

Govt agency contracts not confidential: CIC

*Himanshi Dhawan, The Times of India
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NEW DELHI: In an order that could have far-reaching consequences, the Central Information Commission (CIC) has ruled that a contract with a public authority cannot be categorised as confidential.

Government agencies are loath to give information regarding contracts. Government transactions are often kept away from public view under the garb of confidentiality, especially in cases related to defence and national security.

While it is early days yet on whether the order will impact such contracts, the CIC's decision appears to be a step in that direction.

The order issued by chief information commissioner Wajahat Habibullah substantiates this by elaborating that in case of "quotations, bid or tender or any other information prior to conclusion of a contract, it could be categorised as trade secret, but once concluded the confidentiality of such transactions cannot be claimed".

The commission has directed the National Institute of Science Communication and Information (NISCAIR) to furnish information sought by an applicant under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The appellant, Ramesh Chand Sai, had sought from NISCAIR details of a contract with a firm, Deep Security Services, and the employees deployed by the firm.

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