GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2245
ANSWERED ON:09.03.2011
INCREASE IN VISA FEES
Nahata Smt. P. Jaya Prada;Rani Killi Krupa;Shekhar Shri Neeraj

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Information Technology industry has expressed concern over the latest increase in the visa fees by the USA;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this is inconsistent with the statement exchanged during the last visit of US President to India;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether the Government has taken up the visa fee hike issue with the US; and

(f) if so, the outcome thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SMT. PRENEET KAUR)

(a) & (b) The United States has enacted the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act in August 2010 to raise $ 600 million for augmenting US Border Security by hiking the fee applicable to H1B and L category visas until 2014. This would apply to those companies, which have more than 50 employees and 50% of which are on H1B/ L visas. In a legislation enacted in December 2010 termed 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, the period of enhanced fee on H1B and L visa categories has been further extended by a year to 2015. The Government is aware that Indian companies could face an adverse impact from the recent increase in H1B and L category visa fees.

(c) & (d) The Government believes that this measure is inconsistent with the commitment contained in the India-US Joint Statement of 8 November 2010, issued during President Obama's visit to India, to facilitate movement of professionals, investors and business travelers, students and exchange visitors between their countries and enhance their economical and financial partnership.

(e) & (f) The Government has conveyed its concerns over the protectionist sentiment in the US and on the increase in fee for H1B and L visa categories. The Government continues to be engaged with the US Government on this issue, including at the highest level.