

Outsourcing of visa processing services

1273. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that outsourcing of visa processing services is processed under the General Finance Rules (GFR), if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether Indian Embassies seeking to outsource visa processing services ever used the option of outsourcing by choice, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH]: (a) The procedures for outsourcing Consular/Passport/Visa services are in accordance with the General Financial Rules and Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) Guidelines. In this procedure, a two tier bid process is followed, in which the Financial Bids of those who qualify in the Technical Bid stage are opened and the lowest bidder is awarded the Contract.

(b) Yes. In terms of Rule 184 of General Financial Rules, 2005, in exceptional circumstances, outsourcing by choice can be awarded with the approval of the Competent Authority of the Ministry and Financial Adviser. Under this provision, Ministry of External Affairs has approved award of Contracts in Embassy of India, Kathmandu and High Commission of India, Dhaka to Nepal SBI Bank Ltd and State Bank of India, Bangladesh respectively.

Expansion of outsourcing diplomatic services

1274. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has decided to expand outsourcing diplomatic services, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether Government proposes to amend/change in the existing criteria and has finalized the criteria for selection of service provider for the said purpose, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V.K. SINGH]: (a) and (b) As of now, Ministry of External Affairs has outsourced Consular/Passport/Visa Services in 67 Indian Missions/Posts abroad. Any expansion of this scheme including amendments/changes in the existing criteria is an ongoing process and will be publicized, when such decisions are taken, in the form of revised tender documents through the websites of the Ministry and Indian Missions/Posts abroad. It may be mentioned that diplomatic services are not outsourced.