

(a) whether the Government of Gujarat has requested for the allocation of at least 8 million cubic meters Natural Gas for the requirement of Industries and generation Power;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Union Government thereon;

(c) whether there is any proposal under the consideration to reduce the price of natural gas;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR) (a) and (b): Various requests have been received from time to time from the Government of Gujarat for allocation of additional quantity of Natural Gas. The entire gas being produced in Gujarat, along with substantial quantities of Offshore gas, have already been committed to various consumers in Gujarat. Further allocation would depend on various factors including production and availability of gas.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Increasing exploration and production costs do for not justify a decrease in prices.

#### **Issue of Passports**

3519. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL:

SHRI V.S. VIJAYA-RAGHAVAN:

SHRIMATI CHANDRA PRABHA URS:

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA:

SHRI K. MURALEE DHARAN:

SHRI PALA K.M. MATHEW:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Queuing up for Passports" appearing in the Tribune dated October 10, 1991;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to speed up the issue of passports by various passport offices including that from Chandigarh Office;

(c) whether the Government propose to increase the staff strength of the various passport offices in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, Passport Office-wise?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMADHAVSINH SOLANKI):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Passport procedure have been simplified with a view to expedite issue of passports. Details of steps taken are given in the enclosed Statement.

(c) and (d). A proposal to increase the staff strength of various Passport Offices is under study.

#### **Statement**

#### *Details of steps taken to reduce delays:-*

1. Following categories of applicants have been exempted from requirement of Prior Police and CID verification before issue of passports to them;

(a) All Government servants and Employees of Public Sector Undertaking who alongwith their applications submit No Objection Certificate (NOC) and Verification Certificate Signed by their Head of Department on official stationery.

- (b) Where an applicant submits his application accompanied with a verification certificate signed by either;
- (i) a Deputy Secretary to the Government of India and above;
  - (ii) a Joint Secretary and above to a State Government;
  - (iii) a Sub-Divisional Magistrate and above;
  - (iv) District Superintendent of Police and above;
- (c) Retired Gazetted Government Servants.
- (d) Former Members of the Union Parliament (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha) and State Legislatures (Assemblies and Councils).
2. In all other cases where Regional Passport Officers/Passports Officers are otherwise satisfied with genuineness of applicant a passport may be issued where Police and CiD do not send their reports in 4 weeks after despatching personal particulars forms to them.
3. Children below the age of 15 years may be issued passport without police verification.
4. Persons holding normal passports may be issued fresh passports after 10 years of its validity without prior Police/CiD verification.
5. Furthermore, in order to ensure expeditious clearance monitoring

of passports issued and pending is done through weekly progress reports in respect of each passport office.

6. With effect from 16th August, 1990, fresh passports are being issued for a period of ten years at a stretch so that a passport holder need not visit a passport office for renewal after first five years as was the case before August, 1990.
7. With a view to increase productivity of Passport Offices, it has been decided that a passport writer should write 50 passports per day along with making entries in passport register. Each official detailed in the indexing section should screen at least 100 applications per day without overtime.

#### **International Declaration on the Rights of Minorities**

3520. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the highlights of the last session of the UN Commission on Human rights and the Sub-Commission on Minorities;;

(b) the role played by Indian delegates/experts in the two bodies; and

(c) the present status of the Draft declaration on the rights of Minorities?

**THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAV SINGH SOLANKI):**

(a) At the last session of the UN Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities a very wide range of issues were considered pertaining to