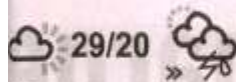


Palakkad Yesterday

Palakkad Today

Palakkad Tomorrow



Mainly cloudy sky on a comfortable day. Light storm with a few spells of rain is expected at night. High 29 °C low 20 °C. RH max 87%.



Partly cloudy sky on a cheerful day. Thundery development is possible towards the evening/night. High 29 °C low 20 °C. RH max 90%.

Read RH as Relative Humidity

SKYMET

REGION

HINDU - 5 JAN 08

Get passport information on mobile

Facility for applicants of Malappuram, Palakkad soon; voice response system to follow

Staff Reporter

MALAPPURAM: Passport applicants of Malappuram and Palakkad districts will soon get information about their passports through mobile short messaging service (SMS). Union Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed said here on Friday that facility to make passport inquiries through SMS would soon be set up at Malappuram Passport Office.

He was inaugurating a touch-screen information kiosk set up at Malappuram Passport Office with the help of State Bank of India. The kiosk will provide all passport-related information, including the status of one's passport application.

Mr. Ahamed said SMS service would be a part of modernising Malappuram Passport Office. The SMS facility was first set up at Lucknow a couple of weeks ago. Malappuram will be the second passport office in the country to introduce that facility, he said.

SMS facility will be followed by interactive voice response system (IVRS), which will be active in a couple of months.

The Union Minister praised Passport Officer M. Muraleedharan for expedit-



AT YOUR FINGERTIPS: Union Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed inaugurating a touchscreen information kiosk at the Malappuram Passport Office on Friday.

ing issue of passport by clearing the backlog and reducing pendency of applications. In the four months after the Passport Office opened on August 28, 2006, the office got 42,000 applications, out of which 21,000 were issued in that year. In 2007, the

Passport Office got 1.40 lakh applications, but issued 1.56 lakh passports, clearing the previous year's backlog.

Laudable feat

Mr. Ahamed said all applications, which received police clearance, were issued pass-

ports by the Office. He said it was a remarkable achievement especially when other passport offices were taking many weeks, even months, to issue passports.

He said about 6,000 passport applications were awaiting police verification. Now,

Malappuram Passport Office is issuing 650 passports a day on an average against as many applications. Passport Officer M. Muraleedharan welcomed the gathering. State Bank of India assistant general manager S. Srinivasan Raghavan offered felicitations.