

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:331

ANSWERED ON:14.03.2012

SIMPLIFICATION OF PASSPORT PROCEDURE

Chavan Shri Harischandra Deoram; Pathak Shri Harin; Rani Killi Krupa; Swamygowda Shri N Cheluvaraya Swamy

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has issued instructions to issue new passports to the applicants within three weeks and simplify the police verification procedure;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the current status of the matter;
- (c) the details of steps taken/proposed to be taken to implement the same;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise, particularly in Gujarat & Maharashtra;
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (f) the details of pending passport applications as on date, RPO-wise?

Answer

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

(a) to (f) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (F) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.331 "REGARDING SIMPLIFICATION OF PASSPORT PROCEDURE" FOR ANSWER ON 14.03.2012.

(a) & (b) As per Government instructions, 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 issue 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) a shortage of staff strength in the Central Passport Organization, not keeping with the increase in demand for services.

In spite of various constraints, in 2011, the 37 Passport Offices, Headquarters and the office of the Chief Secretary of Andaman and Nicobar Islands issued 63.06 lakh passports and related services which is a record ever achieved in any year.

(c) to (e) In order to further simplify the passport procedure, a Mission Mode Project (MMP) was identified under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) of the Government of India which inter alia includes many other high impact e-Governance initiatives and projects. The MMP on Passports, named Passport Seva Project, aims "to deliver all Passport-related services to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible, reliable manner & in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes and committed, trained & motivated workforce". The Passport Seva Project (PSP) incorporates the global best practices in the passport issuance system. The key features of the PSP are enumerated below:

Establishing 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) for delivering all front-end citizen services.

Creation of on-line Passport Portal [www.passportindia.gov.in] for offering Passport services.

Providing links to designated points in Police department.

Establishing a Central Passport Printing Facility (CPPF) for handling extra load of Dispatch process to Postal Department.

Introduction of a multi-modal Information and Grievance handling system.

Creating a centralized IT system linking all PSK's, Passport Offices, Police and Postal Departments.

Introducing productivity linked incentive scheme for Government employees.

Establishing a proper Program Governance Structure for managing the implementation and operation of all the above.

The set of objectives proposed to be achieved through this project are as follows:

Establish a secure & error-free Passport issuance system that compares with the best in the world.

Issue Passports (fresh and re-issue) in 3 working days (for 'No' or 'Post'-police-verification cases)

Issue Passports (fresh and re-issue) in 3 working days plus the time taken for Police Verification (for 'Pre'-police-verification cases)

Issue Passports under Tatkaal scheme next working day excluding the day of submission

Render miscellaneous Passport services (change in address and other personal particulars) on the date of application itself

Render the services through simplified procedures and in conditions of comfort for the Passport-seeking public

Provide a portfolio of ONLINE services to the citizens.

(f) The details of pending passport applications beyond 30 days, as on 24.2.2012 RPO-wise is at ANNEXURE-I.