

# Visa rules: Govt says US cos operate in India too

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**New Delhi:** Commerce and industry minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** on Thursday suggested that US authorities need to keep in mind the interests of American companies doing business here, while crafting visa policies that impact workers from India and other countries.

“It is not just that Indian companies are in the US, several big US companies are in India too... They are earning their margins, they are earning their profits, which go to the US economy. It is a situation which is not where only the Indian companies have to face the US executive order. There are many US companies in India which are doing

business for some years now. If this debate has to be expanded, it has to be expanded to include all these aspects. We shall ensure that all these factors are kept in mind,” she told reporters.



Asked if India would drag the US and Australia to WTO's dispute resolution mechanism, she said, “At this stage, we will engage constructively. At the same time, India will ensure it will not accept unfair treatment.” The trade minister, however, said India was in favour of “constructive engagement”, while officials added that India was not considering retaliatory action.

The statement comes days after US president Donald Trump signed an executive order on H-1B visas and Australia

too reworked its visa regime. American authorities propose to replace the current lottery system for issuing H-1B work visas with a merit-based approach. While maintaining that the government expected the US to honour its commitment on the number of visas, Sitharaman said protectionism was on the rise and India's proposal for a trade facilitation agreement on services could address some of the concerns. “It is not just the US, but several countries now adopting such measures.”

The government is working with the industry amid indications that finance minister Arun Jaitley, who is in the US for the annual meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, may flag concerns related to protectionism.