GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:874
ANSWERED ON:14.08.2012
BIOMETRIC DATA OF VISA APPLICANTS
Bapurao Shri Khatgaonkar Patil Bhaskarrao;Bhoi Shri Sanjay;Gaikwad Shri Eknath Mahadeo;Paranjpe Shri Anand Prakash

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to launch a pilot project in its consulates in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Pakistan to collect the biometric data of all foreign nationals applying for visa to visit the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether this pilot project is likely to create problems to travelers and affected the flow of visitors to India;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the remedial measures taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN)

(a) to (e): Yes, Madam. The Government is implementing Mission Mode Project (MMP) on Immigration, Visa and Foreigners' Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) which interalia include:

i) Authentication of traveller's identity at the Missions, Immigration Check Posts (ICPs) and Foreigners Registration Offices (FROs) through use of intelligent document scanners and biometrics;

ii) Online registration of foreigners at the time of grant of visa and automated updation of the particulars of the foreigners at entry and exit points;

iii) Availability of a centralized system for sharing of information across the concerned Agencies about foreign travellers;

iv) Improved tracking of foreigners by integrating and sharing information captured during visa issuance at Missions, during immigration check at ICPs, and during registration at FRRO/FROs.

The IVFRT integrated online visa application system (without Biometrics) has been introduced in 81 Indian Missions/Posts abroad till 31.07.2012. As per the approved IVFRT Plan Scheme, the Biometrics enrolment procedure for capturing Biometrics of all the visa applicants is to be introduced in all the Indian Missions by September, 2014. However, during the current financial year, it is proposed to start Biometrics enrolment Procedure at Indian Missions in UK, USA and Pakistan. After successful implementation at these Missions, the solution will be extended to other Missions after suitable modifications in the software, as per practical requirements. Under the IVFRT Plan Scheme, it is proposed to implement biometric solution to establish identity of the visa applicants and for preventing identity thefts for better security and enhancing passenger facilitation. The biometrics traits of both the ten finger prints and facial of the Visa applicants will be captured.

The implementation of the IVFRT Plan Scheme will not create problems to the travellers and will not adversely affect the flow of visitors to India. The enrolment process is so designed that entire process will not take more than 5 Minutes per Visa applicant.