

To,
StratNews Global,
New Delhi-India

Jun 8, 2022

Subject: Afghan Students facing Indian visa problems

Respected Sir,

On behalf of all Afghan ICCR scholars who are stranded in Afghanistan as a result of the collapse of Afghan government last August, I am writing this to express my sincere gratitude towards Indian Government for making ICCR scholarship for Afghan National possible. I was truly honored to be the recipient of the same, which has allowed me to accomplish the dream of my higher studies in India. I am very thankful from ICCR and Indian government for providing facilities for Afghan national under special scheme.

On behalf of the Afghan students.

I am Onib Dadgar, a resident of Nangarhar province, a doctoral candidate at the University of Mysore, India. On 15, August, 2021, Taliban took over our beloved Afghanistan for the second time as a result of which we – who were in Afghanistan for the purpose of our research project data collection – got stranded in Afghanistan with our valid Indian visas invalidated by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs – MEA right after the collapse on August 15th, 2021. There are over 2500 Afghan students enrolled in Indian universities awaiting the issuance of electronic e-visas proposed by Indian MEA so they can return to India to pursue their studies. The details of these students have already been shared by our Ambassador to India, and requests are already made so that the MEA issue these students with visas.

The India's policy to issue visas to Afghans has changed after the Taliban takeover our country. We students are neutral; we are not involved in politics. We really do not know why Indian governments refuse us? Changing the system should not harm our lessons. As a result of this change, Afghan students who study in India severe problems some of which are listed below:

1. Almost half of the students who study in India through different Indian scholarship schemes such as ICCR are government employees. These students now have to provide their organizations with their progress report. Since they are not physically in India, they cannot have this progress report as a result of which they are in danger of losing their jobs here in Afghanistan as well as their scholarship in India.
2. Some of these scholars who had come to Afghanistan for the purpose of their research data collection have their families left alone in India, while they themselves are stranded here. These families are facing real problems, financial and being left alone utmost.

3. There is a great deal of scholars who got their scholarships cancelled as a result of them not being able to physical attend their classes.
4. There are scholars whose families accompanied them to India and have their spouse and kids enrolled in schools and colleges, they are in danger of failing the academic year too.
5. With the removal of COVID-19 restrictions, all colleges and universities in India have started launching their offline classes. To pass their courses, these scholars need to attend classes physically. So far, it was a bit easier to deal with online classes from Afghanistan, though.
6. These are only a few of the problems Afghan students face. Let business and medical issues alone.

It is really sad that in such a difficult time when Afghans need help, India denies to extend a helping hand especially to those students whom they supported for years. Throughout the history, Indo-Afghan relations have been a reason for the jealousy of the neighboring countries and we are here to keep up with all those humanitarian relationships. It is really distressing to see how the India who claims to be Afghanistan's friend is tight-lipped in this situation and relating to the Afghan students' problems. Indian government like all other countries (Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and Russia) should decide and solve the problems of their students' and help them keep up with their studies. As, India wants to be a big player in Afghanistan, so why is it not giving visas to Afghans?

To sum up, I am writing on behalf of around 2500 students who are stranded in Afghanistan as a result of the collapse of the Afghan government last August. I sincerely request you to share the voice of Afghan students who are stranded in Afghanistan and urgently need to attend their classes physically in order to reunite with their families, as well secure their jobs in Afghanistan and secure their scholarship in India.

Sincerely Yours,

Onib Dadgar

PhD Scholar at university of Mysore

