

US taking steps to facilitate business visas in India

Measures like increasing the staff are being taken to address the issue



SHREYA NANDI

New Delhi, 17 January

The US is taking several measures, such as increasing the number of staffers, to further facilitate the issuance of business visas in India, a senior US government official said on Tuesday.

“We have also made significant progress by issuing more H1B and L visas in 2022 than we did even in 2019 before the pandemic. This is a significant improvement. We are in the process of raising our staff,” Arun Venkataraman, US Assistant Secretary of Commerce for global markets, said.

“We are doubling the number of direct hires as we have to facilitate the issuance of visas here at the embassy. We are also working to bring diplomatic spouses to work in the process in the areas of visas,” Venkataraman said.

The challenges pertaining to issuance of visas have been due to Covid.

Venkataraman further said that US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo will be visiting India in March, along with a delegation of American chief executive officers (CEOs).

Raimondo will also be joining Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal in the India-US CEO forum as well

as the US-India Commercial Dialogue, which will deepen economic ties between both the nations.

The US is India’s largest exporter and trade partner.

Bilateral merchandise trade during April-November stood at \$87.33 billion. Both the nations aim to achieve bilateral trade of \$500 billion by 2025.

According to Venkataraman, the \$500-billion target is far away and that is why both the nations are working with the private sector to identify strategic elements.

These are to not just achieve the target but also surpass it in the long term.

As far as additional import duties on Indian steel and aluminium are concerned, Venkataraman also said that the US is working with all trade partners to address the fundamental issue of excess capacity and behaviours that gave rise to the problem.

“As we move forward, we’re committed to working with all of our trading partners to address the problem at its source. This is because without addressing the fundamental issue of excess capacity and behaviours, we will not be able to move forward towards a system where steel and aluminium can be traded more freely,” he said.