

Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan chairs Inter-Session Consultative Committee Meeting in Bengaluru to review functioning of Food Corporation of India & Bureau of Indian Standards

Main objective of FCI is to ensure farmers get their due share & all possible efforts should be made for achieving this objective: Shri Ram Vilas Paswan

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The Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan today chaired an Inter-Session Consultative Committee Meeting of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The Inter-Session Consultative Committee Meeting was held to review the functioning of Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). Addressing the Committee members and officials, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan asserted that the main objective of FCI is to ensure that farmers in the country get their due share and all possible efforts should be made to ensure that the objective is achieved. Shri Paswan gave 4 key points

regarding procurement, storage, maintenance of stock and appointments/recruitments. The Union Minister said that it is a matter of public concern and regular inspection of all stock should be done to ensure quality product is delivered to the final consumer.

The Committee highlighted the fact that procurement has been steadily increasing every year and new records are being set. Union Minister Shri Ram Vilas Paswan enquired about the progress being made by various State governments for creating godowns and silos for ensuring proper storage facility for the procured food grains. The committee was informed that state governments often face difficulties in land acquisition for godowns due to the prerequisite of being near Railway lines. Shri Paswan hailed the State governments' contribution towards further enhancing storage capacities in the states and stated that several State Food Ministers request him to assist in enhancing their capacities. A key suggestion regarding having differential rates of rent for different states was also highlighted as the rent rates and land rates often have huge variations.

Shri Paswan also reviewed the recruitments being done by FCI. The committee was informed that a total of 6209 recruitments have been done from 2015 till date and more than 4000 new vacancies will be notified shortly. Shri Paswan said that provision should be made for providing reservation to Economically Weaker Sections. A decision was also taken regarding change in nomenclature from district office to divisional office as it causes confusion. 162 district offices of FCI will now be rechristened as divisional offices with immediate effect.

Reviewing the functioning of BIS, the committee suggested that consumers should be given good quality, adulteration free products and tougher provisions should be made for punishing adulterators as it has an adverse effect on health of the consumers. Officials of BIS briefed the committee on several new initiatives such as digitization of various activities of BIS, Online approval of licenses and its future plans to utilize surplus funds towards construction of more field offices, new lab etc.

The members of the consultative committee chaired by Union Minister Shri Ram Vilas Paswan also held a press conference after the meeting where Shri Paswan briefed media about the meeting and highlighted various achievements and initiatives undertaken by the Ministry. The Union Minister also informed that Food Minister of Karnataka met him regarding clearance of State's pending dues and assured that the same shall be expedited. The reason for the dues is due to the delay on part of state government in furnishing the necessary details and while part of the dues has been provided, the remaining shall be expedited. Shri Paswan will also be inaugurating a new Branch office of BIS in Hubli district of Karnataka today.

APS/AS

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