GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.680
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.02.2022

FEES ON E-PASSPORTS

680.   SHRIMATI SAJDA AHMED:

SHRIMATI SUNITA DUGGAL:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

(a)   whether the Government is planning to introduce e-Passport for the existing and new applicants and if so, the details thereof ;

(b)   whether the said facility would be available at all the passport centres, if so, the details thereof;

(c)   whether the existing Passport holders will have to reapply for e-passports if so, the process thereof;

(d)   whether the Government has assessed the risk on sovereignty and security for the same, if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e)   whether the Government proposes to levy zero fees for passport services and if so, the details thereof ?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]

(a)   The Government is planning to issue e-Passports to its citizens, with advanced security features. An e-Passport is similar to the current Machine Readable Passport (MRP), with the addition of an electronic chip, which contains the personal information that is printed on the passport's data page.

The personal data of the applicant would be digitally signed and stored in the chip.

(b)   The said facility would be made available at all Passport Offices across India and Indian Missions/Posts abroad, in a phased manner.

(c)   The current Machine Readable Passports (MRPs) would continue to be valid for travel, even after the introduction of e-Passports. Once the

validity of the MRP expires, the applicant would be re-issued an e-passport on application. Hence, there would be a period when both MRPs and e-Passports would be in use till the validity of all MRPs expires.

(d)   The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), a specialized agency of the United Nations, which defines the standards for international travel documents, has recommended the introduction of e-Passports by member countries. Accordingly, a large number of countries have introduced e-Passports. In India too, it is planned to introduce e-Passports at the earliest.

        An effective data security mechanism already exists under the Passport Seva Project. The introduction of e-Passports does not envisage any deviation from established practice. Concerned Departments and institutions in India have had consultations to define the parameters for its introduction to Indian citizens with advanced security features and data sovereignty.

(e)   No.

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