GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4202
ANSWERED ON:16.12.2009
SOFTWARE PROBLEM IN PASSPORT OFFICES
Roy Shri Mahendra Kumar

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work relating to issue of passports in the country has been allocated to some private companies;

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

(c) whether the software being used by the passport offices, provided by the said private company, is not working satisfactorily;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the corrective steps taken/being taken in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (DR. SHASHI THAROOR)

(a) & (b) Despite extensive computerisation, opening of new Passport Offices and reforms in the Central Passport Organisation (CPO), a need was felt for change in the existing system due to the rapidly growing volume of passport seekers. With a view to deliver all passport related services to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible and reliable manner, the Government has embarked on the Passport Seva Project. The basic design of the Project involves outsourcing of all non-sovereign, non-security and non-sensitive functions to a private contractor, with Government functionaries retaining all critical roles and responsibilities. Following an extensive and transparent two stage shortlist process, Tata Consultancy Services Limited (TCS) was selected as the Service Provider for the Project. Front-end activities, such as token issuance, initial scrutiny of the application forms, acceptance of fee, scanning of the documents, taking photos, etc., will be performed by the Service Provider's staff whereas the sensitive activities, such as verification of documents, police verification, decision on grant of passports, printing and dispatch of passports, will be performed by the Government staff.

(c) to (e) The application software of the Project is under the process of development by the Service Provider (SP). The software will be put to use only after it is fully developed by SP and tested by the Third Party Audit Agency.