

US's EAGLE Act of 2022

December 16, 2022

In news— The US white House supported the US Congress pass the (Equal Access to Green Card for Legal Employment) EAGLE Act of 2022.

What is the EAGLE Act of 2022?

- The goal of the Act is to **allow US employers to focus on hiring immigrants based on merit, not their birthplace, by eliminating the per country limitation** on employment-based immigrant visas (green cards).
- **To reduce the impact of this on less-populated countries and ensure that eligible immigrants from these countries are not excluded** when the Act is implemented, the legislation plans to phase out the per-country caps over the course of nine years.
- Another goal of the EAGLE Act 2022 is to **improve the H-1B specialty occupation visa program**. This would be done by bolstering the recruitment requirements, strengthening protections for US workers and boosting transparency, among others.
- It also includes important provisions to **allow individuals who have been waiting in the immigrant visa backlog for two years to file their green card applications**.
- Once passed, the legislation will allow US employers to focus on recruiting people based on 'merit' over 'birthplace', and is likely to benefit Indian-Americans.

How will the legislation benefit Indian-Americans?

- **According to the CATO report of 2020, in the United States, 75 per cent of the employment-based backlog was made up by skilled Indian workers.**
- Apart from the law that imposes limits on the number of

green cards for immigrants from any single birthplace, the reason for Indians enduring much longer waits is employers filing far more petitions for Indians than the limits allow.

- However, given the current situation, even if the per-country cap is removed, it would still leave waits of more than a decade for every employer-sponsored immigrant.
- Thus the per-country limits work at a disadvantage for Indians with more recent immigrants facing lifetime waits for green cards.

What is a green card and what are its benefits?

Officially known as a Permanent Resident Card, a green card, issued to immigrants, allows them to live and work in the United States on a permanent basis. The card serves as evidence that the holder has been accorded the privilege of residing permanently.

Some of the benefits of having a green card are –

- It provides a pathway to citizenship, a green card holder can sponsor immediate family members for the same card.
- It provides easy access to US' social security system as also education assistance, travel to and from the country becomes much easier, a card holder can choose to live anywhere in the US, there is more freedom in terms of career opportunities as one can apply for a wide variety of jobs, and a card holder can also have some amount of engagement in the political process of the country.