

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3254
ANSWERED ON:22.03.2017
Simplification of Passport Issuing Process
Rajendran Shri S.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

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- (a) whether a large number of passport seekers/passport renewal aspirants are unable to use online mode as the server often remains down and the information process is complicated;
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the efforts made by the Government to simplify the above process so that the citizens of the country can get their passport easily; and
- (d) the success achieved in this regard as a result of above efforts?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) & (b) (i) It would be incorrect to say that a large number of applicants seeking passport services are unable to use online method as often server goes down and the process of giving information is complex. Effective technical infrastructure is in place to ensure that the Passport Seva system is available for access at all times from any location. The Passport Portal (www.passportindia.gov.in) is accessible to anyone, anywhere and anytime. With a view to address the challenge of digital divide, especially in the rural hinterland, the Ministry in association with CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. (which is promoted by the Department of Electronics and IT), has facilitated online filing of passport applications, through the vast network of over 1.5 lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs) across rural hinterland. Under the Passport Seva Project, a robust information system has been created to offer a bouquet of online passport services.

(ii) Comprehensive information relating to passport application procedure, requirement of supporting documents, applicable fees, location of Passport Offices, Passport Seva Kendras (PSK), police station jurisdiction is posted on the Portal to make it user-friendly. It is kept updated with Advisories/Notices and Press Releases relating to Passport services developments. Status of applications can be tracked through the Passport Portal.

(iii) An e-mail based helpdesk facility and a 24x7 National Call Centre has been set up to provide requisite information to citizens.

(iv) The Passport Seva system sends four free of cost SMS to applicants - (i) at the time of dispatch of passport, (ii) in 'returned undelivered' passport cases, (iii) rejection of request for counter delivery cases and (iv) clear Police Verification (PV) report in pre-PV PCC cases or review of PV and clearance by the PIA. In addition, a premium optional SMS Service, on nominal payment basis, has been made available to enable citizens to receive alerts and updates regarding detailed progress of their passport applications and pending actions. The service can be availed from any mobile phone.

(v) mPassport Seva mobile app provides passport related information including PSK locator, applicable fees, mode of submission and tracking of passport application status on smart phones.

(vi) For assistance, citizens can call toll-free helpline 1800-258-1800.

(vii) The Passport system has interface with the police for verification of personal particulars of applicants and with India Post for tracking delivery of passports.

(c) The following additional steps have been taken by the Government to further simplify the mechanism of issuing passports:

(i) Police Verification: Police Verification of applicants' particulars plays an important role in timely dispatch of passports. The Ministry as well as the Passport Offices continue to engage closely with the Police Departments across States/Union Territories and with concerned Home Departments to reduce time taken in police verification.

(ii) The Government has set up 90 Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) across the country.

(iii) Greater outreach: The Government is working on setting up 3 more PSKs in addition to the existing functional 90 PSKs across the

country.

(iv) The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Department of Posts (DOP) announced on 24 January, 2017 their decision to utilize the Head Post Offices (HPO) in the various States as Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) for delivering passport related services to the citizens of the country. The objective of this partnership is to extend passport services on a larger scale and to ensure wider area coverage. The pilot projects for this joint venture between MEA and DOP was inaugurated on 25 January, 2017 at the Post Offices at Mysuru in Karnataka and at Dahod in Gujarat. The POPSK at these two places have been running successfully since their inauguration. With the successful operationalization of these two pilot projects, the Government has now decided to set up another 83 POPSK in the country taking the total number of POPSK to 85. Out of these 85 POPSK, 12 are already operational.

(v) In order to speed up passport issuance, Walk-in facility has been allowed for certain categories of services/ citizens having Application Registration Number (ARN) to enable them to apply for Tatkaal services ; issue of Police Clearance Certificate (PCC) ; deletion of Emigration Check Required(ECR) status; inclusion of name of spouse in passport and new booklets where pages have been exhausted. Senior citizens (above 60 years); minors below 15 whose parents hold valid passports; differently-abled persons; central/state government servants and their spouse/dependent minor children, have also been permitted walk-in facility.

(vi) With a view to meet heavy and seasonal demand for passport services, Passport Melas are organized on weekends from time to time by Passport Offices.

(vii) Passport Seva Camps: In order to provide closer and speedier passport services to people located far away from PSKs, Passport Seva Camps are being organized at various locations in the country.

(viii) Passport Adalats, on need basis, are also conducted by Passport Offices to redress passport service grievances by dealing with citizens directly.

(ix) In order to further streamline, liberalize and ease the process of issue of passport, the Ministry of External Affairs has taken a number of steps in the realm of passport policy to ease the process of issue of passports. The details of these steps are given below whci have come into force from 26th December, 2016:-

A. Documents in support of proof of Date of Birth

As per the extant statutory provisions of the Passport Rules, 1980, all the applicants born on or after 26/01/1989, in order to get a passport, had to, hitherto, mandatorily submit the Birth Certificate as the proof of Date of Birth (DOB). It has now been decided that all applicants of passports can submit any one of the following documents as the proof of DOB while submitting the passport application:

â€¢ Birth Certificate (BC) issued by the Registrar of Births & Deaths or the Municipal Corporation or any other prescribed authority whosoever has been empowered under the Registration of Birth & Deaths Act, 1969 to register the birth of a child born in India;

â€¢ Transfer/School leaving/Matriculation Certificate issued by the school last attended/recognized educational board containing the DOB of the applicant;

â€¢ PAN Card issued by the Income Tax Department with the DOB of applicant;

â€¢ Aadhaar Card/E-Aadhaar having the DOB of applicant;

â€¢ Copy of the extract of the service record of the applicant (only in respect of Government servants) or the Pay Pension Order (in respect of retired Government Servants), duly attested/certified by the officer/in-charge of the Administration of the concerned Ministry/Department of the applicant, having his DOB;

â€¢ Driving license issued by the Transport Department of concerned State Government, having the DOB of applicant;

â€¢ Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC) issued by the Election Commission of India having the DOB of applicant;

â€¢ Policy Bond issued by the Public Life Insurance Corporations/Companies having the DOB of the holder of the insurance policy.

B. Other Changes:

â€¢ The online passport application form now requires the applicant to provide the name of father or mother or legal guardian, i.e., only one parent and not both. This would enable single parents to apply for passports for their children and to also issue passports where the name of either the father or the mother is not required to be printed at the request of the applicant.

â€¢ The total number of Annexes prescribed in the Passport Rule, 1980, has been reduced to 9 from the present 15. Annexes A, C, D, E, J, and K have been removed and certain Annexes have been merged.

â€¢ All the annexes that are required to be given by the applicants would be in the form of a self declaration on a plain paper. No attestation/swearing by/before any Notary/Executive Magistrate/First Class Judicial Magistrate would be henceforth necessary.

â€¢ Married applicants would not be required to provide the erstwhile Annexure K or any marriage certificate.

â€¢ The passport application form does not require the applicant to provide the name of her/his spouse in case of separated or

divorced persons. Such applicants for passports would not be required to provide even the Divorce Decree.

â€¢ In case of children not born out of wedlock, the applicant for the passport of such children should submit only extant Annexure C while submitting the passport application.

â€¢ In case of issue of passport to in-country domestically adopted children, submission of the registered adoption deed would no longer be required. In the absence of any deed to this effect, the passport applicant may give a declaration on a plain paper confirming the adoption.

â€¢ Government servants, who are not able to obtain the Identity Certificate (extant Annexure-A)/ No-Objection Certificate (extant Annexure-G) from their concerned employer and intend to get the passport on urgent basis can now get the passport by submitting a self-declaration in extant Annexure-'H' that he/she has given prior Intimation Letter to his/her employer informing that he/she was applying for an ordinary passport to a Passport Issuing Authority.

â€¢ Sadhus/ Sanyasis can apply for a passport with the name of their spiritual Guru mentioned in the passport application in lieu of their biological parent(s) name(s) subject to their providing of at least one public document such as Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC) issued by the Election Commission of India, PAN card, Aadhaar Card, etc wherein the name of the Guru has been recorded against the column(s) for parent(s) name(s).

(d) The online system and establishment of PSKs have facilitated better accountability, transparency and streamlining of passport service delivery. This has also helped in issuing error-free and more secure passports. The time taken in issuing passports has decreased since the introduction of online application system and opening of PSKs. During the period January-December 2016, 93% passports were issued within 14 days (excluding the time taken for police verification) compared to 91% during January-December 2015.