GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1823
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.03.2022

PROPOSAL TO ISSUE E-PASSPORTS

1823.   SHRI NARANBHAI J. RATHWA:

Will the Minister of **External Affairs** be pleased to state:

(a)   whether Government is considering a proposal to issue e-Passports which will be having a chip to store all data of passport holders;

(b)   if so, the complete details thereof;

(c)   the steps Government is contemplating to ensure that data collected for these e-Passports are encrypted for privacy and are secure and safe; and

(d)   by when these e-Passports are likely to be introduced in different parts of country?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]

(a) to (d)   Yes. The Government is planning to issue e-Passports to its citizens, starting in 2022-23. This will be a combined paper and electronic passport, with an embedded Radio Frequency Identification (RFID chip) and antenna embedded as an inlay in the back cover. The passport's critical information will be printed on its data page as well as stored in the chip. The characteristics of the document and the chip are specified in International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) document 9303.

The data of the citizens for e-Passport would be used for the specific purpose only, i.e. issuance of the passport and related services. There is no secondary use of the data, thereby safeguarding the privacy concerns. Further transaction processes are authenticated by digital certificates and are cryptographically signed, Once captured, the data is stored in a secured repository, i.e. industry standard database. Relevant database security related controls are performed round the clock by Security Operations Centre.

Sample e-Passports are currently being tested and the full-scale manufacture and issue will commence with the completion of the technical eco-system and infrastructure. The said facility would be made available in phases at all Passport Offices across India.

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