

The American embassy had promised to get back to Iqbal Khan on his visa issue. So far they haven't. Says Iqbal, "I don't think I'll make it for the event in the US. But I'm worried about the future. They had promised to call me as soon as my finger prints were matched with those that they have on their records in Washington belonging to suspected terrorists."

It all began on September 5, when Iqbal was in a queue to get the American visa stamped on his passport along with 14 television actors. The rest of the group, which included Sharad Kelkar and wife Keerti, Kanchi Kaul, Mona Singh and Saakshi Tanwar finished quickly. But, when Iqbal's name was logged into the computer it started flashing a red alert, because the database matched his name with that of a fugitive on the 'Most Wanted Terrorists' list!

Iqbal's now waiting to hear from the American Embassy. "However, I must say in their defence that the American embassy had warned me it could take anything from one to six months, sometimes even more. Maybe I'll never be allowed into the US. Maybe my face resembles Osama's..."

The actor has begun to see the lighter side of the embargo on his movement into their country. "I haven't given up hope. One day they'll probably give me my visa. Until then, I can always visit Iran, Iraq, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Afghanistan, Maldives, Kuwait, Brunei, Pakistan, Bangladesh and all the other Muslim countries... I'm, of course, joking! But this is a serious matter and it can't go on forever. I know one day very soon innocent God-fearing law-abiding citizens like me will be free to go again to any part of the world, just as it used to be. This nonsense can't go on forever."



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