

NIAPPI urges India to take tough stand on Immigration Bill

Smart Investor | 12 Aug 14

The National Indian American Public Policy Institute (NIAPPI), a US-based think tank that works for improving relations between India and the US, said on Monday that the US Immigration Bill that is under consideration in the US Congress, could lead to a loss of \$30 billion annually for India, if passed.

"This Bill could also negatively impact India's GDP by 1.5 per cent, because 5,000 Indian-American-owned small IT firms could go under and cause massive unemployment in India as well as in the US," said Shalabh Kumar, chairman of NIAPPI Business Council.

The S744 Immigration Bill — the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernisation Act of 2013 — though a comprehensive immigration Bill that would overhaul the immigration system of the country, also has provisions that impact employees being hired by Indian IT firms.

During his recent visit to India, US Secretary of State John Kerry for the first time acknowledged that the Bill would see some form of amendment. Answering media questions, he said: "The Immigration Bill is a critical priority for President Obama. And we are very aware of the need to make sure that there are more people able to travel, more people able to become part of the commerce... But the way it left the Senate leaves that in need of some amending. The House has not taken it up yet. And it really appears as if they won't certainly before the election which is in three months."

The NIAPPI has been trying to push the Indian government to take a strong stand on the bill. "The Immigration Bill S744 in the US Congress is the biggest hurdle in front of the people of India and Indian-Americans in the United States. It would also disrupt the economic activity of a large number of US companies. Around 500,000 engineers from India on H1 and L1 visas might have to return back to India, causing a loss of around Rs 200,000 crore a year to the Indian exchequer," said Kumar.

The Bill S744 was introduced in the US Senate on April 16, 2013 and was passed on June 27, 2013. It is now pending in the US House of Representatives, awaiting consideration. Once it is approved, the Bill will become a law.