

**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, in association with the Central Passport Organization, is celebrating this occasion with renewed commitment to provide passport and passport-related services to the citizens in a timely, reliable, accessible, transparent and efficient manner.

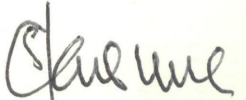
The year 2018 saw the continued growth in passport and passport-related services. More than 1.24 crore passports were issued in India and abroad. The mPassport Seva Mobile App for submission of passport applications and the scheme that allows to apply for passports from anywhere in the country, have contributed to this process. We have continued with the twin objectives of further simplifying the passport rules and expanding our outreach efforts to take passport services nearer to our citizens.

There are 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and 412 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs) functioning today, taking the total number of PSKs serving the Public to 505. We have been working closely with the Department of Posts in taking passport services closer to the people by setting-up new POPSKs in far flung places in the country. More than 18,500 appointments are being released daily at these POPSKs. The success of this initiative is borne by the fact that nearly 3 million passport applications have been processed at these POPSKs since they were set up in January 2017.

The process of Police Verification has been simplified and made citizen-friendly. With the concerted efforts of the Ministry of External Affairs and the State police authorities, the average time for police verification has come down to 19 days.

Further, the Ministry has successfully integrated the passport issuance systems in our Missions/Posts in Australia; Bahrain; Canada; Kuwait; Malaysia; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom and the United States of America into the Passport Seva Project. This is enabling us to deliver passport and related services to our diaspora abroad in a more efficient manner.

I take this opportunity to request all the Passport Issuing Authorities in India and abroad to commit themselves to the mantra of our Government: "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas", and to continue further enhancing the Performance, Transparency and Delivery of the governance system.

  
(S. Jaishankar)