

Title : Reduction in fee for issuance of duplicate passports.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Before I call upon the next hon. Member to speak, I would request Shri E. Ahamed to make a statement.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, with your kind permission, I would like to make a *suo motu* statement.

In view of the recent floods in Maharashtra, the Government of India has decided to issue duplicate passports to those people whose passports have been damaged. Normally, in such cases, we issue a duplicate passport by charging Rs. 2,500/- and additional *tatkal* charges, if required. However, taking into consideration representations by Members of Parliament from Maharashtra as well as the request by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, as a special gesture, it has been decided to issue duplicate passport on a reduced payment of Rs. 500/- only. This facility will be available in respect of all such applications received till 30th September, 2005 in Regional Passport Offices in Mumbai and Thane in Maharashtra. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please include Punjab also.