

India's Infosys in US business visa probe

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Indian software giant Infosys Technologies on Wednesday said it will "co-operate fully" with a probe by US authorities into allegations it violated visa laws.

Infosys, one of the leaders of India's flagship [outsourcing](#) sector, said it received a notice late Tuesday from a Texas court requesting documents used to obtain visas for staff attending meetings and conferences in the United States.

"We have received the subpoena and are currently internally reviewing details relating to the matter," the Infosys co-chairman S.Gopalakrishnan told AFP in the southern city of Bangalore.

Gopalakrishnan said the company will co-operate fully.

The subpoena is the latest controversy to embroil India's high-tech industry in the United States where anti-outsourcing anger has been stoked by high unemployment.

The investigation is to determine whether Infosys used cheaper and easier-to-obtain B-1 visas for business visits, instead of the correct -- and more expensive -- "H-1B" work permits.

The US State Department says visitors require a B-1 visa if they are travelling for a "scientific, education, professional or business convention, or conference... (to) settle an estate, or negotiate a contract".

In contrast, an H-1B visa allows US-based firms to temporarily employ foreign workers in certain specified occupations. The United States issues 65,000 H-1B visas a year, the department said on its website.

The subpoena was issued after an employee filed a lawsuit in the United States alleging that the Nasdaq-listed Infosys was "improperly" using B1 visas.

Investors sold software shares, including [Infosys Technologies](#), at the [Bombay Stock Exchange](#) in Wednesday trade, after news of the court notice.

Infosys was down nearly two percent at 2,796 rupees (\$61.60).

India, which last year held at least 50 percent of the global outsourcing market, has become the world's back office where Western firms set up call centres, number-crunching and software development outlets to cut costs.

Indian IT firms also fly thousands of employees each year to the United States to work at their clients' locations as on-site technicians and engineers in what critics charge is a violation of the "spirit" of US immigration law.

India's outsourcing industry has insisted that the sector has created thousands of jobs in the United States and is not taking them away.

But last year, Ohio state banned outsourcing of government information technology and back-office projects to locations such as India to combat unemployment.

In a move hitting Indian information technology workers entering the [United States](#) employed by firms whose workforces are largely foreign,

the US government also sharply hiked fees for non-immigrant "H-1B" work permits.

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