

be Indian in their jails. In addition, there is the issue of 83 missing Indian defence personnel, whose custody has not been acknowledged by Pakistan, so far.

(b) The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (DADF) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has a non-plan scheme on Soft Loan Package for replacement of fishing vessels held captive in Pakistan. This scheme envisage one time replacement of a total of 326 fishing vessel held captive in Pakistan with a capital subsidy to the tune of 30% cost of each vessel subject to a ceiling of ₹ 6 lakhs. The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) has been designated as an implementing agency. In addition, DADF has been providing insurance coverage through Group Accident Insurance Scheme for active fishermen.

(c) The External Affairs Minister, in October 2017, suggested to the High Commissioner of Pakistan that the two sides could work together to resolve humanitarian issues related to elderly, women and mentally unsound prisoners in each other's custody and consider their early release and repatriation. It was, *inter alia*, proposed to revive the mechanism of Joint Judicial Committee and that a team of Indian medical experts could be allowed to visit the mentally unsound prisoners with a view to facilitate their nationality verification and subsequent repatriation. Pakistan responded positively on 7 March 2018, India has already shared the details of the medical experts team and the re-constituted Joint Judicial Committee with Pakistan with the request to organise their visit. Pakistan has not responded so far.

Government continues to pursue the matter of early release and repatriation of all Indian prisoners, including civilians, fishermen with boats, and missing Indian defence personnel who are believed to be in Pakistan's custody. Government's persistent efforts have succeeded in securing release of 1749 Indian prisoners, including 1725 fishermen along with 57 boats from Pakistan's custody since 2014. This include 179 Indian prisoners and fishermen who have been repatriated from Pakistan in 2018, so far. The Government has asked Pakistan to provide consular access as also early release and repatriation of the remaining Indian prisoners and fishermen along with their boats in Pakistan's custody.

Passport offices in Madhya Pradesh

†2421. SHRI AJAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of districts of Madhya Pradesh where passport offices are functioning along with the criteria for opening such offices;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether proposals for opening passport offices near Rewa and Shahdol are pending with Government; and

(c) if so, by when these passport offices would be opened, and if not proposed to open, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) to (c) There are 14 Passport Kendras functioning in the following districts of Madhya Pradesh:

Sl. No.	District	Place
1.	Balaghat	Balaghat
2.	Betul	Betul
3.	Bhopal	Bhopal
4.	Chhindwara	Chhindwara
5.	Damoh	Damoh
6.	Dewas	Dewas
7.	Gwalior	Gwalior
8.	Hoshangabad	Hoshangabad
9.	Indore	Indore
10.	Jabalpur	Jabalpur
11.	Ratlam	Ratlam
12.	Sagar	Sagar
13.	Satna	Satna
14.	Vidisha	Vidisha

The Ministry intends to complete the requisite formalities for setting up the remaining Passport Kendras in the following nine districts of Madhya Pradesh at the earliest:

Sl. No.	District	Place
1.	Chhatarpur	Chhatarpur
2.	Dhar	Dhar
3.	Rewa	Rewa

Sl. No.	District	Place
4.	Sehore	Sehore
5.	Shivni	Shivni
6.	Shivpuri	Shivpuri
7.	Sidhi	Sidhi
8.	Tikamgarh	Tikamgarh
9.	Ujjain	Ujjain

Opening of a Passport Kendra depends on various factors, including distance from the existing Passport Kendras. The opening of more Passport Kendras, including at Shahdol, is an on-going activity. The Passport Kendras are being set up in association with the Department of Posts in order to bring passport services closer to people residing in villages, remote and rural areas of the country.

Ban on Indian currency in Nepal

2422. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:

SHRI NEERAJ SHEKHAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government of Nepal has banned the Indian currency notes in Nepal recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Ministry of External Affairs has taken up the matter with Nepalese authorities;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the response of Nepal Government thereto; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) to (e) In 2015, the Reserve Bank of India issued a circular allowing individuals travelling from India to Nepal to carry Indian currency notes of ₹ 500 and ₹ 1,000 denominations upto a limit of ₹ 25,000. The Nepal Rastra Bank issued a similar circular to that effect. However, following Government of India's decision in November 2016 to demonetize Indian currency notes of ₹ 500 and ₹ 1,000