

PM Modi takes up UK visa issue with David Cameron

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Washington: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has raised the issue of change in Tier-2 visa rules with British counterpart David Cameron, saying skilled IT professionals from India should not find it difficult to come to work in the UK.

During a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Fourth Nuclear Security Summit here yesterday, Modi raised the issue of change in the UK visa law, which will impact professionals earning below 35,000 pounds annually.

Â Â Â **"Prime Minister also raised the issue of Tier II visas for IT companies. He said skilled professionals should not find it difficult to come to work in the UK," Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Vikas Swarup said.**

âœAnd, in this context the recommendations made by the migration advisory committee could caste a negative light.â€

According to the new rule, professionals living and working in Britain on a Tier-2 visa who earn less than 35,000 pounds a year could be deported at the end of five years of their stay in the country.

Earlier, a Tier-2 visa holder could apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK with an annual income of around 21,000 pounds. The new rule comes into effect on April 6 and is likely to affect thousands of Indian skilled professionals.

Â Â Â **"Cameron promised to take a look at it. He said we do not want to disadvantage bonafide IT companies, but at the same time we would also want to ensure that the UK system is not misused," Swarup said.**

Indian professionals form the largest category of individuals issued such visas by the UK over the years. According to UK's office of national statistics, of the 55,589 Tier-2 sponsored visa applications cleared in 2014-2015, nearly 78 per cent were for Indians (31,058).

The exact figure of those affected by the salary threshold requirements remains uncertain but it is estimated to be between 30,000 and 40,000 workers.

During the Modi-Cameron meeting, other issues relating to defence co-operation and "Make in India" initiative were also discussed.

The two leaders recalled Modi's visit to London last year, during which India and the UK signed deals worth nine billion pounds and inked a civil nuclear pact, Swarup said.

Modi said ties between the two countries had become "richer and deeper".

Both leaders reviewed the decisions taken during Modi's visit - in particular the launch rupee bonds at the London Stock Exchange. Cameron expressed happiness that it was proceeding very well.

- PTI