

- (v) For the safety, security and welfare of Indian Domestic Service Workers (DSWs), the Government of India has signed Domestic Service Workers (DSWs) Agreement with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in January, 2014, on Labour Cooperation for Domestic Workers Recruitment.
- (vi) The on-line MADAD portal enables the emigrant workers and their family members to register their consular grievances online and track their redressal.
- (vii) Grievances related to Overseas Employment in notified ECR countries including gulf countries, can also be logged in directly by emigrants/ relatives or through the Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK) on e-Migrate portal. A multi-lingual 24x7 Helpline of PBSK is operational in New Delhi, which provides information, guidance and grievance redressal on all issues and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals.
- (viii) Missions in Gulf countries also conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where workers can seek redressal of their grievances.
- (ix) Missions in Gulf countries have also established 24x7 helplines and Toll Free help lines for the benefit of Indian workers to seek help.
- (x) Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK) have been set up at Dubai (UAE), Sharjah (UAE), Riyadh, Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), to provide guidance and counselling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers.
- (xi) Shelter Homes for distressed Indian nationals including women workers have been set up in Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.
- (xii) Labour and Manpower Cooperation MoUs/Agreements are already in place with the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries that provide the institutional framework to comprehensively discuss and review labour related issues.

Simplification of process for issuance of passports

†2572. SHRI NARAYAN RANE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken any steps to make the process of getting the passport simple and transparent and if so, the details thereof;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether Government is also making efforts to ensure that the process of issuing passport be made errorless so that no anti-social element could misuse it and if so, the steps taken in this regard;

(c) whether rackets of touts have been exposed who indulged in making passport on wrong addresses during the last three years; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken against the offenders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) Yes. The Ministry has eased the passport issuing process and has made it an online procedure including getting appointments for submission of documents for passports. Effective technical infrastructure is in place to ensure that the Passport Seva system is available for access at all times from any location. The Passport Portal (www.passportindia.gov.in) is accessible to anyone, anywhere and anytime. With a view to address the challenge of digital divide, especially in the rural hinterland, the Ministry in association with CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. (which is promoted by the Department of Electronics and IT), has facilitated online filing of passport applications, through the vast network of Common Service Centres (CSCs) across rural hinterland.

An applicant can now apply for a passport from anywhere in India. But Police verification would be conducted by the Police Station in whose jurisdiction the address mentioned in the form falls and the passport will also be dispatched at the same address.

mPassport Seva mobile app launched on 26.06.2018 enables to apply, pay and schedule appointments for passport services. This App is available in Android and iOS platforms. It also provides passport related information including Passport Kendra locator, applicable fees, mode of submission, and tracking of passport application status on smart phones. Citizens would not require access to only a computer and printer to apply for passport services.

Securing online appointments for submission of passport applications at Passport Kendras has been simplified. The current provision is allowing applicants to choose any appointment date from the earliest five available dates (working days) for scheduling/ rescheduling an appointment for passport related services. Earlier, the System used to offer only one available date to the applicant for seeking appointment for passport related services.

The Ministry has expanded the outreach by opening more Passport Kendras. At present there are 308 Passport Kendras operating in the country as against 77 in 2014.

The passport rules have also been simplified to make it easier for the citizens to get passports. Details are given in Statement (*See below*).

(b) The process of issuance of passports has been made foolproof under the new system which is capable of leaving no scope for misuse by anti-national elements. Before granting any passport, in-person appearance is mandatory avoiding chances of impersonation. Background check is carried out from the entire Passport database for duplication and criminality status. Capture of Biometric data and photograph on the spot also ensure issuance of the passport to the right person. Police Verification is carried out to check the criminality and citizenship of the applicant. All these measures and precautions available in the system have made the passport issuance process foolproof.

(c) and (d) Very few cases of such fake passports have come to the notice of the Ministry. In one such case, through Writ Petition WP (C) No. 1699/2015 filed as PIL before the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi, the attention of the Ministry of External Affairs was drawn to the issuance of five passports by the Passport Office in Delhi with non-existent addresses on the basis of incorrect police verification report. The passports were revoked by the Passport Office in Delhi in April 2016 following the due procedure.

The involvement of any racket, however, has not been identified in the recent past.

Statement

Details of Simplification of Passport Rules

In order to streamline, liberalize and ease the process of issue of passport, the Ministry of External Affairs has taken a number of steps in the realm of passport policy to ease the process of issue of passports. The details of these steps are given below:—

(A) Documents in support of proof of Date of Birth

As per the extant statutory provisions of the Passport Rules, 1980, all the applicants born on or after 26/01/1989, in order to get a passport, had to, hitherto, mandatorily submit the Birth Certificate as the proof of Date of Birth (DOB). It has now been decided that all applicants of passports can submit any one of the following documents as the proof of DOB while submitting the passport application:

- (i) Birth Certificate (BC) issued by the Registrar of Births and Deaths or the Municipal Corporation or any other prescribed authority whosoever has been empowered under the Registration of Birth and Deaths Act, 1969 to register the birth of a child born in India;

- (ii) Transfer/School leaving/Matriculation Certificate issued by the school last attended/recognized educational board containing the DOB of the applicant;
- (iii) PAN Card issued by the Income Tax Department with the DOB of applicant;
- (iv) Aadhaar Card/e-Aadhaar having the DOB of applicant;
- (v) Copy of the extract of the service record of the applicant (only in respect of Government servants) or the Pay Pension Order (in respect of retired Government Servants), duly attested/certified by the officer/in-charge of the Administration of the concerned Ministry/Department of the applicant, having his DOB;
- (vi) Driving license issued by the Transport Department of concerned State Government, having the DOB of applicant;
- (vii) Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) issued by the Election Commission of India having the DOB of applicant;
- (viii) Policy Bond issued by the Public Life Insurance Corporations/Companies having the DOB of the holder of the insurance policy.

(B) Other Changes:

- (i) The online passport application form now requires the applicant to provide the name of father or mother or legal guardian, *i.e.*, only one parent and not both. This would enable single parents to apply for passports for their children and to also issue passports where the name of either the father or the mother is not required to be printed at the request of the applicant.
- (ii) The total number of Annexes prescribed in the Passport Rule, 1980, has been reduced to 9 from the present 15. Annexes A, C, D, E, J, and K have been removed and certain Annexes have been merged.
- (iii) All the annexes that are required to be given by the applicants would be in the form of a self declaration on a plain paper. No attestation/swearing by/ before any Notary/Executive Magistrate/First Class Judicial Magistrate would be henceforth necessary.
- (iv) Married applicants would not be required to provide the erstwhile Annexure K or any marriage certificate.
- (v) The passport application form does not require the applicant to provide the name of her/his spouse in case of separated or divorced persons. Such applicants for passports would not be required to provide even the Divorce Decree.

- (vi) In case of children not born out of wedlock, the applicant for the passport of such children should submit only extant Annexure C while submitting the passport application.
- (vii) In case of issue of passport to in-country domestically adopted children, submission of the registered adoption deed would no longer be required. In the absence of any deed to this effect, the passport applicant may give a declaration on a plain paper confirming the adoption.
- (viii) Government servants, who are not able to obtain the Identity Certificate (extant Annexure-A)/No-Objection Certificate (extant Annexure-G) from their concerned employer and intend to get the passport on urgent basis can now get the passport by submitting a self-declaration in extant Annexure-‘H’ that he/she has given prior Intimation Letter to his/her employer informing that he/she was applying for an ordinary passport to a Passport Issuing Authority.
- (ix) Sadhus/Sanyasis can apply for a passport with the name of their spiritual Guru mentioned in the passport application in lieu of their biological parent(s) name(s) subject to their providing of at least one public document such as Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) issued by the Election Commission of India, PAN card, Aadhaar Card, etc wherein the name of the Guru has been recorded against the column(s) for parent(s) name(s).
- (x) Orphaned children who do not have any proof of DOB such as Birth Certificate or the Matriculation Certificate or the declaratory Court order, may now submit a declaration given by the Head of the Orphanage/Child Care Home on their official letter head of the organization confirming the DOB of the applicant.
- (xi) An applicant for a passport has to submit any one of the documents as mentioned in (A) above as proof of Date of Birth (DOB) while submitting the passport application.
- (xii) Passports can be now obtained under the ‘Tatkaal’ Scheme without providing the Verification Certificate from a Gazetted Officer, which was required earlier. The documents to be submitted for getting a passport under this Scheme have been notified *vide* G.S.R. 39(E) dated 18 January, 2018 and O.M. No. VI/401/1/4/2013 dated 23 March 2018 read with O.M. of even number dated 17 April 2018. Applicants may submit minimum three out of the following documents for obtaining passport:
 - (a) Aadhaar Card
 - (b) Electors Photo Identify Card (EPIC)

- (c) Service Photo Identity Card issued by State or Central Government, Public Sector Undertaking, local bodies or Public Limited Companies;
 - (d) Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes/Other Backward Class Certificate;
 - (e) Arms License;
 - (f) Pension Document such as Ex-servicemen's Pension Book or Pension Payment order, ex-servicemen's widow or dependent Certificate, Old Age Pension Order;
 - (g) Self-Passport (unrevoked and undamaged);
 - (h) Permanent Account Number (PAN) Card;
 - (i) Bank/Kisan/Post Office Passbook;
 - (j) Student Photo Identity Card issued by an Educational Institution;
 - (k) Driving License (valid and within the jurisdiction of State of submission of applicant);
 - (l) Birth Certificate issued under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act; and
 - (m) Ration Card
- (xiii) Now Passports can also be obtained under the Normal scheme on out-of-turn post-Police Verification basis without paying any additional fees on the submission of minimum three documents mentioned in para-xii.

Legal assistance to victims of frauds

†2573. SHRI NARAYAN RANE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of those foreign countries where the scheme of providing legal assistance to the victims of fraud from the Indian husbands is being implemented?

(b) the number of women benefitted from this scheme during the last three years, country-wise;

(c) whether Government proposes to extend this scheme to other countries also; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) to (d) Prior to September, 2017, the

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