

(c) whether the drinking water situation in the country particularly in rural areas are at an alarming point; and

(d) if so, the efforts made by Government to effectively implement the revised guidelines for NRDWP also to ensure availability of safe drinking water in rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MS. AGATHA SANGMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A meeting of State Secretaries in charge of rural water supply was held on 1st July 2009 to review the implementation of revised guidelines of the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP). The issues discussed, *inter-alia*, were the status of re-alignment of existing data and filling of the gaps, setting targets for the current year, preparedness of each State to meet drinking water situation in the ongoing dry months, setting up the institutions required for implementation of the guidelines, etc. The participating States presented their status on the agenda points.

(c) and (d) The status of drinking water in rural areas in the dry months and preparedness of affected States was also discussed in the meeting on 1st July 2009. All States had been asked to review the drinking water scenario in their States and also draw contingency plan to tackle the problem. The States that identified problems in the dry season were Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra. The States have been tackling the shortages by supplying drinking water through tankers, trains, mules, etc. wherever required. Pending the passing of the Union Budget 2009-10, *ad hoc* release has been made in April 2009 to these States under NRDWP, for implementing the Guidelines and ensuring availability of drinking water in rural areas.

Ombudsman for NREGA

1927. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE:
SHRI N.K. SINGH:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to set up an ombudsman to redress grievances relating to National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the modalities to set up ombudsman for NREGA have been worked out; and

(d) if so, to what extent the various grievances arising out of NREGA are likely to be resolved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI PRADEEP JAIN): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The issue is under consideration.

Bungling of NREGS cards

1928. SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) cards were found in debris of a political leader's house in Khajuri in West Bengal;