

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The North Eastern Council is proposed to be reconstituted with the inclusion of Sikkim and the appointment of the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission as its Chairperson. The requisite bill will shortly be move before the Parliament.

(c) and (d) The North Eastern Council has met thrice during the last three years. The important recommendations made during these meetings include, *inter-alia*, restructuring of North Eastern Council to include Sikkim; adoption of special economic and industrial policy for the North Eastern region; introduction of helicopter services in the North Eastern region; according priority to construction of roads and bridges; provision of funds for maintenance of roads constructed with funds from the North Eastern Council; and provision of resources for development of airports in the North Eastern region.

Pharmaceutical Pricing Policy

2094. SHRI G. GANGA REDDY: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are going to introduce pharmaceutical pricing policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the pricing policy for the manufacture of herbal drugs in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL) : (a) and (b) 'Modifications in Drug Policy, 1986', were announced in September, 1994 and based on that Pharmaceutical Pricing Policy is already in existence.

(c) Existing pricing policy covers drugs used only for Allopathic medicines.

Minimum Wages for Agricultural Labour

2095. SHRI SADASHIVRAO DADOBA MANDLIK:
SHRI A. VENKATESH NAIK:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state.

(a) the number of mine/agricultural labourer in Maharashtra, category-wise, State-wise;

(b) the minimum wages fixed for these labourers in each State;

(c) the date of last revision in wages; and

(d) the factors taken into consideration for determining the minimum wages?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) to (c) Under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 both Central and State Governments are appropriate Government for fixation/revision of minimum rate of wages for scheduled employments under their respective jurisdiction. The Central Government is the appropriate Government in respect of the employment in various mines. Statement-I giving State-wise number of workers employed in various mines as on 1993 including coal mines and the existing minimum rate of wages as revised on 1.4.1998 for various categories of employment in mines is enclosed as Statement-II.

However, the State Governments are mainly the appropriate Government for fixation/revision of minimum rate of wages in respect of Agricultural workers. Statement -II indicating available information on minimum rate of wages for unskilled, number of workers and the date of last revision in different States/Union Territories is enclosed as statement-II.

(d) There are no uniform criteria for fixation of minimum rate of wages. The State Government take into account various factors such as socio-economic condition and market forces etc. while determining minimum rate of wages. However, the five norms recommended by the Indian Labour Conference in 1952 are generally adopted for fixation of minimum rate of wages. These norms provide for a wage rate sufficient to meet the consumption requirement of a family of 3 units on food, clothing, shelters, fuel, lighting and other miscellaneous items of consumption. There is a provision of Variable Dearness Allowance as part of minimum wages which is revised every six months as per the variation of Consumer Price Index Number.

Statement I

No. of mine workers and the minimum rates of wages as fixed under Minimum Wages Act.

(a) Number of Mine Workers in different States/UT's

States/UT's	No. of Workers (in thousand)
1	2
Andhra Pradesh	85
Arunachal Pradesh	1
Assam	19
Bihar	228
Gujarat	23
Haryana	5
Himachal Pradesh	1
Jammu & Kashmir	1
Karnataka	22