

unskilled manual work to the rural poor who are in need of employment and seeking it and in the age group of 18 to 60 years. A maximum of two adults per family are to be provided employment under the scheme. In order to give special emphasis on backward districts in the country, the Intensified JRY was also introduced during 1993-94 in 120 selected backward districts of the country which have a concentration of unemployment and under-employment.

Besides the wage employment programmes, self-employment programmes are also being implemented through out the country to provide self-employment opportunities to the rural poor. IRDP is the major self-employment programme which aims at providing financial assistance to the rural poor for taking up self-employment activities. The financial assistance is given in the form of Government subsidy and term credit from banks. The target group for IRDP consists of small and marginal farmers, agricultural labour and artisans below the poverty line. Safeguards are also provided for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women and physically handicapped.

The Government has strengthened the poverty alleviation programmes during the Eighth Plan with a view to providing a better safety net to the poor during the period of reforms. A number of new initiatives have also been taken to improve the efficiency of the programme for creating better self-employment opportunities. This includes raising of level of investment, targetting of credit, increase in allocation for infrastructure development, encouragement to group activities and introduction of a new category of beneficiary for educated unemployed.

[English]

#### Supply of Gas

\*108. SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state .

(a) the rate of per cubic litre gas supplied to Assam and Tripura; and

(b) whether the Government is agreeable to supply the gas to Assam and Tripura at par rate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The price of natural gas in both Assam and Tripura is Rs. 1000 per thousand cu.mtrs. There is also a provision for a discount of Rs. 400 per thousand cu mtrs on a case to case basis

#### Domestic Oil Products

\*109 DR. RAMKRISHAN KUSMARIA :  
SHRI ANANTH KUMAR :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government had appointed a

committee to study opening up of the domestic oil products market;

(b) if so, whether the committee has submitted its report;

(c) if so, the details of recommendations; and

(d) the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) (a) to (d). Government has constituted a 'Strategic Planning Group' on restructuring of the National Oil Industry with members comprising of top management from public and private sector and leading experts from academic and research institutes. The group has not yet submitted its report.

[Translation]

#### Backward District

\*110. SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state .

(a) whether the Government have formulated any programme for the development of backward districts.

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to include certain districts of Bihar in the said programme; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) (a) to (c). The Planning and Development of an area and allocation of funds for this purpose is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government. However, Planning Commission helps the States, including Bihar, in overcoming the problems of backwardness through Special Area Programmes and allocation of Special Central Assistance under Tribal Sub-Plan in addition to providing weightage for backwardness in the formula for normal Central Assistance.

#### Multi-National Companies in Oil Sector

\*111 SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state

(a) whether there is large scale entry of Multi-national Companies in oil sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether ONGC has urged the Government to prevent the monopolising of the market by these MNCs.

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto, and

(e) the steps taken by the Government thereon?