

## Rules to be eased for Tibetan refugees

India is all set to simplify travel rules for Tibetan refugees who want to visit foreign countries. Currently they have to secure an “exit permit” from the Home Ministry before applying for a visa with any foreign mission.

The Centre wants to do away with the “redundant” procedure, a senior official told *The Hindu*.

The official said the refugees would be provided with a no-objection certificate at the time of issuance of identity certificates and that would be enough for them to travel to any foreign country.

“The present rules are such that a Tibetan refugee has to apply for an exit permit every time he or she has to travel abroad. Since identity certificates are issued after carrying out due diligence and background check, the exit permit is an unnecessary requirement,” said the official.

He said the Home Ministry would soon get approval from the Cabinet Committee on Security. The Ministry of External Affairs will then issue a notification informing all foreign missions of the exit permit clause being removed. As per the latest Home Ministry data, more than one lakh Tibetan refugees are settled in India. Major concentrations of the Tibetan refugees are in Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and J&K. Tibetan refugees began pouring into India in the wake of the flight of the Dalai Lama from Tibet in 1959.

The government decided to give them asylum as well as assistance towards temporary settlement.

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