

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO. 412

ANSWERED ON - 20/03/2026

PASSPORT SEVA KENDRAS

***412. SHRI MOHITE PATIL DHAIRYASHEEL RAJSINH**

SMT. SUPRIYA SULE

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the average processing time for passport applications at Regional Passport Offices across Maharashtra during 2024–25, in comparison with the national average along with the reasons for inter-office disparities, if any;

(b) whether the Government has assessed the high volume of passport applications from semi-urban and rural areas of Maharashtra and the objective criteria used for not establishing additional Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs) in such regions, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the data from MADAD grievance portal indicates recurring issues faced by migrant workers, students and overseas job-seekers

from Maharashtra, if so, the number, nature and disposal rate of grievances registered during the last two years;

(d) whether the Government has reviewed challenges faced by students from rural Maharashtra in documentation, police verification and appointment scheduling for overseas education, if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time-bound measures proposed to expand POPSK coverage and improve passport service delivery across underserved regions of Maharashtra?

ANSWER

THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

(DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid in the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) IN RESPECT OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.*412 REGARDING “Passport Seva Kendra” FOR ANSWERING ON 20.03.2026.

(a) Currently, 8 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and 41 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs) are operational under 3 Regional Passport Offices (RPOs) in the State of Maharashtra. The average processing time for passport applications (excluding Police verification time) under 3 RPOs in the State of Maharashtra during 2024-2025 is 14 working days for normal category passport and 3 working days for Tatkaal category passport. Further, the average processing time for passport applications (excluding Police verification time) across the country under 37 RPOs during 2024-2025 is 13 working days for normal category passport and 3 working days for Tatkaal category passport. There is no noticeable disparity in the processing time of passports between the National Average and the State of Maharashtra.

(b) Opening of new passport offices/ Centres depends on several factors including the demand and volume of applications in the region. Government of India has taken several steps to expand the network of PSKs and POPSKs in semi-urban, rural and underserved districts and tribal areas of Maharashtra. In January 2017, Ministry of External Affairs

(MEA) in association with Department of Posts (DoP) had decided to open Seva Kendras at the Head Post Offices (HPO)/Post Offices (PO) in the country, including in the State of Maharashtra, called Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK) in each Lok Sabha Constituency (LSC) where there is no PSK or POPSK. Under this initiative, out of 48 LSCs, 47 LSCs in Maharashtra are covered with either a PSK or a POPSK, except Dindori LSC. MEA is regularly following up with DoP for opening of a POPSK in the Dindori LSC. The process for establishment of POPSK at Manmad in Dindori LSC is in advanced stage.

(c) To address the challenges faced by Indian citizens abroad, the MADAD Portal was launched by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in February 2015. Over the years, the MADAD Portal has emerged as a key instrument for extending the assistance to Indian citizens abroad including migrant workers, students and overseas job seekers. The challenges and issues faced by Indian nationals *inter-alia* includes repatriation, transportation of mortal remains, salary/dues and employment-related disputes, Recruiting Agent/ fraudulent cases, imprisonment cases, whereabouts unknown, passport related issues, visa and immigration problems, academic difficulties, safety and security concerns and other emergency situations.

The data related to number of grievances registered and resolved through MADAD portal during the last two years (2024-2025) is as follows:

Year	Grievances	Brought forward	Total	Grievances
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	Received	from previous year	Grievances	Resolved
2024	5704	3663	9367	5467
2025	6158	3900	10058	6454

The MADAD portal does not support State-wise access to grievance data.

(d) & (e) To cater the challenges faced by students, including those from rural Maharashtra and to provide the smooth, speedy and efficient passport services, MEA has been working continuously to speed up passport issuance and meet high or seasonal demand for passports by taking various steps including increasing the number of daily appointments and *organising special drives on weekends*. Staff from Ministry and other passport offices are also being deployed to clear the pendency as part of the special drive. Also, walk-in appointments are given for RPO back office for expeditiously clearing pending files. Moreover, in June 2018, Ministry had launched the *'Apply anywhere in India'* scheme under which a passport can be applied at any PSK/POPSK in India. Also, MEA has been regularly deploying *Passport Mobile Van* under respective RPOs, including RPOs in Maharashtra, for on-site passport processing in rural, tribal, remote and underserved areas. The integration of Digilocker with the passport issuance system, which enables citizens to submit various documents required for Passport

Services through DigiLocker in a paperless mode is also benefitting the students. Further, mobile van camps have also been organised in various educational institutions in the state of Maharashtra.

The upgraded Passport Programme Version 2.0 (PSP V2.0) along with the chip-based e-Passport has already been 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, including in Maharashtra. New digital tools introduced under PSP V2.0 have significantly addressed the difficulties faced by the Passport applicants while applying for passport and improved the passport application and grievance-redressal experience by making the process faster, transparent and more user-friendly. Applicants benefit from chatbot and citizen centric service delivery system that guide them to the correct service page, provide information on required documents, appointment availability and nearest PSK/POPSK. Automated biometric matching strengthens security and accelerates decision-making during application processing. Real-time SMS/email alerts keep citizens informed at every stage of their application cycle. Further, the payment of application fees through digital mode including through Unified Payments Interface (UPI), online appointment facilities and feedback kiosks have brought significant improvement in delivery of passport services.
