

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1277

ANSWERED ON:17.08.2012

DELAY IN NEW PASSPORT

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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is inordinate delay in issuance of passport to the citizens of the country contrary to claims of the Government in this regard;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for said inordinate delay;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to fix any time limit for issuing passport and to include it in the citizens charter of the Ministry;
- (d) whether a large number of middlemen are reportedly working in passport offices in various States across the country including Rajasthan;
- (e) if so, the number of complaints received in this regard during the last three years and the current year; and
- (f) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for expeditious/timely issuance of passports to the applicants?

Answer

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

(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 is aware that in a number of cases, there are delays in issuance of passport. The reasons for delay normally are as under :

- (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) shortage of staff strength in the Central Passport Organization, not keeping with the increase in demand for services.

(c) The Government has fixed a time limit of 30 days for issue of fresh passports and 15 days for re-issue of passports and 1-7 days for Tatkal applications. The Government is considering several citizen-friendly proposals, including revision of time-limit for issue of passports given in Ministry of External Affairs' Citizen Charter, to improve the delivery-process of passport issuance.

In spite of various constraints, in 2011, the Ministry issued 73.65 lakh passports and related services which is a record ever achieved in any year.

(d) & (e) Some activities of middlemen have been noticed in and around Passport Offices. In order to obviate any need to approach any middlemen for any kind of service, passport application procedures are prominently displayed in all the Passport Offices. Advisories cautioning the public against middlemen/touts are also displayed prominently. Whenever middlemen activities are noticed, Passport Officers, with the assistance of local police, conduct raids to eliminate this menace.

(f) 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.(The Project has been completely

executed and all 77 PSKs were made operational by early June 2012)

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.