

Central Information Commission

Minutes of the weekly meeting of the Commission held on 01/05/07

Present:

1. Shri Wajahat Habibullah, Chief Information Commissioner
2. Smt. Padma Balasubramanian, Information Commissioner
3. Dr. O.P. Kejariwal, Information Commissioner
4. Shri A.N. Tiwari, Information Commissioner

Secretary, and both the Joint Secretaries and Under Secretary Sh. D.C. Singh attended the meeting.

1. The Commission approved the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 24/4/07.
2. Compliance of the minutes of the meeting held on 10/4/07 were taken up. Compliance on all other items had been done except for item no. 6(a) i.e. Para 6(a) was:

“ 6. Outcome of the meeting of Ms. Medha Patkar & others with the CIC

- a) *Regarding this point the Commission decided that JS(S) would study the approaches by different Commissioners regarding procedure adopted in the matter of issuing show cause notices and imposing penalties and put up a note to discuss in the next weekly meeting.”*

JS(S) was asked to put up compliance at the next meeting.

Regarding compliance of 5(a), there was rethinking and the Commission decided that the proposed meeting with PIO's and AA's on 12th June should be deferred. The Commission should decide an agenda for the meeting along with concrete examples. Thereafter, a strategy should be worked out for holding the meeting or meetings so that there can be interaction between the Commission and the PIO's with minimum of dislocation of PIO's.

3. There was only one item on the agenda i.e. “Empowerment of Appellate Authorities”. The proposal was discussed at length. It was generally felt that empowering Appellate Authorities would help in ensuring fewer 2nd appeals to the CIC. Hence, the following decisions were taken:-
 - a) Empowerment of Appellate Authorities can be included as part of the proposed Rules being framed.

- b) A letter be sent to all Appellate Authorities bringing out the points raised in the agenda item by either the CIC or by the Secretary. JS(N), JS(S) and Secretary may discuss the issue and put up a draft for approval of CIC.
- c) Ministries of Govt. of India may be requested to appoint Appellate Authorities of an appropriate level. The system worked better where the Appellate Authority is fairly senior compared to the CPIO.
- d) Public policy institutes may be identified for a time bound training of Appellate Authorities and DoPT may be requested to make this training compulsory for them.

Thereafter, the functioning of the Legal Cell was reviewed. It was found that the Legal Cell needs streamlining. The Commission decided that some top of the line law firms may be contacted who would be interested in the RTI area. The legal cell could refer matters to such law firms. Mr. Singhi should function as a co-coordinator in obtaining legal advice. As the workload is increasing, the legal cell is unable to dispose of the matters speedily. JS(S) should put up a proposal for discussion in the weekly meeting of the Commission.