

(a) whether it is a fact that IAF is facing shortage of pilots due to large number of requests for early retirement;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to overcome this situation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) The present strength of pilots in Air Force is sufficient to meet its current operational requirements.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The improvement in the job profile of the pilots is a continuous process keeping in view the job specific requirements and operational necessity. Besides, the Short Service Commission for Flying branch has been modified to also make both men and women eligible for induction in this branch. Further, the implementation of the recommendations of the VIth Central Pay Commission shall also go a long way in attracting youth.

Vacancies in various wings in defence

1401. SHRI MANGALA KISAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of posts vacant in grade-I, grade-II, grade-III, and grade-IV in various wings of the Defence force;

(b) the category-wise details of posts lying vacant since last five years; and

(c) the steps taken to fill up these long standing vacant posts?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Acquisition of arms from companies under CBI scanner

1402. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has allowed five multi-vendor trials involving two companies— Israel Military Industries and Singapore Technologies Kinetics which are under a cloud in India following CBI investigation of Ordnance Factory Board scam;

(b) whether according to Government, go ahead was given by Ministry of Defence following request from Army which expressed concern over delays in acquisitions;

(c) whether Government had earlier put on hold acquisition from seven companies;

(d) if so, whether trials have now been completed for 150 mm light weight assault rifles; and

(e) if so, to what extent final decision for obtaining these arms will be considered?