

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1511
ANSWERED ON- 12/02/2026

APPOINTMENT DELAYS FOR PASSPORT APPLICANTS

1511. DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) the reasons as to why passport applicants are facing long appointment delays despite digital reforms;
- (b) the reasons for slow processing of OCI, visa and consular services in several missions abroad;
- (c) the reasons as to why overseas Indians report inadequate assistance during emergencies and crises; and
- (d) the details of manners in which the Ministry is improving accountability in embassies with persistent service gaps?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) The average waiting time/ appointment cycle for passport services in the country is about 7 to 10 working days. Ministry has taken steps to address the high appointment cycle where they occur in any Passport Office(PO)/ Passport Seva Kendra (PSK)/ Post office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK). It includes opening of new PSK/POPSK, expansion of PSK/POPSK, shifting of PSK/POPSK at larger premises with increased scalability, conducting special drives in PSKs/POPSKs, etc.

In the year 2018, MEA launched the 'Apply anywhere in India' scheme under which a passport can be applied at any PSK/POPSK in India irrespective of jurisdiction of the selected Passport Office vis-à-vis the residential address of the applicant. Mobile Passport Van facility has been provided at all 37 Regional Passport Offices (RPOs), to increase the outreach of the RPO and provide passport service at remote locations/hilly areas/ village panchayats/ institutions/ Defence establishments, under the respective RPOs.

(b) The average time taken for issuance of paper/regular visas by Indian Missions/Posts abroad is about 7 working days after final submission of application along with all supporting documents, except in certain visa categories as per guidelines issued by Ministry of Home Affairs. For OCI, the time taken for issuance of OCI registration booklet is normally about 30 days from the date of verification of all the supporting documents by Indian Mission/Post abroad and acknowledgement of the application on the online system. OCI applications are processed as per guidelines issued by MHA. Most of the applications are processed within the prescribed timeline barring a few special cases requiring extra scrutiny.

(c & d) The Government has taken several steps on priority basis through its Missions/Posts to enhance consular services for Indian nationals abroad, through Indian Missions on priority basis. Grievances are responded through various channels like calls, walk-ins, e-mails, social media, 24x7 Helplines and Open Houses. Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSKs) have been set up at Dubai, Sharjah, Riyadh, Jeddah and Kuala Lumpur to provide assistance to Indian workers abroad. Shelter homes for distressed Indian nationals have also been set up at some Missions/Posts. Mission officials visit immigration offices and labour camps to address the

complaints of Indian workers. Financial assistance to distressed Indians, if necessary, is provided through the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF). During emergency or crisis situations, our Missions/Posts abroad pro-actively help distressed/stranded Indian nationals in terms of providing food, shelter, medicine and helping their return to India.

The Ministry has established mechanisms to monitor the performance of Missions/Posts to ensure that service gaps, if any, are addressed and consular services are delivered as per the stipulated time lines.
