

File No. Z-33013/156/2021/CVAC
 Government of India
 Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
 Department of Health & Family Welfare
 COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Cell

Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi

Dated: 03.09.2021

To,

Shri S K Chitkara
 Dy. Registrar,
 Central Information Commission,
 Baba Gang Nath Marg, Munirka
 New Delhi-110067.

Subject: Decision dated 16.08.2021 of Hon'ble CIC in respect of Second Appeal(s) filed by Sh. Saurav Das

Reference(s): (1) CIC/MOHFW/A/2021/625994
 (2) CIC/MOHFW/A/2021/625995
 (3) CIC/MOHFW/A/2021/625996
 (4) CIC/MOHFW/C/2021/620415
 (5) CIC/MOHFW/C/2021/621399
 (6) CIC/MOHFW/A/2021/622522
 (7) CIC/MOHFW/A/2021/622519

Sir,

This is with reference to the decision dated 16.08.2021 of Sh. Y. K. Sinha, Hon'ble Chief Information Commissioner received in this office on 27.08.2021 through RTI Cell, MoHFW vide FTS No. 2308586 in respect of aforesaid referenced second appeal(s).

2 (a). Hon'ble CIC vide his decision directed to the respondent *to submit a suitable explanation before the Commission, justifying denial of information under Section 8(1)(a) of the RTI Act in respect of file notings pertaining to procurement of COVID vaccines or about Non-disclosure Agreement signed by members of NEGVAC or information/advice/report which led to increase of the gap between doses of the Covishield vaccine.* (Refer page no. 15)

2 (b). In respect of Para 2 (a) above, it is submitted that the information sought is exempted under section 8(1)(a) of RTI Act, 2005 with the following justification:

A National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC) has been established by the Government of India which provides guidance on all aspects of COVID-19 vaccination including prioritization of population groups, procurement and inventory management, vaccine selection, vaccine delivery and tracking mechanism etc. Information, disclosure of which would pre-judicially affect the scientific or economic interests of the State.

- There may be a chance of misuse of information for commercial purposes.
- Scientific information pertaining to vaccine development can be used by people/countries without authorization and for malicious intent.

3 (a) It is also mentioned in the decision that the Government is convinced that information as

137941
 13/9/21



defined under Section 2(f) of the RTI Act, 2005 has been provided by the Respondent. However, in view of the extraordinary predicament the world finds itself in, it is of vital importance that all relevant updates, notifications and information which are likely to serve larger public interest, and address concerns and worries should be widely disseminated to create awareness among the public. The respondent must note that dissemination of vital information is as much a national duty as proper and effective discharge of their onerous responsibilities. (Refer page no. 17)

3 (b) In respect of Para 3 (a) above, it is submitted that information/guidelines/Standard Operating Procedure (SoP)/Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)/data/statistics etc for the General Public is proactively disclosed by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare on the various Platforms.

For COVID-19 Vaccination related information/guidelines Standard Operating Procedure (SoP)/Frequently Asked Questions(FAQs) data/statistics etc, people may visit the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare's website "mohfw.gov.in" or "Aarogya Setu App". CoWIN portal (<https://www.cowin.gov.in>) (refer link <https://dashboard.cowin.gov.in>) or "mygov.in COVID-19" or "MyGov App", Press Information Bureau, Government of India's website www.pib.gov.in then go to Home All Press Release then Select Ministry (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare) select Date, Month, Year for date wise release/information, which is being updated from time to time.

The people may also get lots of information regarding COVID-19 Vaccination in Media Conferences addressed by the highest level Officers of MoHFW regularly.

The people may call Helpline: +91 11 23978046 (Toll Free - 1075), Technical Helpline: 0120 4473222 Toll free - 1075 and Helpline Email ID: ncov2019@gov.in and for any technical enquiry with respect to COVID-19, email on technicalquery.covid19@gov.in. Also refer FAQs on Co-WIN. (link <https://www.cowin.gov.in/faq>.)

4. The justification of denial/exemption under section 8(1)(a) of RTI Act as mentioned at Para 2 (b) above has the approval of Competent Authority of MoHFW.

Signed by Satyendra Singh

Date: 03-09-2021 15:36:26

Reason: Approved

(Satyendra Singh)

CPIO & Under Secretary to the Govt. of India

Email ID: singh.satyendra80@gov.in