

## Anil Kapoor makes American TV debut on 24

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Washington, Jan 16 (IANS) Bollywood star Anil Kapoor is excited about his debut Sunday on '24', a popular American TV series depicting a 24-hour period in the life of a government agent fighting fictitious terrorist threats to the US.

The new incarnation of '24' broadcast by Fox represents a number of firsts for the veteran actor. For one 'I've never played a president', he says in a video interview on Fox Television.

'It's the first time that I'm doing television. I've been doing feature films for around 30 years. Not only was I excited that I was doing '24', but I was also anxious and nervous that I was doing something for the first time in my life.'

Kapoor says he took the role on the urging of his friends and family. 'People told me, 'No matter what happens, you have to be on '24'! My son, my daughter, my friends.

'24' is very popular in India. Five or six years back, I was introduced to '24' by my colleagues who would watch it in their trailers.'

His decision to play a Middle Eastern character was a deliberate one, he added. 'I am very clear that I won't play Indian characters in international projects unless they're really special. I've told my agent to seek out parts that are not culture-specific, but have character.'

The hit action drama begins its eighth season with a two-night, four-hour special, airing Jan 17 at 9 p.m. and Jan 18 at 8 p.m.

In the new episode Jack Bauer (Kiefer Sutherland) has finally decided to quit CTU (Counter Terrorist Unit) and take up a safe, cushy consulting job when word comes that a high-level peace agreement between President Allison Taylor (Cherry Jones) and Omar Hassan (Anil Kapoor), president of a fictitious Middle Eastern country, is on the brink of sabotage.

'Anil Kapoor is above all else a great elegant gentleman with an amazing background,' said Cherry Jones. 'He has a natural regalness to him which is so perfect.'

But Kapoor, an actor whose capacity for caustic viciousness was celebrated in 'Slumdog Millionaire', wouldn't have been hired for '24' if it was just a predictable, good-guy role. Hassan, it seems, has a secret that might jeopardize the peace agreement, the wellbeing of his family, and his career.

'I don't think the peace talks will go well at all,' said Jones. 'This is '24' and we've gotta give Jack something to do!'

With its average of 12.5 million viewers each week, the Emmy-winning '24' has provided a stage for several leading South Asian actors since its debut in 2001. Indian American star Kal Penn played a teenaged terrorist over four episodes in 2007.