

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 339
ANSWERED ON 11.08.2023

PASSPORT SERVICE CENTRES

***339. Shri Saumitra Khan:**
Ms. Debasree Chaudhuri:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Passport Service Centres opened in West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh during the last three years and the current year;
- (b) the details of funds sanctioned/allocated and utilized thereon during the said period;
- (c) the number of applications for passports pending in West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh at present along with the action taken by the Government to clear the pending passports in time;
- (d) whether the Government has any proposal to make changes in the passports currently being issued and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether any scheme is under consideration to provide fast Passport service to students, if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) whether the Government has any proposal for setting up of new passport office in the said States including Bankura district and Khargone and Barwani Parliamentary Constituencies, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR)

(a) to (f): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *339 REGARDING “PASSPORT SERVICE CENTRES” FOR ANSWER ON 11.08.2023

(a) to (f): It was decided in January 2017 to open Passport Kendra at the Head Post Offices (HPO)/Post Offices (PO) in the country called Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) in each Lok Sabha Constituency where there is no Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) or POPSK. This was executed through a partnership between the Ministry of External Affairs and the Department of Posts. As on date, 93 PSKs and 431 POPSKs have been set up in the country and are operational to cater to the needs of passport seekers.

In West Bengal, all Lok Sabha Constituencies, including Bankura Lok Sabha Constituency, have a PSK / POPSK. In Madhya Pradesh, 02 PSKs and 18 POPSKs are in operation to cater the need of passport seekers. The Ministry is in close consultation with the Department of Posts for setting up of a POPSK in Khargone Lok Sabha Constituency. One Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) at Seoni, Madhya Pradesh was opened in 2020.

Expenditure on Passport Service Centres is met from the budgetary grant of the Ministry of External Affairs and no separate funds are allocated for it.

The number of passport applications, which are currently in various stages of processing in West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh is 1714 and 1776, respectively. The government augmented more officials to deal with increasing demand and officials have also been working on Saturdays to process passport applications faster. In addition, files are granted remotely through cross granting officers as and when needed.

The Government is planning to issue e-Passports to its citizens, with advanced security features. An e-Passport is an upgradation and enhancement of the current passport booklet, with the addition of an embedded chip, which holds the personal data that is printed on the passport's data page. In case anyone tampers with the chip, the system shall be able to identify it, resulting in the failure of passport authentication. Sample e-Passports have already been tested and the full scale production and issuance will commence with the completion of the required technical ecosystem and infrastructure. e-Passport project will be rolled out in phases at all Passport Offices across India and later at Indian Missions/Posts abroad.

There is a provision for speedy issue of passports under “Tatkaal “ scheme, through which students are also issued with passports speedily.
