Passport Fees 2026: One '67%' Headline, Nine Different Rises

Governance / Citizen Services | News context: Lok Sabha answer, 31 July 2026 | Published: 19 October 2026

Background and Context

The passport fee is bound by the Passports Act, 1967 and the Passport Rules, 1980 (Rule 8, Schedule IV); the provision for an application with fee is in Section 5(1) of the Act. Since 1971 the fee has been revised six times. The Passport Seva Programme (PSP) is a private-partnership model of service delivery, and the e-Passport is a chip-based booklet in line with ICAO standards - the answer counts both among the reasons costs have risen.

Why in the News

In the answer to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question 2208 (Shri Abhishek Banerjee) on 31 July 2026, Minister of State for External Affairs Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh stated: new rates took effect on 1 July 2026 under the Passport (Amendment) Rules, 2026 (G.S.R. 516(E)); the fee for an ordinary 36-page passport rose from Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,500; according to the answer, "the current increase in passport fees is 67%, after 14 years"; PSP Version 2.0 and the e-Passport were counted among the cost reasons. Annexure-I gives the new notification and Annexure-II a category-wise 2012-versus-2026 table.

One "67%" - but Each Category Has Its Own Rise

The answer's headline figure is 67%, which exactly matches Annexure-II's first row - ordinary 36-page fresh/reissue (Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,500) (our calculation: 66.7%). But the same table's other rows tell a different story: 60-page +75%, minor fresh +75%, lost/damaged 60-page +71.4%, minor lost +41.7%, PCC/surrender certificate +50% (all our calculations). And on the Certificate of Identity, Annexure-II enters "NA" in the revised column, while the new notification (Annexure-I) prints its rate as Rs 1,000 - both differences recorded as they are.

Key Facts and Figures

The historical series of revisions (as printed)	**The percentages printed in the answer: 67% in 1971 (in 4 years; G.S.R. 1783, 11.11.1971), 100% in 1980 (9 years; G.S.R. 691(E), 11.12.1980), 500% in 1993 (13 years; G.S.R. 503(E), 10.07.1993), 233% in 2002 (9 years; G.S.R. 235(E), 28.03.2002), 50% in 2012 (10 years; G.S.R. 731(E), 28.09.2012), and 67% in 2026 (14 years; G.S.R. 516(E)).**

The legal form of the 2026 amendment	The Passport (Amendment) Rules, 2026; G.S.R. 516(E); under Section 24 of the Act; Schedule IV substituted; effective 1 July 2026. The date printed on the notification is 20 June 2026, while the answer text writes "dated 25.06.2026" - both as printed; we make no correction.
New rates - Annexure-I (India, Rs)	Ordinary 36-page 2,500 / tatkaal 5,000; 60-page 3,500 / 6,000; lost-damaged 36-page 5,000 / 7,500; 60-page 6,000 / 8,500; minor fresh 1,750 / 4,250; minor lost 4,250 / 6,750; Emergency Certificate: India NA, abroad $15; Certificate of Identity Rs 1,000 (tatkaal NA); PCC/surrender/Global Entry verification Rs 750.
2012 versus 2026 - Annexure-II, our calculation	Row-wise rise (ordinary rate): row 1: 1,500 to 2,500 = +66.7%; row 2: 2,000 to 3,500 = +75%; row 3: 3,000 to 5,000 = +66.7%; row 4: 3,500 to 6,000 = +71.4%; row 5: 1,000 to 1,750 = +75%; row 6: 3,000 to 4,250 = +41.7%; row 9: 500 to 750 = +50%; row 7 (EC): both NA; row 8 (CoI): old Rs 1,000, revised column "NA" (Rs 1,000 in Annexure-I - the difference recorded as it is).
The tatkaal premium (our calculation)	In the 2012 table, tatkaal = ordinary + Rs 2,000 uniformly (all 6 passport rows: 1500+2000=3500 up to 3000+2000=5000); in 2026, tatkaal = ordinary + Rs 2,500 uniformly (2500+2500=5000 up to 4250+2500=6750). The premium went from 2,000 to 2,500 (+25%, our calculation).
The rules on concession and validity	Minors up to 8 years and senior citizens above 60 years get a 10% concession only on fresh applications (not re-issue). Category I(a) validity is a maximum of 10 years; I(b) is 5 years or up to the age of 18, whichever is earlier.

How Is the Fee Structure Built?

The legal chain: Section 24 of the Passports Act, 1967 -> rule-amendment notification (G.S.R.) -> substitution of Schedule IV -> the effective date (01.07.2026). The binding of application with fee is in Section 5(1) and Rule 8.

Cost components (listed in the answer, without amounts): passport booklet cost; data printing; service-provider payment; police-verification payment; postal department payment; courier; technical support; the ePassport project cost (including operation and maintenance with ICAO Public Key Directory verification); establishment and infrastructure expenditure.

From PSP V1.0 to V2.0 and the e-Passport: the service-provider payment "has increased" compared with Phase-I (no amount given); the India Security Press "substantially increased" the cost of the chip-based ePassport booklet (no unit cost given); personalization and the ePassport project's additional costs.

Reading the Figures Correctly

Whose figure is "67%": it matches only the ordinary 36-page fresh/reissue category (our calculation: 66.7%). In other categories the spread is 41.7% to 75%; on the CoI the difference between the two annexures (NA versus Rs 1,000) stands as it is. The answer itself does not give category-wise percentages.

The difference in dates: the answer text has the notification "dated 25.06.2026", the notification page has 20 June 2026 - both are printed; we record both, giving no reason. The effective date (01.07.2026) is the same in both places.

Tatkaal = an inclusive rate: the tatkaal column is the total rate including the ordinary fee (the column header prints "inclusive of normal fee"); the calculation of the premium (2,000 to 2,500) is ours.

Foreign rates in dollars: Annexure-I has $ rates (125/175/250/300; minor 90/215; EC $15; CoI $50; PCC $40); the 2012 $ rates are not in the answer, so a comparison of the foreign-rate rise is not possible from the source.

Which Conclusions Should Be Avoided?

No detail of a cost study available: part (a) asked about a cost study, a regulatory impact assessment and an affordability assessment; the answer stopped at "comprehensive review of the cost" - whether any study happened is not made clear by the source.

No per-application amount: part (d) asked for the per-application payment under PSP Phase-II; the answer gives only the direction of the rise, not the amount - measuring the difference from Phase-I is impossible from the source.

No chip unit cost: part (e) asked for the e-Passport chip's unit cost and contribution to the fee; the answer is limited to "substantially increased" - the chip's share of the revision cannot be drawn from the source.

"Everyone's fee rose 67%" is a wrong reading: the category-wise rise runs from 41.7% to 75% (our calculation); 50% on PCC, and the mutual difference between the annexures on CoI - treating a single percentage as universal would go against the source.

Way Forward

Our policy suggestion is that with a fee revision, the substance of the cost review should be made public: component-wise cost amounts, the service provider's per-application payment (a Phase-I/II comparison), and the chip booklet's unit cost stated separately. A

combined statement of the category-wise average should accompany the headline percentage, so that a single figure like "67%" does not hide category differences. And a reference to affordability - such as a comparison with the minimum wage or per-capita income - should be part of future revisions.

Distinctions Within the Concept

Ordinary is not tatkaal (the tatkaal rate includes the ordinary fee); fresh is not re-issue (the 10% concession is only on fresh); documents like EC/CoI/PCC are not passports; the notification date is not the effective date; the answer's "67%" is not every category's rise.

Mains Perspective

GS-II: the meeting point of citizen-centred service delivery, governmental fee policy and transparency. Keep all three in the answer - the mechanism (Sections 24/5(1), Schedule IV, the G.S.R. series), the figures (category-wise 41.7-75%, the tatkaal premium of Rs 2,500, the concession rules, the $ rates) and the limits (the absence of the cost study, the per-application amount and the chip cost).

UPSC CSE Mains Style: Original Practice Question

Balancing cost recovery in service delivery with citizen affordability, critically examine the passport fee revision of 2026.

(Answer in 150 words) | 10 marks

Answer Outline

Introduction: The legal framework of the fee revision.

Main Body: The category-wise picture of 2012-2026; the correct meaning of "67%"; the cost components and the lack of transparency; suggestions.

Conclusion: Assess the balance between cost recovery and citizen affordability through category-wise fees and transparency in the cost review. Do not apply a single "67%" to every category or make definite claims about unavailable details of studies.

Source

- Lok Sabha Unstarred Question 2208, answer of 31.07.2026 (ten pages; the notification and two annexures included)

The figures are from the Lok Sabha answer of 31 July 2026 and its two annexures. All 9 rows of Annexure-II's 2012-to-2026 rates were read row by row; the percentage rise and the tatkaal premium are our calculations; the answer's "67%" matches row 1. In Annexure-II row 8 (CoI) the revised column is "NA" versus Rs 1,000 in Annexure-I; the answer text's date "25.06.2026" versus 20 June 2026 on the notification page - both differences recorded as they are.

Also read: AI avatars in consular services: easy information, clear accountability (Hindi).

Remember: The answer's single figure of "67% after 14 years" is only the story of the most common category; Annexure-II shows nine rows of different rises, and precisely on the three questions where real transparency lay (the cost study, the service-provider amount, the chip cost), the answer stops at general sentences.