

vacancies are filled up from amongst persons belonging to these communities;

(b) whether any such review is being done for the Backward Classes also; and

(c) if so, whether there is any proposal by Government to review backlog vacancies of employment for backward communities?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) and (b) The position of appointments of SC/ST/OBC candidates is reviewed in respect of each calendar year. Special Recruitment Drives are also conducted for clearing the backlog of vacancies for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

(c) No, Sir.

Action plan to provide gainful employment in khadi and village industries sector

2477. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared any action plan to provide gainful employment on a sustained basis in the khadi and village industries sector in the country, particularly in the rural Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any plan outlay has been earmarked for this purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Based on the recommendations of the High Power Committee, KVIC is implementing the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) to create 2 million additional employment in the country through development of khadi and village industries. The programme includes (1) District Special Employment Programme (2) 125 Block Development Programme, (3) National Programme on Leather, Handmade paper, Beekeeping and Pottery and (4) Special Projects in thrust

areas. In Gujarat, three districts namely Banaskantha, Panchmahal and Kutch have been identified for the District Special Employment programme and 6 blocks, namely Dharampur, Dhanduka, Jasdai, Megraj, Savarkundla and Desada have been selected for the Block Development Programme. In addition to this, a few projects are also being taken up.

(c) and (d) HPC has estimated a total outlay of Rs. 5600 crores for the REGP involving about 1/3rd amounting to about Rs. 1865 crores as the budgetary support from the Government and the remaining as credit from the banks and financial institutions. For the year 1996-97, an amount of Rs. 6.30 crores has been earmarked by the KVIC for the State of Gujarat as per details given below:—

	Identified Programmes	(Rs. in crores)
1.	District SEP	3.00
2.	Block SEP	1.80
3.	Spl. Projects	1.50
	Total :	6.30

Hike in the Prices of Steel

2478. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether domestic steel majors may defer the plan to go for a sizeable across the board hike in steel prices and wait for steel market to improve to absorb the major part of the cost escalation burden;

(b) whether changing competitiveness in the steel market has also forced Tata Steel to change its price revision period from twice a year to four times a year;

(c) whether SAIL has already announced that it will be forced to hike steel prices; and

(d) the extent to which the prices of steel will be increased?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL & MINER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a)