

Construction of buildings in foreign countries

417. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have signed up contracts for constructing buildings in foreign countries on the plots it had leased more than a decade ago;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) by when the construction of these buildings is likely to be completed and by when they are likely to be occupied;

(d) whether Government have fixed responsibility for delay in taking decision for construction of buildings and leaving the plots vacant for such a long period; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir;

(b) to (e) The Ministry of External Affairs has adopted a double-pronged approach which focuses on development of properties and also lays emphasis on purchase of properties, both aspects combining to fulfil the recommendation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for External Affairs to bring down the financial liability of Government of India on rental office buildings and residences abroad.

2. The Ministry has intensified its efforts to develop Embassy Complexes in plots of land made available to Government for construction of Chanceries and residences. The Foreign Secretary chairs a committee for monitoring construction projects and a sub-committee headed by Additional Secretary (Human Resources) meets on a weekly basis to review the progress of projects.

3. The Ministry has completed implementation of construction projects for Embassy Complexes in Berlin and Abu Dhabi, a Cultural Centre in Mauritius and an Embassy Residence in Gaborone. During the financial year 2003-2004, the Ministry also purchased 3 properties in Chicago, Panama and Prague, stations which had been identified by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs for having high rentals.

4. The Ministry is in possession of 20 plots of land/properties for which planning and execution of projects (construction and re-

development) are in varying stages of implementation. Contracts have been signed for 15 projects with Consultants. Financial approval has been obtained for projects in 5 stations (Beijing, Doha, Geneva, Muscat Trinidad and Tobago) and proposals pertaining to the remaining projects are under process for finalisation of the design and for obtaining financial approval.

5. The tentative time-frame for execution of a project after signing of contract with an Architect/Consultant, is 6-9 months for pre-construction planning, processing of approvals and award of contracts; 18-24 months for construction of the complex; and 3 months for completion of interiors. Each major project takes approximately 3 years for completion.

6. The Ministry is also in the process of constituting a separate Division which will deal with Projects specifically. This will ensure that the implementation of projects which are on the anvil will continue to be processed for implementation. Details of project proposals of the Ministry of External Affairs, giving their present status, are attached as statement (See below)

7. In view of the numerous procedures involved, both in stations abroad where the Mission is governed by local rules and regulations, and in processing of approvals within Government, fixing a definite time frame for the implementation of the projects has proved difficult. The processing of these projects has been an on-going exercise over a period of time and a multiplicity of officers and institutions are involved, thereby making the fixing of responsibility a complex matter. However, Government attaches high priority to the expeditious completion of planned projects and is moving resolutely to achieve this goal.

Statement

Construction Projects Abroad

Station	Project	Present Status
Abuja	Construction of Chancery and Embassy Residence	Foundation stone laid by PM on December 5, 2003. Contract with M/s. C.P. Kukreja Associates, Architects signed on January 9, 2004. Cost estimate of project under consideration of financial authorities.

Station	Project	Present Status
Beijing	Construction of Chanery and Residences	Contract signed with M/s Raj Rewal Associates and Architect-Consultant. Financial approval obtained in July, 2003. Local contracts signed by Mission in March, 2004.
Brasilia	Chancery, Embassy Residence and Officers Residences	Design of M/s. Paranhos selected on September 30, 2003. Contract with Architect being signed by Mission.
Dar-Es-Salaam	Construction of Chancery	Selection of architect by Project Design Selection Committee, chaired by Foreign Secretary, being finalised.
Dhaka	Construction of Chancery and Residences	Concept design of five short-listed architects received on May 31, 2004 and being examined. Selection of architect to be finalised by Project Design Selection Committee.
Doha	Construction of Chanery and Embassy Residence	Approved by Ministry of Finance in January, 2003. Unfortunately, delay has occurred because local government has shifted the site of land allocated to India.
Geneva	Renovation of PR's Residence	Contract with Consultant signed in June 2004.
Islamabad	Construction of Residences	Contract signed with M/s Sachdeva Architects. Property team visited Islamabad in May 2004 to revise design concept.
Kabul	Construction of Chancery and Residences	Project design finalised by CPWD and under examination of Ministry. CPWD requested to submit cost estimates.

Station	Project	Present Status
Kathmandu	Construction of Chancery and Residences	Contract signed with M/s. Akshaya Jain and Raka Chakravarty as Architects in April, 2004.
Kyiv	Demolition and reconstruction of residences	Local Architect selected and contract signed by Mission in June, 2004.
London	Construction of 6 residences in 8 South Audley Street	M/s Axis Mason selected as Architect-consultant and contract being signed by Mission in July, 2004.
Moscow	Construction of Residences and School	Contract signed with M/s Consulting Engineering Services Ltd. Cabinet approval being processed for financial proposal.
Muscat	Construction of Chancery and Embassy Residence	Contract signed with M/s Babbar & Babbar as Architect-Consultants. Tender documents for award of construction contract under consideration.
Paramaribo	Construction of Indian Cultural Centre	Design brief being finalised in Consultation with the Mission.
Port Louis	Construction of Chancery complex	Short list of architects approved by Ministry. Inputs for design brief received from Mission, b u t site of land has been shifted by local Government.
Singapore	Renovation of Embassy Residence, Construction of two residences Renovation of Chancery and Residential Blocks.	Contract signed with local consultant. Financial proposal under consideration of Ministry of Finance.
Tashkent	Construction of Embassy Residence, Chancery and Residences	Contract signed with Mr. Romi Khosla as Consultant. Final design and cost estimates submitted by Architect being examined.

Station	Project	Present Status
Trinidad & Tobago	Construction of Cultural Centre	Financial approval obtained in May, 2003. Revised drawings being finalised by local architect.
Warsaw	Construction of Chancery and Residences	Contract signed with M/s Sachdeva Eggleston as Architects. Financial proposal being processed with competent authorities.

Secretary level talks with Pakistan

418. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Foreign Secretary level talks with Pakistan have been held in June this year; and

(b) if so, the proposals and issues discussed therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan were held in New Delhi on June 27-28, 2004. The two Foreign Secretaries discussed the subjects 'Peace and Security including CBMs' and 'Jammu and Kashmir' within the framework of the Composite Dialogue. They exchanged views on carrying the process forward in an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence. In the Joint Statement issued at the end of the talks on June 28, the Foreign Secretaries, *inter alia*, approved the measures recommended by the Expert level meeting on nuclear CBMs in New Delhi on 19-20 June, 2004. The two sides proposed a comprehensive framework for CBMs aimed at initiating and enhancing communication, coordination and interaction. It was also agreed to immediately restore the strength of the respective High Commissions to the original level of 110; to immediately release all apprehended fishermen in each other's custody and put in place a mechanism for the return of unintentionally transgressing fishermen and their boats from high seas without apprehending them; and to initiate steps for early release of civilian prisoners. It was also agreed in principle to re-establish the Consulates General in Karachi and Mumbai.