



MESSAGE

It is a matter of great pleasure for me to felicitate all our Passport Issuing Authorities in India and abroad on the occasion of the Passport Seva Divas. The Ministry of External Affairs and its subordinate office- the Central Passport Organization- are celebrating as well as marking the Day with renewed commitment to provide better passport and other related services in a timely, assured, transparent and efficient manner.

The year 2017 will be remembered for the commendable growth of nearly 19% in passport and other related services. The monthly submission of applications crossed the one million mark for the first time. The Ministry took significant steps to build efficient passport delivery systems. Not only did the work of simplifying the Passport Rules continued with the same vigour but also we endeavoured and worked towards taking passport services closer to the doorsteps of our citizens.

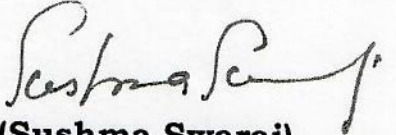
We have 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) today serving our populace. We strengthened our partnership with the Department of Posts to render passport related services by setting-up Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK) in the Head Post Offices and other Post Offices. We have announced so far the establishment of 289 POPSK in three phases - 86 in Phase-I, 165 in Phase-II and 38 in Phase-III to extend passport services to our citizens on a bigger scale and to ensure wider area coverage. It is matter of immense satisfaction that 81 POPSK identified in Phase-I, 130 POPSK identified in Phase-II and 2 POPSK identified in Phase-III have become functional. The Ministry is working closely with the Department of Posts for early operationalization of the remaining POPSK. More than 12,000 appointments are being released for passport applicants at these POPSK to enable them to complete the requisite formalities necessary prior to the issue of the passport. Our efforts have helped in reducing the distance required to travel by an applicant to get a passport.

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We have eased the process of getting a passport under the 'Tatkaal' Scheme by removing the requirement of submitting a Verification Certificate. We have made excellent use of 'Digital India' to provide a mobile platform for submission of passport applications. The process of Police Verification has been simplified and made citizen-friendly. We are working towards integrating our Embassies and Consulates into the Passport Seva Project. We are working towards providing an effective, transparent and accountable service delivery system in the years ahead.

I take this opportunity to request you to commit yourself towards the core principle of our Government: '*Saaf Niyat; Sahi Vikaas*'. Let us re-dedicate ourselves to work towards providing good governance and pledge to put in place more inclusive and robust mechanisms to achieve our objective of building a new India.


(Sushma Swaraj)