

## Indian IT fears impact as US moves on new H-1B process

Indian companies are concerned that the process would be non-transparent and would favour US firms over them

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Once the proposed H-1B registration rule is published in the next few days, USCIS will open it for public comment before being finalised.

PUNE: The US has moved a step closer to changing how the H-1B visa issuance process is carried out from next year that would impact Indian IT services firms.

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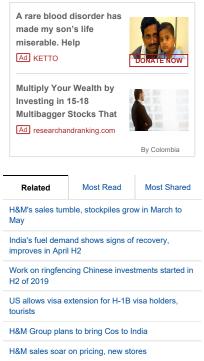
Last week, the Office of Management and Budget said it has completed a review of a proposed regulation from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that would mandate employers to register without paying the H-1B visa fees of those employees who they intend to sponsor for H-1B visa permit. A lottery system would

shortlist people for the work permit, following which the applications will be accepted.

Indian companies are concerned that the process of issuing visas would be nontransparent and would favour US technology companies over them.



ET reported on August 9, that Indian IT firms have seen higher rejections for their visa



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applications, as the Trump administration looks at hiring more locals. The DHS body also did a review of increasing the visa fee, a move once finalised would come into effect by April 2020. The revised fees has not been announced yet.

Once the proposed H-1B registration rule is published in the next few days, US Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) will open it for public comment before being finalised. Poorvi Chothani, managing partner at the Mumbaibased immigration law firm Lawcompanies Quest, said that USCIS should solicit feedback from interested stakeholders before the electronic registration system is implemented to make sure they roll out a viable and sustainable system.

"It is important that USCIS confirms by mid September, 2019 whether it intends to mandate use of the electronic registration for the H-1B CAP petitions that will be filed in April 2020 for FY 2021. This is important because a large number of companies begin their H-1B cap filing process as early as August, and no later than January, depending on the industry."

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