



In The Pakistan Information Commission, Islamabad

Appeal No 782-12/20

Taimoor Khan

(Appellant)

Vs.

Prime Minister Office

Through its Public Information Officer

(Respondent)

ORDER

Date: March 04, 2021

Zahid Abdullah: Information Commissioner

A. The Appeal

1. The Appellant filed an appeal, dated 23-12-2020, to the Commission, stating that he submitted an information request to Public Information Officer, Prime Minister Office on November 30, 2020 under the Right of Access to Information Act 2017 but did not received any response from the public body.
2. The information sought by the Appellant is as follows:
 1. *“Year-wise allocated budget vs actual expenses of the Prime Minister House from 2013 to till date.*
 2. *Details of the PM House expenses in year-wise break up under all heads such as employees’ salaries, kitchen expenses, furniture expenditure, gifts, repair and maintenance, entertainment and bakery items from 2013 to till to date.*
 3. *Details of utilization of discretionary funds by the Prime Minister Imran Khan since the assumption of the office till to date?*
 4. *Details of utilization of discretionary funds by the then Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi during his tenure i.e. August 2017 to May 2018.*
 5. *Details of utilization of discretionary funds by the then Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif during his tenure i.e. 5th June, 2013 to 28th July, 2017*
 6. *Details of the renovation made in the Prime Minister House since 2013 to date, along with the following details, (Year wise breakup)*
 - a. *List of the furniture items purchased during the said time period along with the price of each item.*
 - b. *List of electronics items purchase during the said time period along with the item name, brand name, specification and price of each item since 2013 to date.”*

B. Proceedings

3. Through a notice dated January 05, 2021, sent to Deputy Secretary (Admn) / Public Information Officer, Prime Minister Office, the Commission called upon the Respondent to submit reasons for not providing the requested information.

4. Through a letter dated January 25, 2021, the Respondent intimated that the request for information was forwarded to the concerned quarters to provide the information to the applicant vide this office UO. Dated 17.12.2020.
5. The Appeal was fixed for hearing on February 23, 2021 and both parties were informed accordingly through a notice sent on February 11, 2021.
6. The Respondent did not attend the hearing.

C. Discussion and Commission's View on Relevant Issues

7. The Respondent, Prime Minister Secretariat, has been given reasonable time and opportunity to decide on the request for information of the citizen through duly served notices of the commission.
8. As the Respondent, Prime Minister Secretariat has failed to submit its response, this commission is left with no option but to decide whether the requested information can be disclosed under the provisions of the Right of Access to Information Act 2017.
9. From the legal stand-point, the requested information should have been provided to the citizen in response to the information request, under Section 6 (b) of the Act, within a maximum of 20 working days, under Section 14 ((2) of the Act.
10. It is evident from the correspondence of the Respondent that he sought assistance from other officers to collect the requested information. In eventuality where a PIO has sought assistance from other officers and they fail to fulfill their obligations, officers whose assistance has been sought by the PIO become responsible *under Rule 3 of the Right of Access to Information Rules 2019 which is reproduced as under:*

“3. Designated officer. -(1) A designated officer of a public body may seek assistance of any officer in order to collect, collate or retrieve the information being sought by an applicant.

(2) If the delay is caused or any other complaint occurs as a result of non-cooperation, faulty or delayed response on the part of an officer whose assistance was sought by the designated officer, such other officer shall be deemed to be the designated officer after approval of the Secretary concerned for purpose of imposition of penalties under the Act”.

11. This commission also believes that the disclosure of information will serve public interest. For example, the disclosure of requested information will shed light on whether or not the incumbent Prime Minister and his predecessors have been utilising discretionary funds. Similarly, through the disclosed information, citizens would be able to know how their taxes have been put to use for the renovation of PM House through the procurement of furniture and electronic items during the tenures of different Prime Ministers since 2013. Lastly, citizens would know about the pattern of the expenditures incurred on the running of the PM House during the tenures of different Prime Ministers since 2013.

D. Order

12. The appeal is allowed. The Respondent, Prime Minister Secretariat is directed to provide the following requested information to the Appellant, with intimation to this commission within 7 working days of the receipt of this Order:

1. *“Year-wise allocated budget vs actual expenses of the Prime Minister House from 2013 to till date.*

2. *Details of the PM House expenses in year-wise break up under all heads such as employees' salaries, kitchen expenses, furniture expenditure, gifts, repair and maintenance, entertainment and bakery items from 2013 to till to date.*
 3. *Details of utilization of discretionary funds by the Prime Minister Imran Khan since the assumption of the office till to date?*
 4. *Details of utilization of discretionary funds by the then Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi during his tenure i.e. August 2017 to May 2018.*
 5. *Details of utilization of discretionary funds by the then Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif during his tenure i.e. 5th June, 2013 to 28th July, 2017*
 6. *Details of the renovation made in the Prime Minister House since 2013 to date, along with the following details, (Year wise breakup)*
 - a. *List of the furniture items purchased during the said time period along with the price of each item.*
 - b. *List of electronics items purchase during the said time period along with the item name, brand name, specification and price of each item since 2013 to date.”*
13. Copies of this order be sent to Secretary to Prime Minister and the Appellant for information and necessary action.

Fawad Malik
Information Commissioner

Zahid Abdullah
Information Commissioner

Announced on:
March 04, 2021

This order consists of 3 (three) pages, each page has been read and signed