

MINUTES OF FOURTH MEETING OF FULL COMMISSION HELD ON 07.05.2010 AT 12.00 NOON IN THE OFFICE ROOM OF CHIEF INFORMATION COMMISSIONER PUNJAB, CHANDIGARH.

PRESENT:

1. **Sh.Surinder Singh, State Information Commissioner;**
2. **Lt. Genl.(Retd) P.K.Grover, State Information Commissioner;**
3. **Sh. P.P.S.Gill, State Information Commissioner;**
4. **Sh.Kulbir Singh, State Information Commissioner;**
5. **Sh.Darbara Singh Kahlon, State Information Commissioner;**
6. **Mrs.Jaspal Kaur, State Information Commissioner;**
7. **Sh.S.S.Sandhu, IAS, Secretary to the Commission.**

Leave of absence was granted to SICs, Sh. P.K.Verma, Mrs. Rupan Deol Bajaj and Mrs. Ravi Sinigh.

The agenda items were discussed and the following decisions were taken:-

Item No.1 Review of Court work

It was noted that for the first four months of the year 2010, against the institution of 2024 cases, 2188 cases were decided; thereby reducing the overall pendency of complaints and appeals in the Commission. It was felt that few cases which were more than three months old, should be taken up on priority for early disposal.

The Management Regulations of the Commission have been successfully implemented w.e.f.01.04.2010. Some initial difficulties felt by the public as well as by the Registry have been resolved and now the system is functioning smoothly.

The Commission was in the process of compiling land mark judgments delivered by various Benches. The State Information Commissioners were requested to send details of such judgments so that these are displayed at the website and compiled in a book form.

It was observed that the scope of mode of service to the parties needs to be widened by introduction of speed post and SMS facilities. The matter may be thoroughly looked into for getting the Punjab Right to Information Rules 2007 amended by taking up the matter with the State Government.

Item No.2 Pension and other entitlements of the State Information Commissioners.

Office of the Commission had made correspondence with various State Information Commissions to know if any State was allowing the facility of pension to the State Information Commissioners. The information received from various Information Commissions so far reveals that no State Information Commission has made provision for pension facility to the State Information Commissioners. Some State Information Commissions, like Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Arunachal Pradesh have referred the matter to the Govt. of India, Ministry of Personnel, PG & Pensions, DoPT, New Delhi for amending the provision of section 16(5)(b) of the RTI Act 2005 in order to provide for pension to the State Information Commissions.

It was decided that the State Information Commission Punjab may also refer the case to the Govt. of India for suitably amending the provisions of the RTI Act 2005 to provide the facility of pension to the State Information Commissioners. A similar reference should also be made to the State Govt. for allowing the pensionary benefits to the State Information Commissioners.

Vide letter No.2/74/09-1PS/134 dated 02.03.2010, the State Govt. in the Department of IT and AR has provided information regarding various entitlements and other benefits allowed to the State Chief Secretary regarding petrol, telephone, sumptuary allowance etc.

It was decided that in view of the above letter of the State Govt., except for provision of staff, which is sanctioned by the Govt., other entitlements, as provided to the Chief Secretary, should also be notified for the State Information Commissioners with effect from the date they have joined the Commission as such.

Item NO.3 Increase in salary of contractual and outsourced employees working in the State Information Commission Punjab.

The recommendations of the Sub-Committee for Personnel & Training dated 05.03.2010 were considered by the Commission. It was decided to accept its

recommendations and restore 5% annual incentive retrospectively to the employees who were appointed against the posts sanctioned in regular pay scales.

Regarding the second recommendation of the Committee for Personnel & Training relating to an up-ward revision of emoluments of employees of the Commission keeping in view the recent revision of salaries to their employees by the Govt. of India and the Punjab Govt., it was decided that the Committee may take further action in this regard.

Item No.4 Membership of National Federation of Information Commissions of India (NFICI).

It was decided that the Commission may agree in principle to become member of the National Federation of Information Commissions of India (NFICI). However, it was felt that the Federation should formulate its byelaws and make provision for the post of Chairman and Vice Chairman on rotational basis to be held for one year. The HQs of the Federation should be at Delhi and a time period should be fixed for shifting it from Hyderabad. After formulation/adoption of byelaws by the Federation on the above lines, the Commission will consider the matter for becoming the member..

Item NO.5 Allocation of Budget for the year 2010-11

It was noted by the Commission.

Follow-up action

After discussion of regular items, the status of follow-up action was taken up in the meeting of the Full Commission as under:-

1. Office accommodation

It was informed that case for hiring of 4th floor of SCO.84-85, Sector 17C, Chandigarh has been referred to the Administrative Department. Approval has not been received so far.

-Secretary may speak to PSIT in this regard.

2. Allotment of plot to the State Information Commission Punjab

The U. T. Administration Chandigarh has allotted one-acre plot for the construction of office building of the Commission in Sector 38 (West) @ Rs.45,400/- per sq.yd. The total cost of this plot comes to Rs.21,97,36,000/-, The case has been referred to A.D. for making provision of funds.

3. Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Strengthening, Capacity Building and awareness Generation for effective implementation of the RTI Act.

The remaining funds will be utilized in the current financial year.

The lap tops have been provided to Ld. CIC and SICs. It is hoped that computers will also be provided by the Punjab InfoTech in the coming days.

Necessary funds have been provided to NIC for providing the facility of Video Conferencing in the Commission. The matter is being regularly pursued with NIC and it is hoped that this facility will be in position in a month or so.

The remaining amount of Rs.9.00 lacs out of Rs.30.00 lacs is yet to be received from the Govt. of India under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Strengthening, Capacity building and Awareness Generation for effective implementation of RTI Act 2005. The matter is being pursued for early release of these funds.

4. Annual Reports for the year 2007 and 2008

The translation of Annual Reports for the year 2007 and 2008 in Punjabi has been received from Director Languages Punjab, Patiala. For the Annual Report for 2009, information has been received from about 16 Departments. Out of these 16 departments, five departments have not sent the correct information. Therefore, the matter has been referred back to those departments for sending the correct information. D.O. reminder has also been issued to the remaining departments to send the information at the earliest.

It was observed by the Ld. SICs that they require the facility of wireless internet for the lap tops provided to them. It was decided that a proposal may be

initiated for providing the best and cost effective facility available in this regard to all the SICs.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.