

Address by Minister of State for External Affairs on Passport Seva Divas 2020

June 24, 2020

Hon'ble External Affairs Minister of India, Shri S. Jaishankar Ji,

Secretary (CPV & OIA) Shri Sanjay Bhattacharyya Ji,

Additional Secretary (PSP) Shri Arun Chatterjee Ji,

Passport Officers who have joined in the virtual mode,

Namaskaram

Good afternoon to all of you,

It is my privilege to join you all today on the occasion of Passport Seva Divas. My greetings and best wishes to all of you on this occasion. As mentioned by Secretary (CPV & OIA), we expect to organize the traditional Passport Officers' Conference in future.

Colleagues,

In the last six years of our Government, the Ministry of External Affairs has taken several important steps in improving the passport delivery systems in the country under the dynamic leadership of our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. Under the able guidance of External Affairs Minister Dr. Jaishankar ji, the Passport Seva Programme has continued to take rapid strides and has become one of the largest and most acclaimed Mission Mode projects under the National e-Governance Plan of our Government. We will continue to serve the people following their guiding principles in delivering passports and passport related services to the citizens of our country.

The issuance of passports is one of the most successful citizen-centric activities of the Ministry of External Affairs. With globalization as well as improved living standards in the country, the number of Indian citizens travelling abroad for tourism, business, conferences, jobs, and education, has increased rapidly. As a result, over the years, we have seen a growth in the demand for passports. It is heartening that we issues more than 1 crore passports last year. I congratulate the collective efforts of all of you for the success story of the passport issuance system today. Without the dedication and support of the officials of the Central Passport Organization, it would not have been possible for the Ministry to deliver passport services in a seamless manner.

In order to take passport services to the doorsteps of the citizens of our country, we have partnered with the Department of Posts to set up Post Office Passport Seva Kendras in the country. We are grateful to the Department of Posts who have worked with us in this unique endeavor in setting-up 424 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras in the country. I had the privilege of inaugurating a Post Office Passport Seva Kendra at Nenmara in my home State, Kerala, in October last year. This effort of our Government has been appreciated by the citizens of our country. Together with the 93 Passport Seva Kendras, we now have 517 Passport Kendras in the country. We would be continuing with the programme of opening more Post Office Passport Seva Kendras in future. As a result of this outreach, the waiting time for getting an appointment has come down. We have also made considerable progress in integrating the passport issuing systems of our Missions and Posts abroad into the Passport Seva Project to help our Diaspora abroad.

Colleagues,

We have put in place a robust Grievance Redressal Mechanism, effectively using social media to connect with our citizens and further improving the delivery of our services. All Passport Offices are now receiving public grievances directly through the latest version of the CPGRAMS of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions I would like to re-emphasize the need to redress public grievances speedily. Our Passport Issuing Authorities must take steps for the resolution of all complaints received from the public in a time bound manner.

Our endeavor should be to further simplify rules and regulations for issue of passports. We must make the process simpler and optimize the requirement of documents for getting a passport.

I am happy to know that with the concerted efforts of the Ministry and the State police authorities, the time taken for police verification has come down steadily to 16 days resulting in faster issue of passports. This has become possible by the many initiatives that have been taken by the State Police Authorities especially those of Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Haryana and Kerala. I would urge all the Passport Officers to take up with their State Police Authorities to use our mPassport Police App, if they have not yet done so, as this can further reduce the time taken for police verification.

I congratulate the recipients of Passport Seva Puraskars this year for their outstanding performance and the contribution that they have made to good governance. I am convinced that these awards would encourage others to emulate them to further improve the passport issuance process.

I am confident that our Passport Issuing Authorities in India and abroad would continue to deliver passport and other related services in a comfortable environment with wider accessibility, transparency and reliability.

Thank you all.

New Delhi

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