

**Increase in wealth of candidates contesting recent elections**

1331. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that according to the recent Assembly elections, some of the MLAs have increased their wealth by 126 times;
- (b) if so, how; and
- (c) what Government would do to find out the method of increase in their assets?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED):

(a) In pursuance of the direction in the judgment dated 13th March, 2003 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Writ Petition No. 490 of 2002 and connected petitions, candidates are required to give information regarding their criminal antecedents, assets, liabilities and educational qualification in the affidavits prescribed by the Election Commission. The information furnished by the candidates is disseminated by displaying copies thereof on the notice board of the Returning Officer, supplying copies to anyone seeking the same and hosting the same on the website of the Chief Electoral Officer of the State, which is easily accessible.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

**Holistic reforms in election process**

1332. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK:

SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is mulling to bring holistic reforms in the election process to save the nation from the clutches of money, muscle power, mafia, communalism, casteism criminalization and corruption;
- (b) whether it is a fact that there were reports of use of excessive and unaccounted money power in many constituencies during the recently held Assembly elections; and
- (c) what appropriate action the Ministry is taking to plug loopholes and bad practices being adopted by the political parties and the candidates so that further reforms could be initiated in the near future and cleanse the democratic system?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (c) The Election Commission has made proposals for electoral reforms from time to time. The Commission's proposals include proposal to amend the Law to check criminalization of politics, check money power, political parties reforms, misuse of religion for electoral gain, etc. The Commission has also recommended to amend the

law to make the offence of bribery under Section 171(B)/171(E) of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 a cognizable offence. With a view to carrying out comprehensive electoral reforms, a Core-Committee has been constituted on the 1st October, 2010 under the Chairmanship of an Additional Solicitor General. The talking points of the Committee included (i) Crimilisation of Politics; (ii) Funding of Elections; (iii) Conduct and Better Management of Election; (iv) Regulation of Political Parties; (v) Audit and Finances of Political Parties; (vi) Review of Anti-Deflection Law. The Committee under the aegis of Legislative Department and in co-sponsorship of the Election Commission of India conducted seven regional consultations at Bhopal, Kolkata, Mumbai, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Bengaluru and Guwahati, wherein the stakeholders have been consulted, who *inter-alia* included leaders and workers of the political parties, legislators, legal luminaries, representatives of NGOs, eminent persons, civil servants (serving and retired), students etc. and view have been gathered. An all party Consultation is also under consideration. On the basis of the inputs received or as may be received in all these consultations, legislative process as may be considered necessary will be initiated by the Government in due course.

(b) Due to implementation of the comprehensive Election Expenditure Monitoring guidelines by the Commission through deployment of Expenditure Observers and Assistant Expenditure Observers with support from the Income Tax Directorate (Inv) wing and by the Nodal Officers of the State Police and large number of Flying Squads and static Surveillance Team, in recently held Assembly election of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa-2012, the following amount have reportedly been seized-

Uttar Pradesh:	Rs. 39.07 crore
Punjab:	Rs. 11.51 crore
Goa:	Rs. 0.60 crore
Manipur:	Rs. 1.08 crore
Uttarakhand:	Rs. 1.30 crore

#### **Vacancies of Judges in High Courts**

1333. SHRI P. RAJEEVE: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) the total sanctioned strength of Judges in each of the High Courts;
- (b) the number of vacant posts of Judges in each of the High Courts;
- (c) the reasons for not filling up the vacant posts; and
- (d) the steps being taken to ensure that each High Court has its full sanctioned strength of Judges?