

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.773
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.12.2017**

PASSPORT SERVER COMPLAINT

†773. SHRI HARINARAYAN RAJBHAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to State:

- (a) whether a large number of passport seekers/passport renewal aspirants are unable to use online mode as the server often remains down and the information process is complicated;**
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto and the reasons therefor;**
- (c) the efforts made by the Government to simplify the above process so that the citizens of the country can get their passports prepared easily; and**
- (d) the success achieved in this regard as a result of its efforts?**

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]**

(a) & (b) It would be incorrect to say that a large number of applicants seeking passport services are unable to use online mode as the server often goes down and the information process is complicated. Effective technical infrastructure is in place to ensure that the Passport Seva system is available for access at all times from any location. The Passport Portal (www.passportindia.gov.in) is accessible to anyone, anywhere and anytime. With a view to address the challenge of digital divide, especially in the rural hinterland, the Ministry in association with CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. (which is promoted by the Department of Electronics and IT), has facilitated online filing of passport applications, through the vast network of over 1.5 lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs) across rural hinterland. Under the Passport Seva Project, a robust information system has been created to offer a bouquet of online passport services as follows:

- (i) Comprehensive information relating to passport application procedure, requirement of supporting documents, applicable fees, location of Passport Offices, Passport Seva Kendras (PSK), Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK), police station jurisdiction, etc. is posted on the Portal to make it user-friendly. It is kept updated with Advisories/Notices and Press Releases relating to Passport**

services developments. Status of applications can be tracked through the Passport Portal.

- (ii) An e-mail based helpdesk facility and a 24x7 National Call Centre has been set up to provide requisite information to citizens.
- (iii) The Passport Seva system sends four free of cost SMS to applicants - (i) at the time of dispatch of passport, (ii) in 'returned undelivered' passport cases, (iii) rejection of request for counter delivery cases and (iv) clear Police Verification (PV) report in pre-PV PCC cases or review of PV and clearance by the Passport Issuing Authority (PIA). In addition, a premium optional SMS Service, on nominal payment basis, has been made available to enable citizens to receive alerts and updates regarding detailed progress of their passport applications and pending actions. The service can be availed from any mobile phone.
- (iv) mPassport Seva mobile app provides passport related information including PSK and POPSSK locator, applicable fees, mode of submission and tracking of passport application status on smart phones.
- (vi) For assistance, citizens can call toll-free helpline number 1800-258-1800.
- (vii) The Passport system has interface with the police for verification of personal particulars of applicants and with the India Post for tracking delivery of passports.

(c) The Ministry has expanded the outreach by opening 15 additional PSK since May 2014 to take the total number of PSK to 92 in the country. All the North Eastern States now have a PSK. One more PSK at Siliguri in West Bengal is scheduled to be inaugurated shortly. The Ministry of External Affairs and the Department of Posts have taken an innovative initiative and decided to open Passport Offices at Head Post Offices in the country to be known as 'Post Office Passport Seva Kendra' (POPSK). The Ministry has announced opening of 236 POPSK out of which 59 POPSK have become operational as on 15 December, 2017. The Ministry intends to complete the requisite formalities like preparation of sites, procurement of IT and non-IT equipment for setting up the remaining POPSK at the earliest. The passport rules have also been simplified to make it easier for the citizens to get passports.

(d) The online system and establishment of PSKs have facilitated better accountability, transparency and streamlining of passport service delivery. This has also helped in issuing error-free and more secure passports. The time taken in issuing passports has progressively decreased since the introduction of online application system, opening of PSK and POPSK and simplification of rules. The Passport Seva Project has won several

**awards and is seen as a model of people centric service,
innovation and Public Private Partnership.**
