

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 567
ANSWERED ON 23/07/2026

PASSPORT AND CONSULAR REFORMS

567 SHRI VINOD SHRIDHAR TAWDE

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has assessed the rise in first-time passport applicants from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities for education, employment, business and travel abroad;
- (b) the measures taken to improve passport and consular services through expansion of PSKs, POPSKs, e-passports and faster passport issuance and police verification;
- (c) whether additional facilitation, awareness, digital handholding and simplified compliance measures are proposed; and
- (d) the steps taken to strengthen grievance redressal through MADAD, CPGRAMS and citizen outreach for students, migrant workers and overseas travelers?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH]

(a) to (d) The Government has observed an increase in the demand for passport services across the country, including from applicants residing in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities for education, employment, business and travel abroad.

The Passport Seva Programme provides comprehensive digital platforms, including the Passport Seva Portal, Passport Seva Mobile App and centralized citizen service call centre available through toll free number, enabling applicants to access information, track application status and obtain responses to routine queries without visiting Regional Passport Offices. These digital initiatives have substantially reduced the need for physical visits for administrative enquiries while improving accessibility, convenience and service delivery.

To provide improved and smooth passport services to the citizens of the country, including the applicants residing in smaller towns, the Ministry has taken several steps. The upgraded Passport Programme Version 2.0 (PSP V2.0) was rolled out in all 37 Regional Passport Offices (RPOs) and their Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs) in the country in a phased manner and the pan-India roll out was completed on 26 May 2025. MEA has also taken several steps to expand the network of PSKs and POPSKs in underserved cities and to improve digital/online facilities for faster processing. MEA, in association with Department of Posts (DoP), decided in January 2017 to open Seva Kendras at the Head Post Offices (HPO)/Post Offices (PO) in the country called Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK) in each Lok Sabha Constituency (LSC) where there is no PSK or POPSK. Currently, 93 PSKs and 456 POPSKs are operational under 37 RPOs in the country. These steps have certainly reduced the average passport processing and issuance time. Police Verification has been an integral part of the Passport Issuance process. In January 2016, the Ministry

launched ***Passport Police Seva App*** (erstwhile *mPassport Police App*) for Android/iOS for use by State/UT police personnel tasked with conducting police verification, enabling them for an expeditious submission of PVR digitally directly from the Police Station itself. It is worthwhile to note that 25 States/UTs covering more than 9444 Police Stations across the country have already launched Passport Police Seva App. Moreover, a dedicated Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) in the PSP Division continuously monitors system performance and stability, while a 24×7 helpline provides round-the-clock support to users and resolves operational issues ensuring uninterrupted and efficient service delivery.

Further, Indian Missions/Posts render all possible consular assistance to the Indian nationals abroad, whenever required, including to students, migrant workers and overseas travelers. Indian nationals can contact the Indian Missions/Posts abroad via walk-ins, email, social media platforms, 24x7 emergency telephone numbers established by Missions/Posts abroad, grievance redressal portals like MADAD, CPGRAMS etc for prompt redressal of their grievances. Indian Missions and Posts also assist in providing legal aid wherever needed. Missions and Posts also maintain a local panel of lawyers where Indian community is in sizeable numbers. Indian nationals who are in distress in foreign countries are provided assistance under Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) set up in all Indian Missions/Posts abroad to meet any contingency expenditure incurred by them, on a means-tested basis. Besides, Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSKs) have been set up at Dubai, Sharjah, Riyadh, Jeddah and Kuala Lumpur to provide assistance to distressed Indian nationals abroad. Advisories are issued for Indian nationals from time to time, asking them to exercise due caution and remain vigilant. The Government remains vigilant to developments impacting the lives of Indian nationals abroad and takes all measures to safeguard their interests and welfare.
