

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.*44
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.02.2022

CHIP BASED E-PASSPORTS

***44. SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN:**

SHRI RAVINDRA KUSHWAHA:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has any proposal to issue chip based e-Passports to its citizens and if so, the details including salient features and the benefits thereof along with the time by which it is likely to be introduced;
- (b) whether the Government has created any mechanism for data privacy and to ensure that data/records collected for e-passports are safe and secure in line with Puttuswamy Judgement of Honourable Supreme Court and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any international institutional arrangements are made to address issues of technical complications including transfer of existing visa citations and other aspects involved in migration of the passport system to digital platform and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the Government has started the trial run of the said e-passports, if so, the details thereof and if not, the time by which it is likely to be started?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR]

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

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF
STARRED QUESTION NO. 44 BY SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN AND SHRI
RAVINDRA KUSHWAHA, TO BE ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON
04.02.2022 REGARDING “CHIP BASED e-PASSPORTS”.**

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.

2. For the objective of issuing e-passport, the Ministry has entrusted National Informatics Centre (NIC) with the technical responsibilities. The e-passports will be produced by the India Security Press, Nashik, which has issued letters of intent for the procurement of 4.5 crore ICAO-compliant electronic chips along with its operating system. 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.

3. The main benefit of the e-passport is its enhanced ability to maintain the integrity of its data. This is expected to increase the level of confidence in the Indian passport. E-passports would also facilitate the ease of travel for Indian citizens, making their interface with immigration authorities much smoother. Since the ICAO has recommended its introduction by member countries, the introduction of e-passports would be in consonance with global best practices.

4. The current Passport Seva Project includes robust safeguards for data privacy, as well as adequate measures for data security. Passport data is used for the specific purpose for which it is obtained. The introduction of the e-passports does not envisage any deviation from this practice.

5. Transfer of existing visa citations will not be required in the case of e-passport as they will continue to have physical visa pages.
