



The 100k dollar question

When The American Dream Got A Six-digit Shocker

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“Hello, Aryan bhaiya, Trump has imposed a work-visa application fee of USD 100,000. What is going on? Will you have to come back? We can’t afford this fee, we...” Ayansh’s voice turned to a whisper in Aryan’s mind as the news sank in. He and hundreds like him had crossed seas, oceans, and continents chasing that American dream. Now, he wondered if it was about to turn into a nightmare. The headline about sweeping H-1B visa reform blinked on the screen. Ayansh’s panic bubbled; Aryan took a deep breath.

The hype and the hustle

“Bhaiya, everyone in India is talking about it,” Ayansh said breathlessly. Aryan nodded. “Yes, it’s huge. The H-1B visa allows US employers to hire foreign workers in specialised roles - especially IT, engineering, research. Every year, about 85,000 new H-1B visas are issued under the cap. Indians have claimed a large share, at times around 70 % of new visas. That’s why this matters so much to us.” As Aryan spoke, a ‘Breaking News’ banner flashed on NDTV, showing Ayansh the potential impact on Indian tech giants like Wipro and Infosys. These companies frequently use the visa programme to place Indian employees in US client projects. The news anchor explained that the September announcement could be crucial for India’s economy. “The stakes are high,” she said in a grave voice.

The fee fable

Ayansh gasped. “So 88 lakhs INR per year? More than 50-fold hike from what used to typically cost between 2,000 USD and 5,000 USD. Why is this happen-

ing?” Aryan gently corrected him. “First, it’s not 88 lakhs INR every year, and it’s not for everyone. The new rule imposes a one-time 100,000 USD fee, but only on new H-1B petitions filed on or after September 21, 2025, and only when the beneficiary is outside the US at the time of filing. So, it’s not for renewals, or petitions filed before that date. Also, the fee must be borne by the employer... as has always been the case.” He calmed Ayansh’s nerves, telling him that the confusion was sparked by US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick’s initial remarks and amplified by WhatsApp forwards, which the US government later clarified.



chance to join his brother in the States after he finishes his B.Tech in AI. “Exemptions are possible,” Aryan replied. “The US govt said it will allow exceptions if it deems an application in the national interest. So, there’s hope, especially in emerging fields like AI.”

“But they are replacing the lottery system too,” Ayansh interjected with frustration. “Yes, the government has proposed a new process that would give more weightage to applications by employers who pay high wages, which will facilitate a merit-based system. But that’s not locked in yet,” Aryan responded. “There’s uncertainty, but not necessarily absolute closure.”

The wheels of change

“Oh, okay. But what about me?” asked Ayansh, worried that he may lose the

The whys of the why

“Why did they do this in the first place?” Ayansh asked. Aryan sent him a link which

H1B VISA\$\$\$ FOR US!!



read - The official explanation: To ensure firms hire Americans instead of leaning too heavily on foreign talent; to discourage misuse of the H-1B programme, where foreign workers are allegedly used to undercut wages or substitute for American workers. Aryan continued: “But this is being criticised widely. The US Chamber of Commerce has warned that the new fee could cost American firms billions in lost productivity if skilled positions remain vacant. Several tech industry groups have cautioned this might accelerate the relocation of R&D hubs to Canada, Ireland, and India, where visa policies are more welcoming. In 2024 alone, Canada recorded a 40 % rise in tech worker inflows, many of them former H-1B hopefuls. It could stifle the inflow of global talent, hurt innovation, and favour big firms over startups. Some warn the H-1B scheme itself may face an existential threat. A lawsuit has already been filed by a coalition of unions, employers, and other groups, challenging whether Trump had the authority to impose such a fee without Congress’s approval. So, this could be tied up in court for a while.”

Some reassurance

“Don’t worry too much, Ayansh,” Aryan said gently. “Because you’re in India now, this new fee might or might not affect your path. It depends on when and how you apply, whether your employer is ready to absorb the cost, and whether you qualify for an exemption. This policy isn’t final... it is currently set for one year, and it may or may not be extended. It’s also being contested legally. Things could shift. But the safest move? Stay informed, follow official guidance, align with a strong employer who can navigate this - and don’t trust rumours on WhatsApp. Trump’s US is changing fast. But that doesn’t mean dreams have to die.”