

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:995
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2010
BAN ON HAND-WRITTEN PASSPORTS
Shanavas Shri M. I.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has set a deadline of April 2010, after which those with hand-written passports, cannot travel;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has started producing high-tech machine readable passports and bio-metric passports in the country; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the names of passport offices presently issuing machine readable high-tech passports ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(DR. SHASHI THAROOR)

(a) to (b): Though the ICAO has issued guidelines for issue of Machine Readable Passports (MRPs) by April 2010, there would be no ban on the travel of hand-written passport holders till 2014.

(c) to (d): The MRPs were introduced in India in July 2000. All the Passport Offices and the Indian Missions/Posts abroad issue MRPs. However, biometric passports have been introduced only in the Diplomatic and Official category in June 2008. The roll-out of biometric passports in Ordinary category is under process.