

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2728
ANSWERED ON:10.05.2006
HOUSES RENTED BY MISSIONS ABROAD
Khanna Shri Avinash Rai

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has framed any criteria for taking houses on rent in foreign countries;
- (b) if so, the country-wise details thereof;
- (c) whether any discrepancy has been found in renting these houses;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether any action has been taken against the officers found guilty in this regard;
- (f) if so, the details thereof; and
- (g) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA)

(a)&(b) Yes, Sir. Entitlement to accommodation for different levels of officers posted to Indian Missions/Posts abroad is governed by Indian Foreign Service (Pay, Leave and Compensatory Allowance) Rules - IFS (PLCA) Rules, in terms of size and furnishing. The Heads of Mission/Post have delegated powers to hire residential properties within the limits prescribed under the delegation of Financial Powers of Government of India's Representatives Abroad. Any property beyond the delegated financial powers or entitlement in terms of size has to be approved by the Ministry of External Affairs. The Missions/Posts also require specific approval of the Ministry for hiring any property for use as Chancery or as Embassy Residence.

(c)&(d) The proposals for renting beyond the delegated powers are examined in the Ministry taking into account the prescribed norms; functional requirements; security situation; and the prevailing rentals in the local markets. After careful examination of all the relevant parameters and factors, the Ministry fixes individual rentals or rental ceilings for different levels of officers for a particular Mission/Post abroad. Only under exceptional and rare circumstances requiring urgent action, the Missions/Posts hire property in anticipation of such approvals keeping in mind the overall interest of Government of India. However, in all such exceptional cases, an ex-post-facto approval of the Ministry has to be obtained. These decisions are also scrutinized by the audit from time to time and anomalies, if any, are pointed out. In fact, a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on Property Management by Ministry of External Affairs for the year ending March 2004 has pointed out five Missions/Posts where rentals were fixed in excess of the prescribed ceilings, and in one case they have pointed out payment of agency charges without Ministry's approval. These cases have arisen largely due to difference in interpretation of the applicable norms. Action is under way for settling these audit observations. The Ministry has also issued necessary clarifications with a view to obviating the re-occurrence of such instances.

(e) Not applicable.

(f)&(g) Does not arise.