

Agents operating in Passport Offices

†358. SHRI BALAVANT ALIAS BAL APTE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether large number of agents are operating in passport offices;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the numbers of complaint received against them so far;
- (c) whether agents are openly operating from outside the passport offices located in Delhi;
- (d) whether there is a policy to transfer the passport officers/employees; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) to (c) As per the legacy system for submission of passport application forms, travel agents have been authorized to submit applications on behalf of applicants in the Passport Offices subject to condition that they are recognized by International Air Transport Association (IATA) and are members of either the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) or Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI). These travel agents submit passport applications supported with proper authority letters and they are required to produce original documents of the applicants for verification.

Under the Passport Seva Project, there is limited role for travel agents which inter alia includes on-line filling up of passport applications and status enquiry of applications. The applicants have to come to Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) for submission of applications, finger prints and digitization of photograph. Wherever Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) has been opened, the submission of the applications by travel agents has been dispensed with. Presently out of 77 Passport Seva Kendras proposed to be opened all over India, 50 are already in operation and the remainder would be opened in the next two months.

(d) and (e) The Ministry has constituted a Transfer Board to consider transfers of employees working in the Central Passport Organization. The Transfer Board meets every year and takes decision on transfers keeping in view various factors viz. rotational policy, administrative exigencies, request of officials on medical grounds, educational reasons etc.

India's position in HDR

†359. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the reference

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.