

Membership Agreement has been signed with Telecommunication Industry Association of USA to exchange an Honorary and Friendly Membership Certificate between two associations and to engage in variety of co-operative activities including exchanging visit, views, key publications, encouraging members of each association to participate in Telecommunication Exhibition or Seminar sponsored by other association.

The Government has no role to play in this matter.

Amendment in New Pension and ESI Schemes

294. SHRI S.B. THORAT : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any representations from the National Trade Union Organisations seeking amendment in the new pension and ESI schemes;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) the details of changes/amendments under consideration/finalised?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (c). The Government had received suggestions for making certain changes in the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995. The suggestions inter-alia relate to removal of discrimination between married sons and married daughters and between remarrying widows and remarrying widowers, extension of the scheme benefits to the employees drawing wages beyond Rs.5,000/- per month, provision for commutation, education in discounting rate for early payment of pension, provision of ensuring pension payment in default cases, application of the scheme to the subscribers who did not join the Family Pension Scheme, 1971, refund of Family pension-related withdrawal benefit in the case of exemption and coverage of piece-rated workers. These suggestions have since been examined and notification carrying out necessary amendments in the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 has already been issued on 28.2.1996. Other suggestions like providing individual option, linking pension with the consumer's price index and giving pension as a third benefit have not been found actually feasible for acceptance.

2. The suggestions received about the ESI Scheme relate to increase in wage limit for coverage, enhancement in the per capita medical expense, provision of the Central Government's contribution towards the ESI Scheme, maintenance of Status-quo in respect of the workers' contributions etc. A draft notification providing interalia for enhancement in the wage ceiling from Rs 3,000/- to 6,500/- per month and for enhancement of the rate of contribution of the employer from 4% to 4.75% and for employee from 1.50% to 1.75% of the monthly wage has since been issued for inviting objections/Suggestions from all concerned.

Child Labour

295. SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY :
SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT :
SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state

(a) whether National Human Rights Commission has expressed dissatisfaction over the pace of implementation of programmes aimed at eliminating child labour/child labour in hazardous industries;

(b) if so, the effective initiatives taken by the Government in this regard during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(c) the achievements made and the funds provided utilised for the purpose during the above period, State-wise in general and Metro cities in particular; and

(d) the number of employers prosecuted under the Labour Act for employing children?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Government has taken a number of steps for the rehabilitation of child labour. As a part of the National Policy on Child Labour announced in 1987, project based action plan has been initiated in the areas of high concentration of child labour engaged in wage/ quasi-wage employment. A major activity undertaken under the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) is establishment of special schools to provide non-formal education, vocational training, supplementary, nutrition, stipends etc. to the children withdrawn from employment.

The number of NCLPs implemented during 1993-94 and 1994-95 was 9 and 12 with a coverage of 7000 and 14000 children respectively. A major programme was announced in August, 1994 to rehabilitate child labour working in hazardous occupations. As a follow up of the programme, Government is presently engaged in the task of rehabilitation of about 2 million children, working in hazardous occupations by the year 2002. During 1995-96, 76 child labour projects were sanctioned for rehabilitation of around 1.5 lakh children working in hazardous occupations in 11 child labour endemic states. State-wise details regarding these 76 projects are given in the enclosed Statement. The total expenditure incurred on all the National Child Labour Projects taken together during the last 3 years is as under :

Year	Expenditure
1993-94	2.89 crores
1994-95	1.43 crores
1995-96	33.90 crores

(d) According to the available information, 415 employers were prosecuted during 1995-96 for violation