GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:308
ANSWERED ON:12.02.2014
PASSPORT SEVA PROJECT
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Passport Seva Project (PSP) operationalised all over the country and the number of passports issued in the country till date;

(b) whether the Government is aware of the difficulties being faced by applicants on account of online procedures, including getting appointments for submission of documents for passports;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken/being taken to address the said issue and further ease the process of issue of passports;

(d) whether the passport authorities are not accepting the statements and passbooks issued by private banks as address proof for issuing passports; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR 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. 308 REGARDING `PASSPORT SEVA PROJECT` FOR ANSWER ON 12.02.2014

(a) The Passport Seva Project (PSP), a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan, has been implemented by the Government with a view to comprehensively overhaul passport issuance system. As part of this citizen-centric Project, 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) have been set up and operationalised as extended arms of the existing 37 Passport Offices across the country. Since the launch of Pilot PSKs in May 2010 to 31st January, 2014, 1,25,21,071 Passports have been issued in the new system.

(b) & (c) The Government is aware of the difficulties being faced by applicants on account of online procedures when they were introduced. In this context, following measures have been taken for smooth processing of online appointments:

(i) The Passport Portal, www.passportindia.gov.in, is web-based and can be accessed by anyone, anytime and anywhere. The system has inbuilt checks to ensure that multiple appointments are not booked from a single user-id. The citizens are free to apply online and obtain appointments themselves or seek the assistance of anyone else to obtain appointments. The applicants are required to log on to the Passport Portal; create their user ID and assign a password ; fill & submit the application form online or download the e-form, fill & upload the same at the portal (applicants may scan and upload supporting documents, if they so desire); schedule an appointment after making payment of passport fee online through debit/credit card or State Bank of India (SBI) net-banking or SBI Challan; note the Application Reference Number (ARN) or take a print-out of Appointment Slip/Challan; and along with ARN, original documents and photocopies visit the concerned PSK for submission of application.

(ii) The online appointment system has been introduced to minimize waiting time for applicants. Appointments are allotted according to handling capacity of PSKs and are based on electronic queue management system. The number of public dealing counters has been increased from the erstwhile 350 to 1610 in the new system and public dealing hours have gone up from 4 hours to 7 hours a day.

(iii) The entire process is online and streamlined including interface with the Indian police for verification of personal particulars of applicants and with India Post for tracking delivery of passports. Status of applications can be tracked through the passport website or through mPassport Seva. An optional premium SMS facility for tracking of Passport applications, on nominal payment is also available. An e-mail based helpdesk facility and a 24x7 National Call Centre has been set up to provide requisite information to citizens in 17 languages. An SMS message is sent to the citizen as soon as the passport is dispatched. For assistance, one can call toll-free helpline 1800-258-1800.

(iv) Applicants' presence in person at the PSK enables the Passport Issuing Authority to capture their photograph and fingerprints to

prevent the incidence of impersonation. The applicants also get full opportunity to see and affirm their personal particulars to be entered in the passport to avoid unnecessary correspondence later.

(v) Walk-in facility has also been allowed to citizens having Application Registration Number (ARN) to enable them to apply for Tatkal service, issue of Police Clearance Certificate (PCC), deletion of Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) status, inclusion of name of spouse in the passport and issue of new booklets where pages have been exhausted. Senior citizens above 60 years, minors below 15 years whose parents hold valid passports, differently-abled persons, Central/State government employees and their spouse/dependent minor children having ARN have also been permitted walk-in facility.

(vi) Passport Offices conduct Passport Melas at PSKs on weekends from time to time for meeting high demand of passports. Passport Adalats, on need basis, are also conducted by Passport Offices to redress passport service grievances by dealing with citizens directly.

(vii) As police verification of personal particulars and antecedents of applicants is critical to Passport issuance, Passport Offices keep in touch with Police to expedite Police Verification reports.

(viii) A Handbook of Standard Documents & Procedures for PSK officials has been circulated to all the Passport Offices for speedy processing of passport applications.

(ix) A Productivity Linked Incentive Scheme has been implemented aimed at increasing productivity of Central Passport Organisation officials.

(d) & (e) As of now, passbook of 26 Public Sector banks are accepted as address proof for issuing passports. In addition, other documents such as water bill, telephone bill, electricity bill, proof of gas connection, Voter ID card, spouse's passport copy, Income Tax Assessment Order, Aadhaar Card, Ration Card are also accepted as address proof.