

Consumer protection bill becomes law

NEW DELHI, Jan. 6.

The President has given his assent to the Consumer Protection Bill, 1986, and seven other related and amended Bills, thus making them a law of the land with effect from today.

The other seven Bills are the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, the MRTP (Amendment) Bill, the Prevention of Food Adulteration (Amendments) Bill, the Drug and Cosmetic (Amendment) Bill, the Standards of Weights and Measures (Amendment) Bill, the Standards of Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Bill, and the Agriculture Products Marketing (Amendment) Bill.

The enactment among other things enables the Government to frame rules and regulations for the setting up of a consumer dispute redress forum in every district, a commission at the State level and a national commission. The forum will have original jurisdiction to redress consumer complaints up to a claim amount of Rs. 1 lakh. The commission will have jurisdiction up to a claim amount of Rs. 10 lakh and the national commission claims above Rs. 10 lakhs.

All the bills, considered vital for strengthening the consumer movement in the country, were passed by Parliament during the winter session.

The Consumer Protection Act covers all goods and services provided by the public, private and cooperative sectors. The amendments to the other seven Acts give specific rights to the aggrieved consumers and their associations to file complaints in the courts. Hitherto, complaints could be filed only by public servants. — PTI, UNI