

# H-1B, L-1 visa fee hikes take effect, Indian IT companies unhappy

**HT Correspondent**

■ [letters@hindustantimes.com](mailto:letters@hindustantimes.com)

**WASHINGTON:** The US citizenship and immigration services (USCIS) has notified higher application fee for heavy users of H-1B and L-1 visas, that would include a large number of Indian information technology firms.

US employers of more than 50 people, half of whom are on H-1B or similar immigrant visas, will be charged an additional \$4,000 each, over and above the basic processing fee, USCIS said in the notification issued on Thursday.

For L-1 visas, required for a foreign national transferring to a US firm from subsidiaries or units abroad, the additional fee is \$4,500 each, also over the basic fee.

These charges are effective retrospectively from December 18, 2015, when a legislation passed by Congress was signed

into law. And it will stay in effect until 2025.

The additional charges are aimed at discouraging American employers from hiring foreign workers, who eventually displace locals, it is argued, by making it prohibitively expensive.

According to NASSCOM, the trade body representing the Indian IT industry, the impact of the hike could range between \$100 million and \$499 million annually for Indian companies.

India has called the hikes discriminatory, arguing they specifically target Indian IT firms with large US operations such as TCS, Wipro, Infosys and Satyam Mahindra.

Finance minister Arun Jaitley raised the issue in his meeting with his American counterparts during his March visit to the US for the annual World Bank group spring meetings.