Orange Passports and LOTUS mark on PASSPORT

Ministry of External Affairs has decided to offer orange coloured passport to the travellers who require an emigration check. By this ECR status would be issued a passport with an orange-coloured, non-ECR status will continue to get blue passports.

ECR status

As per the Emigration Act, 1983, certain categories of Indian passport holders require obtaining an ‘Emigration Clearance’ for going to certain countries.

Emigration, as per the Act, means the leaving of India by any Indian citizen with the intent of taking up employment in certain foreign countries. Persons who don’t have a minimum educational qualification of 10th standard (SSC, Matriculation) will come under ECR category. The idea behind the ‘ECR’ is to ensure the safety of uneducated and unskilled Indian citizens, from the most deprived socio-economic strata, against prevailing legal conditions in certain foreign countries.

Types of passports issued in India

- **Regular Passport** - This has a navy blue cover; it is issued to citizens for ordinary travel like vacations and business trips.
- **Diplomatic Passport** - This has a maroon cover; it is issued to Indian diplomats, top-ranking government officials (joint secretary and above) and diplomatic couriers.
- **Official Passport** - This has a white cover; it is issued to individuals representing the Indian government on official business.

Recent news: The *symbol of lotus* being printed on the Indian Passport for the security feature.

Key data’s:

A day after opposition members in Lok Sabha raised the issue of lotus being printed on new the ministry of external affairs said it was part of the enhanced security features to identify fake passports. Also mentioned that, the other national symbol such as national flower or national animal, also be used for the security features in rotational basis. The question was asked in the Zero hour of the Parliamentary session.

The new passports with lotus symbol being distributed in the Kozhikode in Kerala. These *security features have been introduced as part of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) guidelines*. Indian citizens who is the bearer of Indian Passport can travel internationally and serves as proof of Indian citizenship as per the *Passports Act (1967)*.