

RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 12th August, 2010/21st Shravana, 1932 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, congratulations for completing three years.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Question No. 261.

Delay in issuance of Passports

*261. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that people are being made to wait for several months for getting passport;

(b) whether Government is also aware that in all large number of cases the applications are not traceable; and

(c) if so, the steps that are proposed to be taken to streamline the system to ensure that people get passport within the stipulated time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) to (c) A statement is placed on the Table of the house.

Statement

(a) to (c) Passports are issued as per the provisions of the Passports Act 1967 and the Passport Rules 1980 as amended from time to time. Prior to issue of a passport, in the normal course, the Passport Issuing Authority needs to establish the applicant's citizenship, identity and an absence of criminal record as mandated by the Passports Act. This requires verification which is carried out by the Police authorities. In view of this background, Government is aware that in a number of cases passports are not issued within the target of 30 days for fresh passports and 15 days for re-issue of passports.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

The instances of non-traceable applications in Passport Offices are few and far between and every effort is made to take remedial action.

The Government has embarked on the Passport Seva Project (PSP) to comprehensively transform the passport service delivery system so as to provide passport related services in a timely, transparent, more accessible, reliable manner in a comfortable environment. M/s Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) have been selected as the service provide for the front-end operations. This is a Mission – Mode Project under the e-governance plan of the Government of India. Its successful implementation will lead to a speedy delivery of all passports. The PSP has already been launched at four Centres in Karnataka and is on a trial run at Chandigarh.

DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that in a number of cases, passports are not issued within the target of 30 days for fresh passport and 15 days for re-issue of passport. If the citizens are not getting passports within the stipulated time and in some cases, it takes more than six months, what is the alternative available to the citizens? As a matter of fact, it is a right of the citizen to get a passport. What steps are being proposed by the Minister to ensure that the passports are issued invariably in time?

SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR: Sir, delay in the issuing of passport is because of many reasons. It is mainly due to the police verification not coming in time, incomplete forms, etc. We are trying very hard that they are given in the stipulated time, that is, 30 days and 15 days for *Tatkal*. Now, in the new scheme, passports are being outsourced to the TCS. It is mandatory for them to give it within three days, that is, after not counting the day they admitted and also after the police verification. The *Tatkal* ones will be given in one day. Taking all this into consideration, a new scheme has been set up. Four centres in Karnataka are operational and on in Chandigarh is going to be operational. I think this would help the people getting their passports in a cordial atmosphere and with quick delivery.

DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that the passport seva project has been implemented at four centres in Karnataka and is on a trial run at Chandigarh. I

would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether the project has been successful in the four centres in Karnataka. What is the success they achieved and by when it is likely to be implemented in Andhra Pradesh?

SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR: Sir, the project has been successful in four States. I will just give the list of the centres where it has already been done. About 53,935 applications have been processed in the new system and 25,135 passports have been dispatched from Bangalore and Chandigarh. These four States have met the obligation of 30 days in Triuchi, Cochin, Ahmedabad, Kozhikode and Surat. The pending ones are Delhi, Hyderabad, Patna Kolkata, Lucknow. At Chandigarh, it is going to start on a trial run. It is starting on the 20th August and after the mandatory three months trial period we will start it properly.

श्री अविनाश राय खन्ना : माननीय सभापति जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से कहना चाहता हूँ, यह ठीक है कि तत्काल में और ढंग से जल्दी पासपोर्ट मिलने लगे हैं, लेकिन जो एक बहुत बड़ी प्रॉब्लम, खास तौर से पंजाब में फेस की जा रही है, वह यह है कि जब लोग deport होते हैं, अपने पंजाब में वापस आते हैं और नये पासपोर्ट के लिए अप्लाई करते हैं, तो पासपोर्ट ऑफिसर वहां की एम्बेसी से एक deportation सर्टिफिकेट या इमरजेंसी सर्टिफिकेट मांगता है।

लेकिन दो-दो, तीन-तीन, चार-चार साल बीत जाने के बाद भी Embassy वह सर्टिफिकेट RPO को नहीं भेजती। सर, मेरा मंत्री जी से यह आग्रह है और मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि Embassy कोई time bound manner, 6 महीने, 7 महीने में information RPO को भेजे, क्या ऐसा कोई रूल बनाया जा सकता है?

SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR: Sir, the suggestion given by the hon. Member, Shri Avinash Khanna, is appreciated. मैं आपकी दरखास्त जरूर कृष्णा जी के पास पहुंचा दूंगी कि इनकी रिपोर्ट time-bound manner में आए।

श्री मोहम्मद अदीब : सर, इस साल हाजियों के लिए international passport compulsory किया गया है। 1.5 लाख से ज्यादा हाजी हज पर जाते हैं और उन्हें international passport की जरूरत है। वे हाजी ज्यादातर देहातों के, गांवों के लोग हैं, जो पढ़े-लिखे नहीं हैं। उनका नाम लिस्ट में भी आ गया है, लेकिन अभी तक उनको पासपोर्ट नहीं मिला है। उनके लिए सरकार क्या सुविधा कर रही है, ताकि हाजियों को हज पर जाने में पासपोर्ट की दिक्कत नहीं हो?

श्रीमती परनीत कौर : 2009 में सरुदी गवर्नमेंट ने यह रूल बनाया था कि सबको international passport पर जाना चाहिए। इसके लिए सबने normal passport course में apply किया है। तकरीबन सब तैयार हो चुके हैं। मेरे ख्याल में इनमें से 70 हजार पासपोर्ट उनकी Embassy में जाने के लिए तैयार हैं। इसके लिए काफी steps लिए गए हैं कि ये पासपोर्ट जल्द तैयार हों। Of these, there are special counters for submission of applications by Haj pilgrims; police authorities have been requested by passport offices to send police reports in respect of Haj pilgrims on priority; instructions have been issued to passport offices to give them on priority to those who submit Haj cover number and Haj Committee recommendation; time deadline for issue of passports to Haj pilgrims has been prescribed; normal passports, where police reports were received by 31st July, and short validity passports, where police reports were not received, are required to be issued by passport offices latest by 13th August; State Haj Committees were asked to provide lists of applicants who had not received the passports yet directly to passport offices with a copy to the Ministry; daily wage employees were allowed to be recruited in select passport offices to assist in issue of passports on time; nodal officers have been appointed in passport offices to handle Haj-related issues of passport and the Ministry has constantly monitored the progress of issue of passports to the Haj pilgrims.

DR. MANOHAR JOSHI: Sir, I am only suggesting to the hon. Minister a change in the passport rules of 1980.

Sir, a case happened in the city of Mumbai where a person came to me and requested for early issuance of passport. I told him that the passport can and must be issued to him as his mother was sick abroad. The mother, unfortunately, died but he did not get the passport even in a week's time. I would like to know whether in such cases priority would be given and necessary changes made in the rules.

SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR: Sir, what the hon. Member has said will certainly be looked into. I think, when there is a compassionate case, the officer concerned does normally take a view of helping him out.