

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:140
ANSWERED ON:06.03.2013
PASSPORT OFFICES SEVA KENDRAS
J Helen Davidson;Meghe Shri Datta Raghobaji

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Passport Offices/Seva Kendras functioning in the country, State-wise;
- (b) the number of passports issued, State-wise during the last three years and the current year;
- (c) whether a special drive to speed up processing of pending applications has been launched recently in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether there has been a hike in passport fees recently and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the mechanism in place to redress the grievances of the applicants?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 140 REGARDING 'PASSPORT OFFICES/SEVA KENDRA'

(a) & (b) The number of Passport Offices/Passport Seva Kendras functioning in the country, State-wise and number of Passports issued State-wise during the last three years and current year (as on 31st January 2013) is at (Annexure-A).

(c) A special drive to speed up processing of pending applications submitted under old system (NIC) was undertaken in 2012 by the Passport Offices all over India whereby passports were issued in those cases where clear police verification reports were received before 31st December 2012. In cases, wherein police reports were awaited, the files were closed after giving notice to the applicants. Such applicants were advised to submit their new applications under Passport Seva system without any payment of fees. In this connection, Passport Adalats were conducted by many Passport Offices to clear the backlog of objection cases.

(d) In exercise of the powers conferred by the Passports Act, 1967, the Government revised passport and related services fees w.e.f. 1st October, 2012. The current regime of Passport fee came into force in July 1993 subsequent to the passing of the Passport (Amendment) Bill, 1992 which permits the Government to fix the Passport fee on the basis of actual cost incurred on issuing of a Passport. In 1993, passport fee was fixed at Rs.300/- which was increased to Rs.1000/- when the next revision took place in 2002. Over the last ten years, costs relating to establishment, capital expenditure, procurement of equipment, reimbursement to police authorities, payment to India Posts, printing of passport booklets, personalization costs, IT expenses and contractual payment to Service Providers (such as TCS, NIC, NISG, C-DAC, STQC and ISP) have gone up considerably, which necessitated increase in passport and related services w.e.f. 1st October 2012. The Passport fee has been increased by Rs.500/- raising to Rs.1500/- for normal applications and by Rs.1000/- raising to Rs.3500/- for Tatkal applications. For citizens living abroad, the revised fee is US\$ 75.00 (from 40.00) and Euro 60.00 (from 48.00) for normal applications.

(e) Under the Passport Seva Project (PSP), the Ministry has put in place a strengthened Grievance Redressal system whereby a National Call Centre with a toll free number (1800- 258-1800), operating in 17 languages on 24X7 basis, has been set up to cater to dissemination of information about various services, grievances handling and citizens feedback. Also a help desk has been set up which can be accessed by citizens through the www.passportindia.gov.in portal and where suggestions and grievances can be sent.

Apart from the above, there is a Public Grievance Redressal Cell (PGRC) established in the CPV Division of the Ministry under the supervision of Chief Passport Officer. It deals with grievances received through telephone, e-mail and post, as also references from various Government Offices. In addition, all Passport Offices handle public grievances through the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAM) website of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions. The latest position on their applications, alongwith directions for further action, is posted on this website, which can be easily accessed by the public.

The names, addresses and phone numbers of the Public Grievance Officer are also installed in the Passport Offices. The

complaint/suggestion boxes are also installed on the strategic locations in the Passport Offices. There is a Public Grievance redressal mechanism in all Passport Offices to enquire into and redress any complaints from citizens in a timeframe. Information and Facilitation counters, PG Cell and Help Desks have been set up to assist applicants and to attend to grievances/complaints expeditiously.