

*[Translation]***New Procedure for Assessment of Inflation**

658. SHRI ANAND RATAN MAURYA:

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government propose to change the procedure of assessing the rate of inflation keeping in view of this fact that the present procedure to calculate the rate of price rise on the basis of wholesale price index has become impracticable;
- (b) if so, whether any expert group has been constituted to examine the issue;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (d) Ministry of Industry, Department of Industrial Development vide notification dated 18th June, 1993 set up a working Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. Y.K. Alagh, the then Vice-Chancellor, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, to update the existing series of wholesale Price Index with base 1981-82 so as to reflect structural changes in the Indian Economy since 1981-82. After Prof. Y.K. Alagh joined the Union Government, Prof. S.R. Hashim, Member, Planning Commission was appointed as the Chairman of the Working Group with effect from 2.9.1996. It is hoped that the expert group may be able to complete its analytical work by the end of the current year.

Voting Percentage

659. SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government are aware of the law percentage of voting in general elections in the country;
- (b) if so, whether the Government are contemplating to enact any law for casting vote compulsory;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the steps being taken by the Government to increase the percentage of voting?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) The percentage of voting in general elections to Lok Sabha held in 1989, 1991 and 1996 was 61.95, 56.73 and 57.94, respectively. The Election Commission of India is of the view that compared to international standards and percentage of voting in certain other democratic countries, the percentage of voting in India is good.

- (b) No, Sir.
- (c) Does not arise.

(d) The Election Commission has, however, launched a National Voter Awareness Campaign since 1994, the main purpose of which is to improve the general awareness about the importance of the right of franchise and its free and fair exercise.

*[English]***Royalty of Coal**

660. DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

- (a) the quantity of coal extracted from various coal mines in Madhya Pradesh during 1995-96 and 1996-97;
- (b) the amount of royalty given to the Madhya Pradesh Government and the rate thereof; and
- (c) the amount of royalty being given to the Bihar Government on coal production during the above period and the rates thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): The coal produced from various coal mines in Madhya Pradesh during 1995-96 and 1996-97 are as under:-

	(million tonnes)
	1996-97 (Provisional)
1995-96	79.76
	83.28

(b) and (c) The amount of royalty paid to the State Governments of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar and the rates thereof are as under:

	(Rs. crores)	
	1995-96	1996-97
Madhya Pradesh	666.77	864.14
Bihar	658.33	682.77

The rates of royalty of various grades of coal as revised with effect from 11.10.94 are as under:-

Coal Group	Royalty rates w.e.f. 11.10.94 (Rs. per tonne)
1	2
Group-I (Coking Coal Steel Gr-I, II, Washery Gr-I)	195.00