

PUBLIC ADVISORY

Indian citizens living in India and abroad are advised to apply for urgent re-issuance of their passports in the following cases:-

(i). **HANDWRITTEN PASSPORTS**

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has set a deadline of the 24th November, 2015 for globally phasing out of all non-Machine Readable Passports (MRPs). From the 25th November, 2015 onwards, foreign Governments may deny Visa or entry to any person travelling on a non-Machine Readable Passport.

The Government of India has been issuing Machine Readable Passports since 2001. The Passports, however, issued before 2001 and particularly those issued during mid 1990s with a validity of 20 years will fall in the category of non-MRPs. All handwritten passports with pasted photographs are also considered non-MRPs.

By the end of November 2014, it is estimated that there are approximately 2.86 lakh handwritten passports in circulation. Approximately 6 crore Indian hold valid passports.

Indian citizens residing in India and abroad and holding such passports with validity beyond the 24th November, 2015 are advised to apply for re-issue of their passports well before the deadline in order to avoid any inconvenience in obtaining valid visa or international travel.

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(ii) **PASSPORTS VALID FOR LESS THAN SIX MONTHS**

Many international travellers may not realise that having an unexpired passport is sometimes not enough to obtain Visas or to enter certain foreign countries. **Indian citizens travelling on Passports which may expire in less than six months should renew their passports** before any upcoming international travel. It is especially important to check the passports needs of any minor who may be accompanying their parents as passports for minors have a shorter validity period (5 years) than passports for adults (10 years). The universal practice in vogue now is; **“Once your passport crosses the nine-year mark, it is time to get new passport”**.

(iii) **EXHAUSTION OF VISA PAGES**

Some countries do not accept passports which may have fewer than two pages remaining. **Please check your passport to ensure that you have enough visa pages. There is no provision of additional booklets/pages and you will be required to apply reissuance of passport following standard procedures. Frequent travellers may opt for Jumbo Passport containing 64 pages.**

2. All Passport Issuing Authorities have instituted a simple and fast-track procedure for renewal of passports. For more details related to passport services, website - www.passportindia.gov.in - or the National Call Centre **(1800-258-1800 - Toll Free)** may be accessed. Indian citizens living abroad should visit the website of respective Indian Mission/Post.
