

No. 1/19/1/2010-Cab.
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (BHARAT SARKAR)
CABINET SECRETARIAT (MANTRIMANDAL SACHIVALAYA)
RASHTRAPATI BHAWAN

New Delhi, the 26th August, 2010.

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Instructions regarding foreign travel by Ministers in the Union Government and Chief Ministers/Ministers in the States/Union Territories.

The undersigned is directed to say that instructions regarding foreign travel had been issued *vide* Cabinet Secretariat Office Memorandum No. 21/1/7/94-Cab. dated 30.03.1995 and modified thereafter from time to time. These instructions have been further reviewed and in part supersession of earlier instructions, the existing instructions, in so far as these concern members of the Union Council of Ministers and the Chief Ministers, and other Ministers in the States and Union Territories will stand modified to the extent indicated below:

I. Official Foreign Travel by Ministers of the Central Government:

(i) Proposals relating to official visits abroad of Central Ministers (Cabinet Ministers, Minister of State holding independent charge, Minister of State or Deputy Ministers) require prior approval of the Prime Minister.

(ii) Such proposals should be submitted to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) directly. For effective presentation of our view point with foreign governments, the visits should be coordinated through the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), to avoid duplication of visits. Therefore, it may be ensured that political clearance is obtained from the MEA before forwarding the proposal to the PMO. Requests for political clearance may be submitted at least 15 days before the date of departure to the MEA and thereafter submitted at least 5 days prior to the date of departure to the PMO for obtaining the approval of the Prime Minister. Proposals received beyond the stipulated period in the PMO and proposals received without political clearance will not be processed and will be returned.

(iii) Proposals for Minister level foreign travel may not be taken up by Ministries/Departments directly with either the foreign government concerned or its representations in India or elsewhere, with international organisations or their representations in India or elsewhere, without the prior clearance of the MEA, if such travel is to enter into or discuss, explore, examine a bilateral or multilateral agreement, Protocol, Memorandum of Understanding or any such mechanism. In cases, where proposals for Minister level foreign travel are already covered under an existing bilateral or multilateral mechanism, discussions to plan such foreign travel of Ministers with concerned foreign governments or their representations in India or International Organisations or their representations in India may be undertaken. However, in all cases, political clearance from MEA would be required.

(iv) Minister-level visits abroad should be undertaken only in response to formal governmental invitations from the country concerned.

(v) In case of an international conference abroad, Minister-level visits should be proposed only if it has been certified by the MEA that attendance at that conference is going to be at the level of Ministers.

(vi) Minister level visits can be undertaken for meetings of bilateral joint commissions, where the Minister concerned from our side happens to be the Co-chairperson.

(vii) Minister-level visits in response to invitations from various non-governmental bodies would not be advisable unless specifically recommended by MEA and our Embassy/High Commission concerned.

(viii) Proposals for Minister-level visits for reasons other than mentioned in (iv) to (vii) above are not advised, unless there are compelling circumstances which warrant a visit at the Ministerial Level, for which justification may be submitted.

(ix) Ministers of Cabinet rank are entitled to take their private secretaries along with them.

(x) A Minister of State, holding independent charge, is entitled to take his private secretary along with him except when (i) he is accompanied by officials in a delegation which include an officer of the rank of Director or below; and (ii) when he is accompanied by other Ministers and he is not leading the delegation. Private Secretaries and other personal staff are not intended to replace technical officials of the Department. Request for departure from this policy should not be made.

(xi) Proposals for the deputation of a private secretary or members of the personal staff of Ministers should be sent to the Prime Minister for his approval along with the proposals for the deputation of the Minister concerned. In no circumstances should the proposals for the deputation of the private secretary or any member of the personal staff be considered under the delegated powers of the Ministry/Department.

(xii) The exact date of departure from India and return from abroad should be indicated clearly in the note submitted to the Prime Minister.

(xiii) Instructions issued by the Ministry of Finance and MEA regarding the ceiling on gifts, entertainment, class of travel, DA and hotel accommodation should be followed. It is important that the choice of gifts be made in consultation with the Mission/Territorial Division/MEA Protocol. Such consultations would help in avoiding selection of inappropriate gifts.

(xiv) In regard to expenditure on entertainment and contingencies etc., to be incurred by the Minister, the orders issued by the Ministry of Finance would continue to apply.

(xv) A copy of the previous tour report of the concerned Minister and information regarding funding of such tour etc. should be attached.

(xvi) In the event of conventions being organised abroad by NRI institutions, the representation may normally be limited to the mission in that country and in the case of a conference organised by NRIs in India, where a Minister's participation on substantive issues becomes unavoidable, a brief on the issues, may be obtained from the administrative Ministry/MEA/Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. The offer of a membership of any committee, constituted by NRI organisations, may be politely declined.

ii. Composite delegations consisting of Central Ministers and Officials:

(i) Where a delegation is headed by a Minister, proposal for approval of the tour of the Minister along with his private secretary or one person from his personal staff may be submitted to the Prime Minister and the proposal of the accompanying official delegation (if the officers of the level of Additional Secretary and above are to be deputed) only be sent to Ministry of Finance for seeking the concurrence of the Screening Committee of Secretaries, as per present practice.

However, the details of the entire delegation accompanying the Minister may be brought out in the proposal submitted for approval of the Prime Minister and the fact that the Minister will be heading the delegation may be brought to the notice of the Screening Committee of Secretaries while submitting proposals of the accompanying official delegation.

(ii) The Minister and the Secretary should not be away from the Headquarters at the same time on foreign tour during Parliament Sessions. During other periods, i.e, when Parliament is not in session, if the Minister and the Secretary are required to be away at the same time, the circumstances necessitating this should be brought out clearly for consideration and approval of the Prime Minister.

(iii) Normally, the size of a Minister-led delegation may not exceed five, inclusive of personal staff of the Ministers, except in case of joint working groups. If the size of the delegation exceeds five, justification will have to be given for each additional member.

III. Private Foreign Travel by Ministers of the Central Government:

(i) The Prime Minister's Office should be kept informed of the proposed private visits. However, prior political and FCRA clearances are mandatory.

(ii) During Parliament Sessions, private visits also need the approval of the Prime Minister.

(iii) No official/member in the personal staff of the Minister or from the Ministry/Department should accompany the Minister on his private visit.

IV. Foreign Travel by Chief Ministers and Ministers of the State Governments:

The Prime Minister's Office should be kept informed of foreign visits, either official or private, of Chief Ministers and Ministers in the State Governments/Union Territories. However, prior political and FCRA clearances are mandatory.


(Som Dutt Sharma)

Deputy Secretary to the Govt. of India
Tele: 2379 2204

To

Secretaries to the Government of India (as per list attached).