

Clarification with regard to RTI application registration No. PLCOM/R/2019/50060

RTI Cell dated 25.02.2019.

This is with reference to the article dated March 31, 2019 in the New Indian Express:
<http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2019/mar/31/niti-ceos-office-gets-crorepati-makeover-1958120.html>

It is unfortunate that the reporting, editing, particularly the headlining of this particular report, is mischievous and seeks to malign the reputation of particular individuals.

Statements such as *“Amitabh Kant, the CEO of the think tank, along with his key aides, checked into the fifth floor—whose renovation cost Rs 9.26 crore—early this year”* misrepresents facts and draws false conclusions.

Contrary to the insinuations made due to faulty headline and base-less story, the said amount was spent on renovation of "entire" fifth floor which accommodates more than 300 officials across various verticals of NITI Aayog, including Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO).

The Fifth floor houses not only office of CEO, NITI, but also offices of MD, AIM and DG, DMEO. Three key officials of NITI Aayog have been allocated space on 5th floor. Besides the Young Professionals, Consultants and Technical Officers of NITI Aayog have been allocated space on 5th floor. The entire team of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) under NITI Aayog are functioning from the 5th Floor.

Also, statements such as *“Rs 34 lakh was spent on greening the office space alone, with exotic indoor plants dotting the place”* are misleading.

Please note that the RTI response states that “**a sum of Rs. 34 lakhs has been approved for allocation to CPWD for Horticulture**”, which, it is clarified, includes cost of installation, maintenance, replacement of all plants and provision of manpower for the same, as per horticulture department of CPWD specifications. This is only an approved amount for CPWD for horticulture and only an amount of Rs 10 lakhs has been spent and released to CPWD.

Other senior officers of the NITI Aayog, including its esteemed Vice-Chairman and Members, are also belittled by usage of phrases such as “still holed up in their modest offices”.

The Fifth Floor of the NITI Aayog was redesigned and driven by demands of the organisation, maximising the efficiency of space utilisation. Fifteen offices of DMEO were closed and converged in one location along with Atal Innovation Mission, which was partly functioning from Vigyan Bhawan. From the original capacity of 85, the total seating capacity has been raised to 300.

And indeed, it is an ongoing process as the redesign and renovation of the remaining building is slated to begin in a phased manner. More details about the office can be read on the press release: <http://pib.nic.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1566471>

The ‘Office for New India’ as it has been dubbed, was envisaged to serve as a template for government buildings which can be replicated across central government. The NITI Aayog seeks to introduce a work culture which resonates with external consultants and young professionals as well as bring in a fresh atmosphere and new thinking within traditional government processes. Paperless, transparent, sustainable, inclusive and green work spaces are the hallmark of a modern office.

While upholding the spirit of the Right to Information Act, the NITI Aayog responded in good faith to specific issues or query being raised. Your publication has immaturely extrapolated assumptions which are not in keeping with journalistic integrity.

It is unfortunate that what is routine maintenance and qualitative upgradation is being maliciously projected as a “*swanky makeover*”.

The NITI Aayog Bhawan is more than 60 years old. It was made in 1962 and the Fifth floor had not been renovated before. The renovation of the Fifth floor was planned and carried out through CPWD, which is the designated nodal agency for maintenance and upkeep of Government buildings. It is to be expected that designs of the new Fifth floor will subscribe to the latest specifications than a building constructed over six decades ago.

Again, as stated in the RTI reply, NITI Aayog reiterates that:

“NITI Aayog, the premier ‘Think Tank of the Government of India’ is mandated to develop ‘State of the Art Resources Centre’. With this objective in mind, the 5th floor has been renovated and refurbished to be democratic, transparent, vibrant, energy efficient, flexible and open office so as to promote collaboration.”

F. No. D.25015/31/2-019-Gen.IV
Government of India
NITI Aayog
(General IV Section)

NITI Bhawan, Sansad Marg,
New Delhi, dated the 25th March, 2019

To,

Shri Manish Anand,
New Indian Express, Express Building,
Third Floor, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,
New Delhi – 110002
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Subject:- RTI application – Information regarding expenditure incurred on renovation, refurbishment, redevelopment etc. on 5th floor of the NITI Aayog building, Sansad Marg since 2015 reg.

Sir,

Please refer to your RTI application registration No. PLCOM/R/2019/50060 RTI Cell dated 25.02.2019 received through RTI Cell, NITI Aayog seeking information regarding expenditure incurred on renovation, refurbishment, redevelopment of 5th floor of the NITI Aayog Building, Sansad Marg since 2015. As per records and available information, the point wise reply is given below:

Point 1 & 2: During the year 2015 onwards, routine/ maintenance work was carried out on the 5th floor of NITI Aayog Building. During the year 2018-19, a sum of Rs.8.40 core has been allocated to CPWD for renovation, refurbishment, re-development of fifth floor of building towards civil, electric & furniture items. Besides, a sum of Rs. 34 lakhs has been approved for allocation to CPWD for Horticulture. In addition to it, a sum of Rs.0.52 Cr. has been incurred for Networking and Telephone cabling.

Point 3: The work was carried out by CPWD as per their specification Vol. I & II 2009 and the drawings prepared by Senior Architect, CPWD and which were approved by the Competent Authority in NITI Aayog.

Point 4: The renovated 5th floor has a built up area of about 40,000 sq.ft. The sitting capacity and other facilities are as under:

CEO Room	1
Executive Cabins	5
Conference Rooms	2
Cambers	2
Meeting Rooms	4
Cubicles	53
Cubicles with Visitors Chairs	37
Work Stations	165
Washrooms	9
Hand Wash area	4

contd. 2.

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Point 5: CEO, NITI; MD, AIM and DG, DMEO have been allocated space on 5th floor. Besides the Young Professionals, Consultants and Technical Officers of NITI Aayog have been allocated space on 5th floor. The entire team of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) under NITI Aayog are functioning from the 5th Floor.

Point 6: The requisite sanctions and approvals were taken prior to the commencement of the work. Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog was kept apprised about the progress of the work periodically.

Point 7: The details of the Horticulture works is as under: -

Area of Vertical Garden : 112 Sq. Mtr.

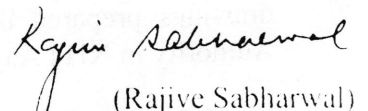
No. of Indoor Plants : 196 Nos.

The details of work stations are given in reply to para 4 above.


Point 8: NITI Aayog, the premier 'Think Tank of the Government of India' is mandated to develop 'State of the Art Resources Centre'. With this objective in mind, the 5th floor has been renovated and refurbished to be democratic, transparent, vibrant, energy efficient, flexible and open office so as to promote collaboration. The concept of open workspace is expected to improve work efficiency, communication, knowledge and skills. It will also innovate, make flat organization and there will be zero paper clutter through electronic files. The renovation of 5th floor has been taken up as a pilot project with also an objective to accommodate higher number of employees due to creation of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and shifting of 15 Regional Offices, Data Management and Evaluation Office (DMEO) to Delhi. The renovation of other floors will also be taken up in a phased manner.

2. In case you are not satisfied with this information, you may like to prefer an appeal within a period of 30 days from the receipt of this information, before the First Appellate Authority, Shri Alok Kumar, Adviser (GA), Room No.204, NITI Aayog, Sansad Marg, New Delhi-110001 (Ph.23096613).

Yours faithfully,


(Rajive Sabharwal)
CPIO, Deputy Secretary

Copy to:- RTI Cell, NITI Aayog w.r.t. registration No. PLCOM/R/2019/50060 RTI Cell dated 25.02.2019 for information and further necessary action.


25/3/2019

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