

# THE ECONOMIC TIMES

## Immigration experts question demand to restrict issue of fresh H-1B visas

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Indians face the longest wait times for an employment-based green card. Every year, the United States issues 85,000 new H-1B visas, of which nearly 70% are issued to Indian nationals.

These H-1B visas allow workers to enter the United States to work in high-skilled occupations, often with the intention of ultimately receiving lawful permanent residency. But per-country limits result in Indians nationals receiving only 8,400 of the 120,000 employment-based green cards available each year.

“...Immigration Voice is now calling on the Biden Administration to use its authority under INA Section 212(f) to exclude any new individual born in India who are not currently in the United States legally from obtaining a new H-1B visa for the first time in Fiscal Year 2022. Moreover, Immigration Voice calls to stop issuing such new H-1B visas until the discriminatory per country limits on Employment-Based Green Cards are finally lifted and immigrants from India are no longer treated as indentured servants in the United States,” said Aman Kapoor, president of Immigration Voice, in a statement.

Immigration experts have, however, questioned this rationale.

“I don’t understand how blocking the entry of new H-1B workers will hasten their green card process. The two are not correlated,” said Poorvi Chothani, managing partner at LawQuest, an immigration law firm.

“It sure is a broken system where people are stuck in the green card queue for decades, but not issuing new temporary visas will not help them get their green cards faster and it is not a given that all H-1B workers will be on a green card track when they arrive in the US,” Chothani said.

The immigration lobby group has called for a rationalisation of the green card process to ‘protect future Indian immigrants from the industrialized process of wholesale exploitation.’

Several families face separation once their children turn 21, as they no longer become eligible to remain in the country as dependents minus a green card. There are over 800,000 Indians in line for an employment based green card – nearly 70% of the 1.2 million backlog.

According to a paper by US think-tank CATO Institute, Indian employer-sponsored applicants face an eight-decade wait for green cards.

Attempts to pass a new immigration bill that would considerably ease the backlog have not yet been successful.