

Resolution of consumer disputes

3118. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of measures taken by Government for quick and fair resolution in case of consumer dispute;
- (b) whether Government proposes to provide guidelines for fair and reasonable terms on online consumption; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was enacted to provide for better protection of the rights of consumers. Under the provisions of the said Act, a three tier quasi-judicial machinery, called Consumer Fora, has been established at the District, State and National level to provide simple, inexpensive and speedy redressal to consumer disputes. To further improve the consumer protection legislation, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 has recently been enacted, which on coming into operation will replace the existing Consumer Protection Act of 1986. The new Act provides for several measures for simplification of the adjudication process in the Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions such as deemed admissibility of complaints if not admitted within twenty-one days, e-filing, videos conferencing for hearing and the provision of Mediation, etc.

(b) and (c) Under the provisions of Consumer Protection Act, 2019, Central Government is empowered to frame rules to prevent unfair trade practices in e-commerce.

Pendency of cases in consumer forums

3119. SHRI PRABHAKAR REDDY VEMIREDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) to what extent appeals in petty cases contribute to piling up of cases in consumer forums in the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that vacancies in National Consumer Distress Redressal Commission, State Commissions and District Forums runs into thousands;

(c) if so, how the Ministry looks at the pendency of cases and the steps taken/ proposed to be taken to fill the vacancies so as to reduce pendency of cases; and

(d) whether the Ministry would give advisory to all Departments, PSUs, etc., not to appeal in cases of petty fines?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) 'Petty cases' is not defined in the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. In terms of Section 11 of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, the cases where the value of the goods or services and the compensation, if any, claimed does not exceed rupees twenty lakhs are to be filed in the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Fora. From the jurisdiction point of view, every matter irrespective of its value has to be decided on its merits, in terms of the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986

(b) and (c) As per information received from all the State Commissions total 670 posts of President and Members of the Consumer Fora are lying vacant. Out of 1 post of President and 11 posts of Member in the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), at present, 4 posts of Member are vacant. Vacancy circular for filling up these posts has already been issued by the Central Government with last date of receiving of application as 30.03.2020. Furthermore, under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, State Governments are required to fill up the vacancies of President and Member in the State Commissions and the District Fora. The Central Government keeps advising the State Governments/UTs from time to time to initiate action for filling up of the vacancies well in time.

(d) There is no such proposal.

Implementation of 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme

3120. SHRI DEREK O' BRIEN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state: