

IMMIGRATION

INDIA WORRIED OVER TRUMP VISA CHANGES



ALEX BRANDON PHOTOS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick speaks Friday as President Donald Trump signs the Gold Card executive order in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington.

Critics say president sidestepped Congress to impose large fees

BARBARA ORTUTAY AND SEUNG MIN KIM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Indian government expressed concern Saturday about President Donald Trump’s latest push to upend American immigration policy, dramatically raising the fee for visas that bring tech workers from India and other countries to the United States.

The president signed a proclamation Friday that will require a \$100,000 annual fee for H-1B visas — from up \$215. He also rolled out a \$1 million “gold card” visa for wealthy individuals, moves that face near-certain legal challenges amid widespread criticism that he sidestepped Congress.

India’s Ministry of External Affairs said Saturday that Trump’s plan “was being studied by all concerned, including by Indian industry.” The ministry warned: “this measure is likely to have humanitarian consequences by way of the disruption caused for families. Government hopes that these disruptions can be addressed suitably by the U.S. authorities.”

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A poster showing the Trump Gold Card is seen Friday as President Donald Trump signs executive orders in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington.

S.C. lawmakers haven’t been paid after one of their own sued over raise

JEFFREY COLLINS
Associated Press

ROCK HILL — South Carolina legislators have not been getting paid for months since a state senator sued over the first raise in the General Assembly’s compensation in three decades.

The issue involves what lawmakers call “in-district compensation” which is money set aside for legislative duties but has few limits on how it can be spent. A line in the budget, passed by both chambers, increased that compensation from \$1,000 a month to \$2,500 a month for all 46 senators and 124 House members starting July 1.

Republican state Sen. Wes Climer sued the state in June, saying the South Carolina constitution bans legislators from immediately increasing their pay. Instead, any raise has to wait until the next election.

As it sorts through the lawsuit, the South Carolina Supreme Court handed down a decision in late June just before the extra pay kicked that stopped not only the raise, but the payment of \$1,000 a month in the same budget line.

The move took legislators by surprise. Some lawmakers said they have had to use their own private salaries for town halls, equipment needed to help constituents or common expenses to serve the public.

Lawmakers won’t get any more money for their General Assembly duties until the case is decided or when the 2026 session starts in January. Part-time legislators, who meet three days a week for about four months, will then get a lump sum of \$10,400 to account for their \$260 a day compensation.

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JEFFREY COLLINS — AP

State Rep. Hamilton Grant, D-Columbia, takes notes during a meeting of the Legislative Black Caucus, Tuesday, Jan. 14, in Columbia.