Withdrawal of departmental appeals in consequence of above Circulars is as below table:

Appellate Forum	Withdrawals as per Circular 3/2018	Withdrawals as per Circular 17/2019
ITAT	6985	6127
High Court	7093	6156
Supreme Court	959	1104
Total	15,037	13,387

2. Other steps taken by Department

I. Central Technical Committee (CTC) and Regional Technical Committees (RTCs) have been created at the level of CBDT & Pr. CCIT Charges respectively to resolve contentious legal issues and to formulate Departmental View/Settled View.

II. CTC has issued 30 circulars on Settled Issues/Departmental View, with directions to withdraw/not press such Departmental appeals on issues that have attained finality before HC/SC.

III. The Department has issued Standard Procedure for handling matters relating to such frequently litigated sections, i.e. section 14A, 68 and 147. It is expected that these standard procedures will go a long way in minimizing litigation.

Minimum pension in private sector

2603. PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any ceiling has been fixed with regard to the minimum pension to persons working in private sector, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government proposes to increase the said ceiling and also to review the existing pension scheme for such private sector, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Dearness Allowance is applicable to such pensioners;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether Government proposes to relax norms to enable employees of Central Public Sector Companies to join New Pension Scheme, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR): (a) and (b) As informed by Ministry of Labour and Employment, under Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995, the Government, w.e.f. 01.09.2014, has fixed minimum pension at ₹ 1000 per month by providing budgetary support keeping in view the widespread demand. At present, decision to enhance the minimum pension under EPS, 1995, has not been taken.

(c) and (d) As informed by Ministry of Labour and Employment, there is no provision under EPS, 1995, to provide dearness allowance.

(e) National Pension System (NPS) was introduced w.e.f. 1st January 2004. All Corporates / Employers including Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) can adopt NPS on a voluntary basis; around 25 CPSEs have already rolled out NPS for their employees.

Consultant firms for sale of assets of PSUs

†2604. DR. KIRODI LAL MEENA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is looking for consultant firms for giving assistance in sale of lands and building assets of Public Sector Undertakings;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government is working towards achieving the difficult sales target of Rs 90 thousand crore for 2019-20;

(c) whether it is fact that Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) has requested to empanel International Asset Advisory (IAA) company or other experienced company; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR): (a) Yes, Sir.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.