

Lalit Modi case determined with appropriate rules: UK

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London: The UK today said it had acted "appropriately" and in accordance with rules when issuing travel documents to scam-tainted former IPL chairman Lalit Modi.

"We do not routinely comment on the detail of individual cases. This case was determined in accordance with the appropriate rules," a UK Home Office spokesperson said.

The department also confirmed to PTI that the UK's Permanent Secretary is "satisfied" that Sarah Rapson, the Director-General of UK visas and immigration, acted "appropriately and professionally in handling this case".

Rapson was the senior official who received correspondence from Indian-origin MP Keith Vaz in relation to expediting paperwork for London-based Modi to be able to travel to Portugal in June last year.

The Indian Premier League (IPL) founder is at the heart of a controversy which has engulfed External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj over accusations that she put diplomatic pressure on UK authorities to secure travel papers for Modi to visit Portugal, purportedly for his wife's cancer treatment.

Modi had come to London in 2010 amid claims that the IPL cricket tournament was embroiled in alleged match-fixing and illegal betting. His Indian passport was later revoked, leaving him grounded in the UK.

A series of "Sunday Times" reports have alleged impropriety on the part of Vaz, who also made a reference to Swaraj in one of his UK Home Office emails. Kathryn Hudson, Britain's Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, yesterday confirmed that she will not be investigating Vaz over the issue.

"The Commissioner received a complaint (against Keith Vaz) last week, but has decided not to investigate into it," a spokesperson for the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards had said.

However, the row continues to brew in India as the Opposition demands Swaraj's resignation.

After the reports surfaced, 63-year-old Swaraj said in a series of tweets that she had taken a "humanitarian view" and conveyed to the British High Commissioner that they should examine Modi's request as per their rules and "if the British government chooses to give travel documents to Lalit Modi" that will not spoil our bilateral relations.

Modi has always denied any wrongdoing and says he left India for Britain because of death threats.

Shortly after he received his UK travel documents in 2014 after a lengthy legal battle with the UK Home Office, he had described Vaz as a "superstar".

- PTI