

Boom time for tender caring hands

Indian Nurses Are In Great Demand In America

By Smitha Rao/TNN

Bangalore: It's the next new wave of outsourcing, except Peter's job won't be taken and given to Preeti. After wannabe Bill Gates, it's Florence Nightingale clones who will go places. Indian nurses are in demand in the US, in numbers like 250,000.

An acute shortage of nurses in the US will now translate into a whopping pay packet of \$45,000-\$65,000, eligibility for a Green Card and perks on a par with US nurses.

Says Stephen S. Nuell, President of NICE (Nurses For International Exchange), the demand for nurses has escalated so much the US Congress is set to bring in a legislation to make visas to nurses easily available. "We zeroed in on India because we need nurses who are trained, educated and have the kind of dedication towards their job that Indians do. They're much more motivated and mature," says Dr Mark McKenney of the Jackson Memorial Medical Centre.

Says a nurse who works at



V. Jayaprakash

a door of opportunities for nurses in India, who are typically overworked and underpaid. We are here with a service motive but shouldn't be treated shabbily." For such a plain-

in the US — nurses are required to work only three days a week.

Says Dr Mark McKenney: "Three-day-a-week is a standard practice for nurses. They are treated very nicely and in group meetings doctors always say, 'Anyone treating nurses badly loses their job'."

A nurse would have to clear some exams, appear for a screening test, and interview before being recruited. When selected, the hospital or the placement agency would bear the cost of processing the green card/visa, legal fees et al.

Could this new demand lead to an outsourcing-like backlash? "This's not outsourcing, this is insourcing. The issue is not the cost of human capital but demand vs supply. The outcry against call centres and medical transcription industry is only due to one reason — cost." The consensus of doctors and hospitals abroad is that the condition is unlikely to turn around in a few years, primarily because Indian nurses are going to be treated completely on a