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Bengaluru: Many Indian H-1B visa holders who came to India to renew their US work permits are now stranded, as US consulates abruptly cancelled or rescheduled their renewal appointments. It is said that if not thousands, at least hundreds of H-1B holders are left stranded in the country, and many have shared their ordeal online.

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"I am one of those unlucky souls who got hit by the mass rescheduling this week. Had my H-1B interview scheduled for December and got an email saying it's moved to March 2026 that's literally 3 months away... apparently it's coz of the new social media vetting policy," an H-1B visa holder shared on Blind, which is an anonymous professional community where employees openly discuss work-life, salaries and career moves without revealing their identity.

Another user said he has been stuck in India indefinitely and that his manager was asking if he could work remotely from India, but the payroll situation is unclear. He claimed that lawyers were not giving straight answers.

This cancellation of scheduled interviews is expected to cause delays in their return to the US. Tech companies such as Google, Apple, ServiceNow and Microsoft have advised their employees to avoid travelling outside the US. This delay is due to enhanced screening procedures. An internal State Department memo said that anyone involved in 'censorship' of free speech should be considered for rejection.

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The H-1B programme allows companies and other employers in the US to temporarily employ foreign workers. While the initial period of stay for those in H-1B status is 3 years, extensions are available for another three years. Again, it can be extended.

Also Read: [US to begin social media screening of H-1B, H-4 visa applicants from December 15](#)

The biggest beneficiary of the H-1B programme is India, as the country accounts for 71 per cent of visa holders, a report from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) pointed out in April this year.

"The current situation appears to be an outcome of the enhanced social media vetting policy that came into effect on December 10," Immigration platform Beyond Border's Co-Founder Frederick Ng told *DH*.

"Since then, there has been increased scrutiny during visa renewals, particularly for applicants who travel outside the US and attempt to re-enter. Given the uncertainty, many visa holders in affected categories—most of them Indian nationals—are being advised to avoid non-essential international travel until there is greater clarity. Once applicants exit the country, they risk prolonged administrative processing," he said.

This heightened scrutiny is expected to continue for several months, and US immigration authorities have stepped up reviews for high-volume and commonly used visa categories, especially F and H-1B visas.

"At present, the visa categories most impacted include H, F, M, and J visas. The H-1B is facing the most attention largely because it is the most well-known and widely used employment visa. This situation reinforces the need for applicants to assess alternatives to the H-1B. Visa categories such as O and L, which are typically more profile-specific, may face relatively lower scrutiny compared to high-volume categories," he explained.

Shilpa Menon, Managing Director, Commercial of LCR Capital Partners, said while these delays are manageable, they require careful planning and proactive guidance to avoid disruptions or unintended risks to visa status.

"These developments also underscore why the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program continues to resonate with Indian professionals and families seeking long-term stability in the United States: it offers a more permanent, transparent, and predictable path to a US green card, independent of non-immigrant visa volatility," she said.

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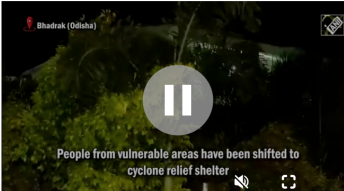
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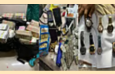
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