

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:295
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2012
ROLE OF TOUTS IN PASSPORT OFFICES
Joshi Shri Mahesh

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the reign of touts in passport offices for issuance of passports has still not ended;
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether the touts act hand in glove with the staff and officers of the passport offices and charge money from the public to facilitate the issuance of passports due to which a number of illegal passports also get issued; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the number of touts apprehended during the last three years alongwith the punitive action taken against them?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SMT. PRENEET KAUR)

(a) & (b) Under the Passport Seva Project, the working of Passport Offices is being made transparent and corruption- free by delivering passport related services to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible, reliable manner and in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes. Since the physical presence of the applicant is required for bio-metrics and photographs in this new system of submission of passport applications, the role of touts in Passport Offices has been minimised to a great extent. However, under the old system of submission, (which will be phased out over the next 3-4 months), activities by touts have been noticed occasionally in and around Passport Offices. In order to obviate any need to approach any outsider for any kind of service, passport application procedures are prominently displayed in all the Passport Offices. Advisories cautioning the public against touts are also displayed prominently. Whenever activities of touts are noticed, Passport Officers, with the assistance of local police, conduct raids to eliminate this menace.

(c) & (d) Cases where collusion of passport officials with touts have come to Ministry's notice, the vigilance team conducts an inquiry and in cases of serious nature, departmental action is taken. Apart from this, surprise raids are made on Passport Offices to check the menace of touts with the assistance of local police.