

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:298

ANSWERED ON:16.03.2011

ISSUE OF PASSPORTS

Argal Shri Ashok;Rao Shri Kavuri Samba Siva

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the time-frame fixed by the Government for issue of passports to the applicants;
- (b) whether the Government is issuing passports within the said time-frame;
- (c) if so, the details of the passports issued by the various passport offices within the said time-frame in the country including Ghaziabad and Hyderabad Passport Offices out of the applications received during the last one year and the current year;
- (d) if not, the reasons for the delay; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to issue the passports to the applicants without any delay?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

(a) to (e) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 298 "REGARDING ISSUE OF PASSPORTS" FOR ANSWER ON 16.03.2011

Passports to Indian citizens are issued as per the provisions of the Passports Act 1967 and the Passport Rules 1980 as amended from time to time. Prior to issuing a passport, the Passport Issuing Authority must establish the applicant's citizenship, identity and an absence of criminal record as mandated by the Passports Act. This requires verification of personal particulars of applicants and background check of their criminal antecedents which are time consuming.

The Government has fixed a time target of 30 days for grant of fresh passports and 15 days for re-issue of passports and 1-7 days for Tatkal applications. In case of non Tatkal applications, the Government is aware that in a number of cases passports are not issued within the time target of 30 days for fresh passports and 15 days for re-issue of passports, due to :

- (i) increase in demand for passport;
- (ii) delays in receipt of police verification reports within the stipulated time of 21 days;
- (iii) receipt of incomplete police reports due to submission of incomplete information/documentation by the applicants; and
- (iv) the pendency is due to increase in number of applications and shortage of staff strength in the Central Passport Organization, not keeping pace with the increase in demand for services.

In spite of various constraints, the 37 Passport Offices in India have issued 55.21 lakh passports and rendered 6.76 lakh miscellaneous passport services in 2010 which are a record ever achieved in any year.

The details of applications received and passports issued, Passport Office-wise (including Passport Offices, Ghaziabad and Hyderabad), during 2010 is enclosed as Annexure I. The number of applications pending for more than one month as on 31st December 2010 at these Passport Offices is also included in Annexure I.

The Government has embarked on the Passport Seva Project (PSP) to comprehensively transform the passport service delivery system. Under the Project, the Government has decided to outsource the front end and non-sensitive activities such as submission of passport applications, taking of digitalized photograph of applicants, collection of bio-metric features and maintenance of national call centre etc. Seven pilot Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) including four under the Regional Passport Office, Bengaluru and three under Passport Office, Chandigarh were launched during 2010. These have been working satisfactorily. The Third Party Audit Agency (3PAA) - STQC (Standardization, Testing and Quality Certification Directorate) has completed the certification process in January 2011. The remaining 70 PSKs are expected to be made operational during the year 2011. The list of 77 PSKs is enclosed as at Annexure II.

During the interregnum, the Government has drawn up an Action Plan to bring down pendency by holding special Passport Adalats, strengthening infrastructural facilities, temporary deployment of manpower, provision of additional printers, and expediting the police verification process, through the intervention of Chief Secretaries of a number of States where incidences of pending police verification reports are found particularly high.