

the Government to build colonies for the rehabilitation of the destitutes ?

**DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, our approach is to provide supplementary assistance to the destitutes in their old age within the precincts of the family, for which we have launched a scheme. Therefore, there is no need for separate colonies for them. We render assistance to voluntary organisations working for destitutes.

**SHRI ARVIND NETAM :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I agree with the contention that it is a State subject. I want to know from the Hon. Minister the number of States having no such scheme for destitutes ? Will the Central Government issue a directive to such States with a view to covering all States under this scheme ?

**DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI :** This scheme is being run in almost all the States, though the amount of assistance may be inadequate and the rate of pension may not be uniform in all the States.

**SHRI V. TULSIRAM :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Minister has stated just now that the amount of financial assistance being paid to destitutes ranges between Rs. 30 to Rs. 100 per month. It seems that Rs. 100 per month is being given only in a few States and so far as I know, it is Rs. 30 to 60 per month in most of the States. Mr. Speaker, Sir, how can an old person manage with Rs. 30 a month when a single day's meal costs Rs. 30 in a hotel ? How can an old man make his both ends meet with Rs. 30 per month ? He should be provided more financial assistance. Will the Central Government allocate more funds and issue directives to the States, which are not giving such assistance, to provide more financial assistance to the old ? Besides, I would like to know whether the Government has any other scheme for providing assistance to the destitutes so that they could make a proper living ?

**DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, in Andhra Pradesh also, Rs. 30 are being given.

**SHRI V. TULSIRAM :** The Government of Andhra Pradesh is giving Rs. 60.

**DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI :** The figures, which I have, show Rs. 30 in Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, it would be better if the Hon. Member takes up the matter with his own State Government first. So far as efforts made by the Central Government are concerned, the matter was not only raised before the Consultative Committee but the Central Government has also written to the States that it would be better if assistance to the old is increased to Rs. 150. But it will require an additional provision of Rs. 4500 crores. Therefore, Planning Commission had told that it would not be possible to provide such a huge amount in the mid of Seventh Five Year Plan. I agree that this amount is inadequate.

Delay in issue of passports

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\*837. **SHRI BALWANT SINGH**  
**RAMOOWALIA :**  
**SHRI RAM DHAN :**

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the period within which an applicant should get the passport as per guidelines laid down by Government;

(b) the actual period within which applicants get their passports issued;

(c) the factors which are responsible for causing delay in issuing passports; and

(d) the steps contemplated by Government to simplify the procedure and eliminate causes for delay ?

[English]

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) :** (a) and (b). Passports are required to be issued within 5 days of receipt of clear police report in the normal course. Accordingly the period

within which applicants get their passports is normally 6 weeks.

(c) Delay in issue of passports has been mainly due to delayed receipt of verification reports from the verifying authorities. Delays in some cases have also been due to incomplete information supplied by the applicants.

(d) A statement is given below.

#### Statement

The following steps have been taken by the Government to simplify the procedure and eliminate causes of delay :

- (i) Passport Officers to issue reminders to concerned verifying authorities in cases of delays beyond 6 weeks;
- (ii) Cases of delay beyond 3 months to be taken up with concerned State Governments through the Ministry of External Affairs;
- (iii) To improve the computer system with a view to expedite processing and to provide computerised status information to applicants at enquiry counters in computerised Passport Offices;
- (iv) To simplify the various passport application forms in consultation with concerned authorities;
- (v) To supply application forms to applicants at the counters within a reasonable time and by post within 2 days of receipt of request with Postal Orders for the cost of form plus self-addressed stamped envelope;
- (vi) To examine the supply of passport application forms through Post Offices in consultation with the Department of Post to which the latter have agreed in principle.
- (vii) To take prompt action on complaints regarding delay in issue of passports with computer-aided checks.

**SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOO-WALIA :** Sir, the Hon. Minister has himself admitted that delay in the issue of passports has been mainly due to delayed receipt of verification reports from the various verifying authorities. So, when it is clear that six weeks time is given for sending the verification from the concerned authorities, my question is if the verification did not reach within six weeks, should it not be deemed that the report is cleared? And already you have a one window system for exports and one window system regarding the co-operative activities and industrial activities. Why don't you go for one window system, a single window system, in passport system which will also make easy the verification of police reports, etc. ?

[*Translation*]

**MR. SPEAKER :** The Hon. Minister will have to come out with a proper reply as Shri Ramoowalia seems to be in his spirits today.

[*English*]

**SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH :** I appreciate the constructive and helpful suggestion that the Hon. Member has made. We will certainly look at what he has said about the one window system. With regard to the verification, as he knows, this is not done by the Ministry of External Affairs but by the other agencies of the Government of India. We want to minimise the delay because we don't want the applicants to be put to inconvenience in any manner. If the six week verification can be reduced, we would like to reduce it.

The Annual Conference of Passport Officers dealt with all these problems but it was felt for a variety of reasons—the Hon. Member comes from a particular part of India and he knows why—we have to make rather stringent regulations for verifications. But I will see, if it can be reduced, without giving any assurance to the House at the moment because I would like to consult the concerned department.

**SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOO-WALIA :** I am thankful to the Hon. Minis-

ter. While replying to my question the Minister gave some indication regarding a particular area of the country from where I come. I would like to ask another question. For the people of Punjab it is obligatory to get the police verification not only from the State of Punjab but from Haryana and Chandigarh also. Is it a justice? Is it a correct step? I would also like to have one information from the Hon. Minister. There is a very hot rumour that they are going to close the Jullundur passport office. Already RPO, Chandigarh is under heavy pressure because it has to look after Haryana and Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh has 6 districts of Punjab. So, my question is, why the applicant from Punjab has to seek verification from 3 States and why are you going to close down the Jullundur RPO Office?

**SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH :** I will answer the second part of his question first. No decision has been taken with regard to closing down the office at Jullundur. Following computerisation of passport offices, we have been trying to rationalise the whole system of passport offices and in some cases, we may reduce, offices to sub-passport offices. But for Jullundur no decision has been taken and I will certainly bear in mind what he has said. With regard to his first part of the question, as to why the police verification is necessary from Chandigarh, Punjab and Haryana, I would submit that he may address that to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :** I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether it is not a fact that just as delay in issuing passport is an irregularity, similarly undue haste shown in giving the passport to certain individuals is also another aberration? In particular, is it not a fact that according to the requirements of the Indian Passport Act, 1967 and so many other provisions it is necessary that those who are found to be guilty of evading courts summons, or those who are found to be guilty of FERA violations, or those who are involved in some corrupt practices they should not be given passports without any scrutiny and if necessary emergency travel certificates might be given to them? And if that is the provision, concretely shall I know whether in

the case of Mr. Win Chadha these violations were there and whether despite that the passport was given to him and even in issuing the passport there were a lot of deceptions? I would like to have a concrete answer.

**SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH :** The Hon. Member has stretched the scope of Shri Ramoowalia's question...

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :** Delay is positive, haste is negative delay. So, it comes under that.

**SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH :** I do not really have the details of this particular matter with me but if you like, we will certainly make it available to you.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :** You can give an answer to the first part, as to whether it is a fact that those who are guilty of FERA violations, evading summons of the courts and those who are involved in the scandals, they are not supposed to be given passports?

**SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH :** That is quite right.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :** Then what about Shri Win Chadha?

**SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH :** I do not have the information here. I could collect it and give it to you.

**SHRI A. CHARLES :** We can understand that there is a reasonable delay in issuing passport but in Kerala I am sorry to point out that the applications for passport are not even available in the offices, whereas the applications are available with every travel agent. People have to pay up to Rs. 500 for the purchase of application and they insist that these applications must be processed only through the travel agent. May I know from the Hon. Minister whether he will make an enquiry into these corrupt practices and whether he will ensure that applications are always made available in the concerned offices?

**SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH :** I was in Kerala two days ago and I sent for the Regional Passport Officer in Cochin because this was brought to my notice.

**SHRI A. CHARLES :** Applications are not available in Trivandrum for the last three weeks.

**SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH :** Let me complete. I was in Trivandrum also two days ago.

**SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY :** It is not a problem for you. It is a problem only for the common man.

**SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH :** Please listen to me Choubeyji. We were made aware of the non-availability of application forms. Now, I looked into it and it will be corrected forthwith.

**SHRI A. CHARLES :** But the forms are available in every travel agent's office.

**SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH :** I am aware of the difficulty that you have mentioned. That is why, I personally looked into it. It is an administrative hiccup and it is not a major calamity that has happened. We will see that it is put right.

**SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS :** Under the Indian Citizenship Act, certain High Courts have given ruling that the passport is an identity for a citizen. But unfortunately, the Ministry of External Affairs treats this as a very sacred document and feels that a common citizen is not entitled for it in the normal course. As Shri Ramoowalia has suggested, if a report does not come within a stipulated date, it should be deemed that the Government has no objection to make available to the citizen, one of his fundamental rights, namely, his identity card. If you look at it in this perspective, every citizen of India can have an identity card of his own in the form of a passport.

I would now like to draw your attention to the fact that many people are not getting jobs because of the delay that takes place

in the Regional Passport Offices in the issuance of passports. Recently, it came to our notice that in Kerala 30,000 applications are pending in the Regional Passport Office. Many of the applicants have lost their jobs because they are not in a position to get a passport and then go and join their jobs abroad. While we cannot provide jobs to them, they are denied the opportunity to seek job outside. With this perspective, I would like to know whether the very rigid procedure adopted in issuing the passports be diluted somewhat and more liberal procedure be adopted to issue passports to every citizen.

**SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH :** We want to assure that every citizen of India who has not flouted any of the rules and regulations and who has not got a criminal record is entitled to get a passport. There is a whole list of criteria, which he has to fulfil. We would like to issue passports to every citizen of India as soon as possible.

Now, with regard to the people going to West Asia, Gulf and the Middle East countries, I discussed this particular matter with the concerned authorities and the Government in Trivandrum two days ago. There is a species called middlemen and touts and we are trying to eliminate them. They exploit the illiterate people and promise them the gold of the world across the ocean. But when they arrive there, they find themselves in difficulties. These touts make money from innocent people and we want to eliminate this particular group

With regard to the delay in getting jobs, unless the application forms are found to be without a flaw, a passport cannot be issued. In a number of cases, necessary information is not available because these people happen to be illiterate and the touts take money from them and mislead them that a miracle is going to happen as soon as they arrive in the Gulf Countries. Also, as you yourself know, a large number of people have come back from the Gulf to Kerala and are facing unemployment even after they have been there. But I note the basic point that you made. We want to issue the passports as soon as possible and we will not delay it even for an hour if necessary. But certain

formalities with regard to security clearances given the conditions in India, have to be undertaken and one has to undergo these. You will appreciate this as a Member of Parliament.

**Purchase of Soviet reactors**

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\*841. SHRI KAMAL NATH :  
SHRI PRATAP BHANU  
SHARMA :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have since taken a final decision to purchase Soviet 1000 MW reactors;

(b) if so, the total number of reactors to be purchased and cost of the same;

(c) the places where these reactors are likely to be set up; and

(d) the time by which these will become operational ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL) : (a) to (c). A draft intergovernmental agreement on the technical, economic, cost and other aspects of the Soviet offer of two units of 1000 MW pressurised light water power reactors is under the consideration of Government. Government have yet to take a decision in the matter.

(d) The schedule of the project will be determined in the detailed project report which will be taken up after a decision is taken to go ahead with the project.

SHRI KAMAL NATH : India has been building heavy water reactors but it has not yet taken to designing pressurised water reactors. The pressurised water reactors are more efficient than the heavy water reactors.

Does this agreement envisage transfer of technology also because this will be re-

quired in future ? It will be a major achievement if we do have some kind of technology available for pressurised water reactors.

As I said we are building heavy water reactors. So, does this proposed agreement envisage only a purchase or does this also envisage transfer of technology ? What about the supply of enriched uranium ? Does this package also envisage supply of enriched uranium ?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : There are two routes. One route involves use of light water and enriched uranium. The second route involves using heavy water and natural uranium. This line will not be discontinued, This line will not be affected. In this area, the research, development and developing the reactor will continue.

As far as the first route is concerned, in which we use the light water enriched uranium, we are trying to get the big reactors capable of producing 1000 M.W. of electricity and to establish them here. That will help us to reduce the time frame within which the electricity can be generated.

As far as supply of enriched uranium is concerned, we are going to get it from U.S.S.R.

SHRI KAMAL NATH : The Minister had just talked about the urgency of all this. This was first initiated in 1979. As we all know, we are in 1988. Still it is hanging fire.

Recently a team consisting of the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission visited Moscow along with the Finance Secretary. Presumably one of the items in the Agenda was to finalise this.

Has this been finalised ? If not, why not and, if so, by when will it happen ?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : There were certain points which require discussions with the Soviet Union and the Soviet experts. Our team had gone there. Their team had come here. They discussed many aspects—