

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:518

ANSWERED ON:13.08.2014

DELAY IN PASSPORT ISSUANCE

Noor Smt. Mausam;Raghavan Shri M. K.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of delay in issuance of passports and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the number of applications received, passports issued and those pending disposal during each of the last three years and the current year, Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) -wise;
- (c) whether there is a shortage of passport booklets creating huge backlog in issuance of passports in various PSKs, if so, the details thereof, PSK-wise and the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether alleged deterioration in the quality of passport booklets has been reported if so, the facts thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the corrective steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 518 REGARDING ` DELAY IN PASSPORT ISSUANCE ` FOR ANSWER ON 13.08.2014

(a) & (b) Yes, Madam. Though the time taken for issue of passports has been progressively reduced in recent years, the Government is also aware that in some cases, there is delay in issuance of passports. The details of passport service applications received during the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 and the period January – June, 2014 and the pendency are enclosed (Annexure I, II, III & IV). The passports are issued Passport Office-wise and the data is compiled accordingly.

The process for Passport issuance sometimes becomes longer due to:

- (i) late receipt of police verification reports beyond the stipulated time of 21 days;
- (ii) receipt of incomplete police reports;
- (iii) increase in demand for passport to the tune of 15% in a year; and
- (iv) shortage of manpower in the Central Passport Organization, to deal with the increasing demand for passport services.

(c) There was a temporary shortage of passport booklets which created some backlog in issuance of passports. This was because ISP Nashik, which is the sole supplier of passport booklets to all Passport Offices in India and abroad, had stopped production of booklets twice (Dec 2013-Feb 2014 and April 2014-mid June 2014) due to shortage of a raw material imported from abroad. Due to prompt measures taken by the Government, ISP Nashik has now started regular supplies of passport booklets to Passport Offices. As on 11 August 2014, all Passport Offices have adequate stock of passport booklets. Further, the Government has also increased the annual indent for blank passport booklets for the year 2014-15 to 20 million in order to create a strategic reserve of 10 million booklets to meet any future exigency (Annexure –V).

(d) The quality of passport booklets has been engaging the attention of the Ministry though there is no deterioration. The matter has been taken up with the ISP Nashik and its controlling organizations, viz. the Security Printing & Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCL) and the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance for improving the quality of the passport booklets.

(e) As regards delay in passport issuance, the Government has taken several corrective steps. 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. 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. Inspections of PSKs and Passport Offices are conducted from time to time to improve

service delivery. Steps have also been taken to fill up the existing vacancies by recruitment through the Staff Selection Commission, fast-track promotion and deputation, wherever applicable. The Government has recently invited applications from suitable candidates to fill up the vacant posts through deputation at the level of Passport Officer, Deputy Passport Officer and Assistant Passport Officer. An indent to fill up vacant posts of Lower Division Clerk has already been placed with the Staff Selection Commission. Pending filling up of vacancies on regular basis, the Ministry has engaged up to 450 Data Entry Operators in the Passport Offices against vacant non-gazetted posts.