

Boards have examined the matter of grant of Interim Rates of Wages to all employees in the newspaper industry and submitted their recommendation to the Government. The Government has notified the grant of interim rates of wages to journalists and other newspaper employees and newsagency employees at the rate of 30% of the basic wage with effect from 8th January, 2008 *vide* notifications S.O. No. 2524 (E) and S.O. No. 2525 (E) dated 24th October, 2008.

(c) The Government has appointed one independent member Shri K.M. Sahni as full time Member Secretary of the Wage Boards. He was appointed prior to the notification of the Wage Boards to get them operationalised. He has been receiving salary from the date of appointment. A post of Assessor besides others has been created for the functioning of the Wage Boards Secretariat. However, the post of Assessor has not been filled up on regular basis till date.

(d) The Chairman has tendered his resignation with effect from 31.07.2008, no specific reason has been mentioned.

(e) Representations were received from various quarters wherein the procedure to be followed for drafting and approval of the minutes etc. was raised. These have been dealt with and replied to.

Safety and security at construction sites

362. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware about the media reports that deaths at construction sites are increasing in the country;

(b) whether Government has issued any guidelines to private and public construction majors on the safety and security at construction sites; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Government has enacted the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 to regulate the employment and conditions of building and other construction workers and to provide for their safety, health and welfare measures. The Act has to be implemented by State and Central Government depending upon appropriate Government as per Section 2(a) of the Act. The Central Government has framed Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Central Rules 1998 which contains provisions and specifications for adequate safety and health of workers employed in the construction industry.

Inclusion of more families under NREG project

363. SHRIMATI RENUBALA PRADHAN:

SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government propose to include more families under NREG project;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the status of this project in Orissa and whether all the districts in the State have since been covered;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether this project is also proposed to be extended to farmers community; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) to (d) NREGA was launched in 200 identified districts including 19 districts of Orissa in the first phase of implementation of NREGA with effect from 2.2.2006. 130 more districts were added in the second phase during 2007-08 which included 5 districts of Orissa. All the remaining rural areas of the country have been included under the Act with effect from 1.4.2008. During 2008-09 (up to Jan., 2009), a total of 36968502 households have been provided employment under the Act. In Orissa, a total of 815588 households have been provided employment up to January, 2009.

(e) and (f) NREGA is demand based. The Act provides a legal guarantee of 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Thus, all rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Thus, all rural household including the farming community may benefit under NREGA if they register and obtain job cards and apply for doing unskilled manual work. Para 1 (iv) of Schedule I of the Act provides for the provision of irrigation facility, horticulture plantation and land development facilities on land owned by households belonging to the Scheduled castes and the Scheduled Tribes or to Below Poverty Line families or to beneficiaries of land reforms or to the beneficiaries under the Indira Awas Yojana of the Government of India.

Labour shift to NREGS affecting agricultural productivity

364. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:

SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the staffing of labour from fields to National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes has led to decline in the productivity of agriculture;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has taken up any study to assess the situation; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) No such instance has come to the notice of Ministry of Rural Development.