

## CHAPTER XXII : MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, CULTURE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

### 22.1 Blocking of funds

**Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation allotted land to autonomous bodies/attached offices of the Ministries of Home Affairs, Culture and Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution in 2001 for construction of office buildings. In 2004, it was decided that part of the financial requirements for construction of the building may be met from the provisions for Integrated General Pool Office Complex and the cost of land paid earlier would be adjusted against the construction cost. Failure of the user departments to seek adjustment of amount paid for the cost of land even after the buildings were made functional led to blocking of ₹ 1.24 crore for more than 12 years.**

The Central Public Works Department (CPWD) of the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation (MoUD) planned to construct an integrated office complex on a plot measuring 7.64 acres at, New Delhi<sup>1</sup>. The complex was to consist of six interlinked multi-storeyed blocks. MOUD allotted (2001) the land for three blocks in the complex to various autonomous bodies/attached offices, namely (i) National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), M/o Home Affairs, (ii) Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), M/o Culture and (iii) National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), M/o Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution. The details are given below:

Sl. No.	Particulars	NHRC	ASI	NCDRC
1.	Measurement of land	9467.92 sq. m	8385.23 sq. m	4936.80 sq. m
2.	Cost of the land paid	₹ 51.48 lakh	₹ 45.59 lakh	₹ 26.84 lakh
3.	Date of allotment	27.4.2001 and 19.12.2002	21.12.2001	14.8.2001
4.	Date of payment to MoUD	15.01.2002 and 02.01.2003	17.09.2002	09.11.2001

As per the terms of allotment, the allottees (user departments) were required to construct their buildings within a period of two years from the date of the possession of the land.

As the user departments did not have adequate plan provisions to undertake the construction project, MoUD in July 2003 decided that part of the financial

<sup>1</sup> INA, near Vikas Sadan, New Delhi.

requirement may be met from the provisions for Integrated General Pool Office Complex (GPOA) operated by MoUD. Subsequently, the MoUD informed (March 2004) that the possession of land given on paper, without demarcation of site, may be treated as cancelled as the allotment would be for an 'envelope' and not the land since this would be on integrated office complex at INA. It was further clarified that the amount paid towards the cost of land by the user departments would be adjusted against the cost of the construction.

Accordingly, CPWD finalised the estimated cost of five blocks<sup>2</sup> of the Integrated GPOA at a cost of ₹ 83.67 crore which was approved by MoUD in February 2005.

The cost of integrated GPOA was further revised to ₹ 135.03 crore<sup>3</sup> by MoUD in January 2008. The break-up of the cost of construction was as follows:

**(₹ in crore)**

Sl. No.	Particulars	NHRC	ASI	NCDRC
1.	Proportionate cost of construction <sup>4</sup>	32.90	29.65	19.91
2.	Date of payment by concerned department	August 2003 to April 2011	January 2009 to June 2010	June 2008 to August 2009
3.	Date of building put to use	September 2013	February 2014	August 2011

Audit observed that the matter relating to the adjustment of cost of land already deposited by individual autonomous bodies/user departments was not taken up by them with MoUD even after the buildings were made functional.

After the issue was raised in Audit, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs directed NCDRC (July 2014) to pursue the matter with MoUD for adjustment of amount paid towards the cost of land. Subsequently, ₹ 26.84 lakh was refunded by the MoUD to NCDRC in June 2015. NHRC stated (December 2015) that the matter had been taken up with MoUD which advised that the matter was under process and on receipt of Utilisation Certificate from CPWD, the amount would be refunded. ASI stated (November 2015) that MoUD had been requested in November 2015 to refund the entire amount deposited towards the cost of land.

<sup>2</sup> One block of the complex was already constructed and occupied by CVC

<sup>3</sup> The escalation in cost was attributable to delay in getting approval from Local Bodies, change in design of building etc.

<sup>4</sup> The remaining ₹ 52.57 crore was charged to Urban Development under the head GPOA

Thus, it would be evident that the autonomous bodies/user departments failed to exercise adequate oversight in the matter leading to blocking of ₹ 1.24 crore for more than 12 years.

## **22.2 Fraudulent reimbursement of Leave Travel Concession claims**

**Employees of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Culture had submitted incorrect air tickets to claim inflated air fares against their Leave Travel Concessions, leading to irregular excess payment of ₹ 14.32 lakh in 45 cases**

Rule 21 of General Financial Rules (GFR), 2005 stipulates that every officer incurring or authorizing from public moneys should be guided by high standards of financial propriety and should enforce financial order and strict economy. It also states that the amount of allowances granted to meet expenditure should be so regulated that allowances are not on the whole a source of profit to the recipients.

As per Office Memorandum (OM) dated 18 June 2010 issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India, all government employees may visit Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) against conversion of Home Town Leave Travel Concession. Further, GOI allowed (OMs Dated 05 August 2010, 25 August 2011 and 15 June 2012) employees to avail the services of private airlines for travel to J&K but stipulated that the tickets were purchased either directly from the airlines or through authorized agents only viz. M/s Balmer Lawrie & Company, M/s Ashok Travels & Tours Limited and Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation.

Test check of LTC Bills disclosed that 44 officers/officials of Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Culture performed air journeys to J&K by availing relaxation provided by the government to travel by private airlines. The journeys were undertaken through three private airlines namely Indigo, Spicejet and Go-Air. Further, one official of Ministry of Culture had performed air journey to Andaman and Nicobar Island through Air India. We carried out a test check of reimbursement of LTC claims for 2013-14 and 2014-15 of these officers/officials in the Ministries by comparing the details available on the website of the airlines and found that the bills furnished with the claims were not correct. Audit observed that Air tickets submitted by these officers/officials were not in conformity with those issued by the Air Lines and the fares claimed by the employees were higher than the amount actually paid to these Air Lines, which resulted in irregular excess payment of ₹ 14.32 lakh.

On it being pointed out, the Ministry of Home Affairs accepted the facts and stated (December 2015) that the details worked out by audit were confirmed from the Indigo and Spice Jet airlines and were found identical<sup>5</sup>. It further added that a two-member Committee had been constituted to examine the matter. The reply of Ministry of Culture was awaited.

The reply of MHA confirms the audit findings. It is recommended that the matter may be investigated and appropriate action taken.

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<sup>5</sup> Confirmation from Go Air was awaited