

# MEA raises issue of Indian students with U.S., after survey found 50% of students facing notices are Indians

Controversy brews ahead of U.S. V-P Vance's visit; MEA tight-lipped about whether the student visa termination issue will be raised

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SUHASINI HAIDAR



Representational image. | Photo Credit: AP

India has “raised concerns” over the treatment of Indian students who have received visa revocation notices through diplomatic channels, government sources told *The Hindu*. The issue was taken up days before U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance and senior U.S. State Department officials arrive in Delhi on Monday (April 21, 2025) for talks, and comes after a survey found 50% of those reporting the revocations were Indian. Meanwhile the U.S. government denied targeting Indians specifically with its actions on the issue.

The survey, conducted by the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) studied 327 responses to a research call, out of an estimated more than 4,000 revocation notices sent out in the last two months, and found half had gone to Indians. The study was described in a policy brief that found “50% of these students were from India, followed by 14% from China,” adding that other significant countries in the data included South Korea, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

When asked about the report, and the indication that Indians were particularly targeted for the revocation of the Student and Exchange Visitor Programme (SEVIS) status, an American official, who asked not to be named, denied the process was discriminatory against Indians.

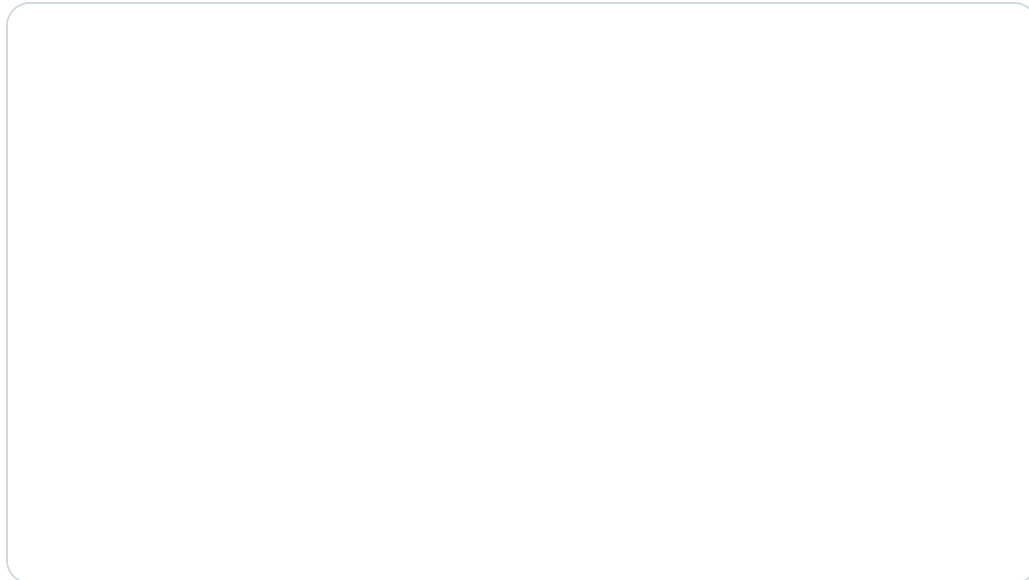
“Continuous vetting and visa revocation actions are not limited to visa holders from any specific country or area in the world. All visa applicants and visa holders, no matter the visa type and where they are located, are continuously vetted,” the official told *The Hindu* in a written response.

The rapid increase in SEVIS terminations came after U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio launched a new AI-assisted “Catch and Revoke” program that would identify students believed to have political views inimical to U.S. Foreign policy interests based on their social media posts. In addition, the Department of Homeland Security is carrying out a nationwide crackdown on students whose names allegedly feature in police databases, and terminating their student status due to visa violations according to US immigration laws.

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A press statement issued yesterday by the American Immigration Lawyers Association is cause for concern to us in India.

Out of the 327 visa revocation cases of international students collected by the organisation so far, 50% are Indians. The reasons for revocation are random [Show more](#)



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Two Indian researchers, Ranjani Srinivasan and Badar Khan Suri were among the first batch of students detained or told to “self-deport” in the first round of such notices, where the MEA had cautioned Indian students to “follow the law” . Subsequently, a number of Indian students have approached courts to have their SEVIS status restored, and in an indication of a shift in the MEA’s stance, Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal disclosed this week that the Indian embassy and missions are “in touch” with affected students and were offering support.

The AILA study found many of those whose visa has been revoked had been in police reports for minor traffic violations or campus infractions, while in an extreme case, a student who was a victim of domestic abuse had their visa cancelled because their name appeared in the police complaint. Only 2 of the 327 responses received pertained to allegations that the students were involved in any political activity, and lawyers have pointed out that protesting is not illegal per se, and that the students risked losing their futures due to the government's action.

"International students contribute billions of dollars to [the U.S.] economy. Scholars and researchers are making this country stronger by doing incredibly valuable work in cancer research, space travel, computer technology and almost every area of science and research. Driving them elsewhere not only weakens our economy but threatens our national security," AILA Executive Director Ben Johnson said.

The MEA declined to comment on whether the issue would be raised directly with Mr. Vance, or other officials like US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Ricky Gill who will be in Delhi on April 21 for official meetings. Mr. Vance, who is accompanied by his family is expected to be hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The discussions held during that meeting (between Mr. Modi and Mr. Vance) will cover all bilateral issues between India and the United States," Mr. Jaiswal said on Friday, without elaborating on whether U.S. tariffs or other specific problems would be on the agenda. Mr. Vance will travel next to Jaipur and Agra while State Department officials will attend an India-U.S. forum hosted by the MEA and organised by the Ananta Centre.

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