

[22 December, 1999]

RAJYA SABHA

Revision of Rate of Royalty for Lignite

*355. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that royalty on minerals is the main source of income of States;

(b) whether the Gujarat Government has approached the Central Government to streamline the existing system of departmentally fixing the rates of royalty;

(c) if so, the response of Government thereto;

(d) whether the Central Government propose to set up a statutory body of experts for the purpose;

(e) whether a decision has been taken to revise the rate of royalty for lignite every three years; and

(f) if so, the reasons for not revising the rate since 1990?

THE MINISTER OF MINES AND MINERALS (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK): (a) to (d) Royalty on minerals is one of the important sources of revenue for the State Governments. From time to time various State Governments approach the Central Government to streamline the system of fixation of royalty and/or revising the rate of royalty on minerals. As per the provisions of Section 9(3) of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, amend the Second Schedule to the Act so as to enhance or reduce the rate at which royalty shall be payable in respect of any mineral with effect from such date, as may be specified in the notification, provided that the Central Government shall not enhance the rates of royalty in respect of any minerals more than once during any period of 3 years. Study Groups representing all interested sections are periodically constituted by the Government to recommend revision in the royalty rates to the Government. There is no proposal to set up a statutory body of experts to streamline the existing system of fixing the rates of royalty.

(e) The provisions of Section 9(3) of the Act do not stipulate any specific periodicity for carrying out revision of royalty rates.

(f) Does not arise.

Talks with NSCN (IM)

*356. SHRI C. APOK JAMIR: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that talks are underway between the Union Government and the NSCN (IM);

(b) if so, where the talks are being held; and

(c) who are the participants in the talks from both sides and what is the progress so far?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Senior officials of the Government of India and Leaders of the NSCN (IM) have had several rounds of talks at different places and as a result a cease fire between NSCN (IM) and Govt, of India has come into effect in Nagaland since 1.8.1997 which continues till date and is currently valid upto 31.7.2000.

Ganga Kalyan Yojna in Maharashtra

*357. SHRI SURYABHAN PATEL VAHADANE: Will the Minister RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of beneficiaries comprising small and marginal farmers below the poverty line in Maharashtra, district-wise, under Ganga Kalyan Yojna; and

(b) what is the number of beneficiaries covered under this scheme from Adivasi and other than Adivasi areas, separately in that State?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) and (b) Eight districts of Maharashtra namely Dhule, Jalgaon, Buldana, Akola, Yavatmal, Amaravati, Nagpur and Chandrapur were covered under the erstwhile Ganga Kalyan Yojana. (GKY). The Yojana, which was started in 1996-97 could not be implemented fully due to some operational difficulties. It has therefore, been discontinued w.e.f. 1.4.1999. During its operation, only 25 individual projects comprising non-scheduled tribe beneficiaries in two districts i.e. Dhule with 4 and Akola with 21 could be implemented in the State.

Food for Work programme in Orissa

*358. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have Proposal to launch Food for Work programme in the cyclone affected districts in Orissa;

(b) if so, the funds earmarked therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to launch the programme?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) The High Powered Task Force for rehabilitation and reconstruction for cyclone area of Orissa has suggested that Food for Work' programme should be designed essentially for the 14 affected districts.