

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
FINANCE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1498
ANSWERED ON:16.07.2004
COMPLAINTS AGAINST CUSTOM OFFICIALS
Athawale Shri Ramdas

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the complaints received especially from foreign diplomats against the custom officers posted at domestic/international airports in New Delhi during the last three years, till date;
- (b) whether the Government are aware that these officers harrass especially the foreign citizens/diplomats; and
- (c) if so, the action taken against guilty officers with the corrective steps taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM)

(a): No customs officers are posted at the domestic airport in Delhi. However, at the international airport, two complaints against the officers of customs were received during the period 2001-2002 to 2003-2004.

The first complaint was made by Mr. Paul Steinmetz, Ambassador of Luxembourg to India in April, 2003 regarding the long queue at the airport and the improper behaviour of a lady Supervisor at the time of departure. On detailed enquiry, it was ascertained that long queues are not seen before the Customs counters since customs checks of passengers in the departure hall had been discontinued. It was also ascertained that no lady officer of Customs was posted in the Departure hall on the said date. It was later clarified to the Ambassador that the complaint did not relate to Customs.

The second complaint was lodged by the spouse of the First Counsellor of the European Commission at the Police Station, I.G.I. Airport, in June 2003, regarding examination of her baggage and personal search. It has been ascertained that her baggage was kept aside by airlines for further checks by Customs. The passenger had crossed the customs counter without presenting the boarding pass to Customs, and was therefore recalled to have her baggage checked in her presence, as is the practice. However, when it was clarified that she was the spouse of a diplomat, she was allowed to proceed without any checks. No further specific complaint was lodged by her regarding any harassment or checks by Customs.

(b): Enquiry conducted by Customs have revealed that the said two complaints were not made specifically against Customs officers and hence, no harassment of foreign citizens/diplomats can be attributed to Customs. The diplomats or their family members or any person enjoying diplomatic status are not subjected to checks by Customs.

(c): Not applicable in view of (a) and (b) above.