

1. PIO Scheme has been withdrawn and merged with OCI scheme.

Replacement of PIO cards with OCI cards will attract a fee of CHF 93.- and CHF 3.-

The process of conversion of PIO cards to OCI cards takes about 3-4 weeks.

It may be noted that from October, 2018 International Civil Aviation Organization will accept only machine readable travel documents. The existing PIO cards which are hand written will, therefore, become invalid travel documents. Hence, it will be necessary for PIO cardholders to obtain machine readable OCI cards in lieu of existing hand written PIO cards to avoid any inconvenience.

Please visit Embassy's website www.indembassybern.ch (Consular Services – OCI cards) for further details.

2. Be careful about passports/valuables

Indian nationals visiting Switzerland are advised to be extremely careful about their passports/valuables, as there has been a considerable increase in passports/valuable being lost/stolen in trains/trams/stations/airports recently in Switzerland, which not only puts them in great difficulty, but is also a security risk.

3. People with medical conditions may negotiate their Insurance policies carefully:

The cost of Medical treatment in Switzerland is exorbitantly high. People are advised to properly check their insurance policies before traveling to Switzerland. If they have any pre-existing ailment, which may render them ineligible for an insurance, they should seek clarification from the Insurance Company, as the insurance companies decline to settle the claims on this pretext later, even though they may have issued the insurance policy, putting the individual at considerable financial risk. Even common ailments, like diabetes & high BP, have been cited as reasons for declining the claims. Recently, in a few cases, the cost of treatment went as high as US\$ 100,000, without positive results. The patients were repatriated through air ambulance which cost between US\$ 50,000 – 70,000/-. Such huge expenditures may wipe out one's entire life's hard earned savings.

4. Regarding correct website for e-Tourist Visa

It has been brought to our notice that a number of fake visa websites are being operated on the internet, claiming to provide e-Tourist Visa services to visa applicants desiring to travel to India. In the recent past, there have been an increasing number of

complaints relating to fraud perpetrated by these websites. In order to mislead applicants, some of these websites have created images and homepage templates mimicking the Government of India websites for e-Tourist Visa applicants. It may kindly be noted that only repeat only Indian Government website dealing with e-Tourist visa is www.Indianvisaonline.gov.in. No other website belongs to the Government of India and therefore should not be relied on for e-Tourist Visa services. Our home page and page on Consular Services already contain the link to the official page.

5. Fraud calls

Several fraud telephone calls have allegedly been made demanding money for Consular services. This may please be ignored and reported immediately to the Embassy.

6. Consequent to withdrawal of legal Tender Character of old high denomination Bank Notes of Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000

Foreigners visiting India are advised to make use of cashless transactions/e-banking or credit/debit cards during their visit in case they find any difficulty in exchanging their foreign currency. The credit cards/debit cards are widely accepted in India in all departmental stores/airports/railway stations, etc.

For further details, please visit the following links of Ministry of Finance and Reserve Bank of India :

1) http://finmin.nic.in/press_room/2016/press_cancellation_high_denomination_notes.pdf

2) <https://rbi.org.in/Scripts/FAQView.aspx?Id=119>