

## H-1B visa shortage again

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BANGALORE: Despite evidence of an impending recession in the US, there is expected to be a severe shortage once again of US visas for Indian IT professionals in the coming year. April 1 is the date to begin filing H-1B cases (for entry into the US from October 1), and IT companies are already scurrying to put together all documents in the expectation that the entire H-1B quota will be exhausted on the very first day, as it did last year. "The visa scenario is going to impact the industry adversely, says Ravi Prasad, resident partner and immigration expert in legal firm Jay Sagar Associates. "The business volumes have gone up significantly, but the quota remains the same. This is going to be a major deterrent for the industry, as it's tough to convince and retain clients without having some amount of physical support/presence at the clients' premises," Prasad adds for the 58,200 H-1B quota, the US received 1,20,000 petitions on April 2, 2007, the first day the quota opened last year. "Short of a miracle, we expect the same to happen this year, says Navneet S Chugh, an attorney in The Chugh Firm. "We can also reasonably expect that, like last year, this year there will be a lottery system to pick petitions for approval. So, expect somewhere between 40 percent to 50 percent of a company's filed petitions on April 1 to get approved. It was widely expected last year that the US Congress would increase the H-1B quota to over a lakh. But that didn't happen. Several immigration bills have failed in the US House as well as the Senate. And now with the presidential election primaries underway, nobody expects US President George Bush or his Republican government to take up the matter. Meanwhile, the demand for IT services has not faced a significant cut yet. So, a visa shortage is inevitable. "To overcome this problem, domestic companies are currently busy checking out alternative options like L visa (meant for intra-company transfer), J visa 3/7/24, 9:45 AM H-1B visa shortage again - Times of India <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/h-1b-visa-shortage-again/articleshowprint/2810583.cms> 2/2 (for specialists/domain experts) and B (business) category visas, says Prasad. Indians were 34,000 of the 58,200 H-1B recipients last year. "We expect the number to go up slightly this year, Chugh says.