

e-Emergency X-Misc Visa for Afghans

June 21, 2022

In news– A day after the deadly terror attack at Gurudwara Karte Parwan in Kabul's Bagh-e-Balain Afghanistan, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) decided to grant an electronic visa, the e-Emergency X-Misc visas to over 100 Afghan Sikhs and Hindus on 'priority.

About e- Visa-

- The e-visas will facilitate the evacuation of Sikhs and Hindus from Afghanistan, who are facing grave danger in wake of the terror threats there.
- **Following the change of regime in Kabul last year, the Indian government extended help to Afghan citizens, who were looking to flee the country and seek refuge in other countries including India, by starting a new visa category – “e-Emergency X-Misc (Miscellaneous)”.**
- e-Emergency X-Misc was introduced to fast-track visa applications for entry into India.
- As per the earlier MHA order, **these visas will be valid for six months only and were granted only after security clearance.**
- **Prior to this, Afghanistan nationals were not eligible for e-visas for India because the country came under the Prior Reference Category (PRC).**
- Under PRC, people travelling to India have to be cleared by the ministry of Home affairs. Citizens of Pakistan, Iraq and Sudan, foreigners of Pakistani origin, and stateless persons come under this category. **China is in the PRC category only for employment visas.**
- India does not have a refugee policy and grants shelter to foreigners facing persecution in their countries on a case-to-case basis.

- **According to MHA's visa policy, foreign nationals applying for a visa for a purpose, which is not specifically covered under any visa category, may be granted 'X-Misc' Visa** for appropriate duration.
- Such a visa may be **granted only with single entry and for the specific duration** taking into account the purpose of visit.
- They are granted in general either independently or in conjunction with other visa categories such as to a dependent child of a medical visa applicant.
 - If the visa is granted for a period of stay exceeding 180 days, the foreigner will have to register himself/ herself with the FRR0/ FRO concerned within 14 days of arrival.
 - This visa will be non-extendable and non-convertible to any other type of visa.
- **India has in the past granted long duration visas to Afghan nationals of all religions facing persecution in that country, but a Stay Visa/ Residential Permit for one year at a time is granted by Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRR0)** to such Afghan nationals on a case-to-case basis with prior approval of the MHA.
- This is, however, **available only to those facing persecution and not to economic immigrants.**
- These permits are also State/UT specific with movement of such Afghans being restricted to the State/UT where they are permitted to stay.