

(b) the number of cases filed in Lok Adalats and the number of cases settled by Lok Adalats during the last five years, year-wise and State-wise;

(c) to what extent the Thirteenth Finance Commission has helped Lok Adalats to work more vigorously and clear more and more cases; and

(d) to what extent Lok Adalats are helping in reducing the pendency of cases in the country?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) and (d) Based on the recommendation of the 13th Finance Commission, a sum of Rs.100 crores has been allocated for the period 2010-2015 for release to the State Legal Services Authorities, through State Governments, for holding about 10 Mega Lok Adalats per High Court per year and about 5 Lok Adalats for each of the 1500 court locations per year. The 13th Finance Commission has set a target of disposal of 15 lakhs cases every year by the Lok Adalats till the year 2015, which is expected to reduce the pressure on regular courts.

Participation of private sector in foodgrains procurement

4251. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has worked out any mechanism for enhanced participation of private sector in foodgrains procurement operations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to counter the tendency of private companies of not purchasing wheat and rice when supplies are abundant and then want Government to liquidate its inventories at cheaper rates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) and (b) As per

the existing policy, as far as possible. Food Corporation of India (FCI) and the State agencies involved in procurement operations do the procurement directly. FCI and the State Governments have the option of involving other agencies including private companies, in the procurement process for maximizing procurement for the Central Pool only in those areas where procurement infrastructure is weak, subject to their meeting certain requirements.

(c) Does not arise, in view of (a) and (b) above.

(d) Some State Governments like Punjab and Haryana have imposed very high taxes/other charges on procurement of foodgrains, and some other States like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh have been declaring bonus on procurement of wheat or paddy, which has driven away private buyers from the Mandis, causing major burden of procurement of wheat and paddy at MSP on the Government agencies only. Government of India has been continuously requesting these State Governments to lower down their taxes and not to declare bonus. Due to accumulation of excess stocks than needed as per buffer norms. Government has been liquidating stocks of wheat in the open market at reasonable price from time to time. In order to induce private buyers to buy for their requirement from the farmers during the harvest season without waiting for open sale by the Government, the Government has adopted a policy of selling wheat in the open market at a more rationalized reserve price *w.e.f.* November, 2012 onwards. As a result, private purchase at or above MSP appears to be more in current wheat procurement season than previous year.

Public Interest Litigations

†4252. SHRI ISHWARLAL SHANKARLAL JAIN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Public Interest Litigations (PILs) filed in the Supreme Court and various High Courts in the country;

(b) whether several people, organisations and institutions file meaningless petitions in the name of PILs;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.