

STATEMENT REGARDING GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): With your permission, Sir, I rise to announce that the Government Business during the remaining period of the first part of the Budget Session will consist of:-

1. Consideration of any item of Government Business carried over from today's Order Paper.
2. Consideration and return of the Appropriation (No.3) Bill, 2006, as passed by the Lok Sabha.
3. Consideration and return of the Finance Bill, 2006, after it has been passed by the Lok Sabha.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Administrative Tribunals (Amendment) Bill, 2006

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): With your permission, Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT - Contd.

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Now, the discussion on the working of the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Hon. Minister to reply.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO): Sir, in the discussion on the working of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, eleven hon. Members, including

Shri Chittabrata Mazumdarji, Shri Manoj Bhattacharyaji, Prof. Ram Deo Bhandaryji, Shri Devdas Apteji, Shri Ravula Chandra Sekar Reddyji, Shri E. M. Sudarsana Natchiappanji, Shri Abu Asim Azmiji, Shri Sharad Anantrao Joshiji, Shri Narain Singhji, Shri N.R. Govindarajarji have participated. Sir, the hon. Members have extended their valuable suggestions to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, for which, first of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the hon. Members.

Sir, while debating on the issue, hon. Members expressed their concerns regarding the labour welfare. Sir, through you, I want to assure the House that the UPA Government will stick to the National Common Minimum Programme and whatever is stated in the National Common Minimum Programme shall be implemented without any second thought. Sir, the Government is committed to the welfare of the labour in the country and the Government firmly believes that healthy workforce is the real wealth of the nation. That is why, as far as labour welfare is concerned, we will never compromise. Some of the hon. Members expressed some apprehensions. Particularly, Mr. Manoj Bhattacharya, who is not here now, was bit disgraceful to me, saying that 'the Ministry is sleeping, the Minister is sleeping; when he will wake up'. Sir, the Ministry is not sleeping; we are acting. We are striving our best, we are doing our best for the welfare of the workforce of the country. Members have shown their concerns in 3 - 4 areas.

Firstly, Sir, as far as the unorganised sector workers are concerned, this is an issue pending for the last four decades and so many Governments have examined it. One of the hon. Members has also pointed out that this was introduced initially in 50 districts. But, that was done by the previous Government, the NDA Government, for which there was no statutory backup; no financial provision was there. That was the reason why the Ministry of Finance withdrew the scheme. Now, after the formation of the UPA Government, the hon. Prime Minister has taken interest in the subject. The Chairperson of the UPA, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, is also very keen on this matter. She is personally taking a lot of interest in the subject. This has been discussed in various fora. A National Commission has also been appointed in this regard. The Commission has also submitted a draft Bill to the Ministry, which is under examination. I assure the hon. Members that the UPA Government will deliver. I think, I may come back in the House very shortly with legislation on the workers who are in the unorganised sector. I think, we will address that problem. Most

likely, I may come to the House with legislation before the end of the Budget Session. We are working on that very hard. This matter will be taken care of.

Another important thing raised by the hon. Members was that some of the multinational companies are derecognising the trade unions there. I want to assure the hon. Members that there is no separate set of laws as far as the multinational companies are concerned. There are no separate labour rules for the multinational companies. Anything is coverable under the same Act, the same law. If any specific case is brought to my notice by any hon. Member, we will take firm action. I assure the hon. Members, Sir.

Sir, I would also like to touch upon the subject of allocation of Budget to the Ministry of Labour. It has substantially increased, Sir. In the year 2005-06, the Budget was Rs. 1205 crores. For 2006-07, it has been increased to Rs. 1506 crores. On the Plan side, the Budget was Rs. 232 crores for 2005-06. For the year 2006-07, the Budget is Rs. 336 crores. So, on the Plan side, there is a substantial increase of 45 per cent over the last year.

Sir, I would like to touch upon some of the initiatives by the Ministry of Labour in the interest of the welfare of the labour. The *beedi* workers were assured in the Common Minimum Programme and the welfare of the *beedi* workers has been taken care of, Sir. The cess before the UPA Government for the welfare of the *beedi* workers, which used to be collected, was only Rs. 2 per thousand *beedis*. After my assuming charge as the Labour Minister, I have increased it to Rs. 5. Now, the fund under *beedi* workers' welfare has gone up from Rs. 71 crores to Rs. 150 crores. With that, we have also increased the sanction of houses for the *beedi* workers. Previously, it was only Rs. 20 crores. In the current year, we have sanctioned about Rs. 60 crores, and for the year 2006-07, we are going to sanction about Rs. 100 crores for the *beedi* workers' housing. Houses have also been sanctioned to the various States now under the Modernised Liberalised *Beedi* Workers Housing Scheme. In Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Karnataka, this Scheme has been liberalised. Previously, this Scheme used to be so complicated. Now, it has been simplified and the District Collectors have been asked to send proposals through the respective State Governments and the Government of India will sanction the houses. So many proposals are coming from the States after the liberalisation and simplification of the

housing scheme. A new hospital in West Bengal and Jhalda has also been sanctioned for the health care of the *beedi* workers. My friend, Mr. Chandra Sekar Reddy, was pointing out that the TB disease is the main disease which is affecting the *beedi* workers. It is a hazardous occupation, Sir. Only poor and backward people work in this sector. Now, we are providing the medical care to the *beedi* workers through dispensaries and hospitals. We are also spending about Rs. 10-12 crores on referral cases. Whenever there are cases of hazardous diseases, we are referring them to the private super-speciality hospitals, Sir. If any specific problem is brought to my notice, I will definitely take action in the matter.

Sir, under the ESIC also, the Government has taken certain new initiatives. One such scheme called "Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana" has been introduced by the ESIC for providing unemployment allowance for a period of six months to the workers who lose jobs involuntarily and are insured with the ESIC. This is a very good scheme.

Previous year, we spent about Rs.20 lakh in 151 cases up to February, 2006. The ESIC has also sanctioned about Rs.200¹ crore for setting up four Super-speciality Hospitals at Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata for providing better health care and medical care to insured persons of the ESIC.

The ESIC has also increased its wage ceiling for coverage from Rs.6,500 to Rs.7,500. A total number of 4.88 lakh employees are brought under the coverage through implementation and additional coverage in the implemented areas.

Total 17,221 factories/establishments covered during the year 2004-05. The ceiling on medical expenditure for providing medical care to insured persons has also been enhanced from Rs.750 to Rs.900 per IP family unit per annum, Sir.

Total 33.02 lakh cash benefit payments comprising Rs.264 crore has also been made by the ESIC. The ESIC also provides vocational rehabilitation through its Vocational Rehabilitation Centres. The daily allowance which used to be only Rs.45 has now been increased to Rs.123 per day.

Sir, on the problem of child labour, several hon. Members expressed their concerns. I must admit it in the House that this is a problem which needs to be pursued vigorously by the Government, because

today's children are the tomorrow's future of the nation. One crore and twenty-six lakh children are identified, and the Government has substantially increased the Budget from Rs.178 crore in the Ninth Plan to Rs.602 crore during the Tenth Plan. The Government has also increased schools from 4000 to 6850 during the year 2004-05.

This is a problem which is connected with socio-economic conditions of the families. The main reason for the child labour, in the country, is poverty. The Government is implementing a scheme called "National Child Labour Project" (NCLP) which has been launched initially in rural districts, but now it has been expanded to 250 districts.

We have also a scheme under implementation with the cooperation of American Government. It is called "INDUS Scheme."

To address this problem of child labour, senior officers and Secretary, Labour, undertake extensive tours across the nation and conduct review meetings with the concerned Chief Ministers, Chief Secretaries, Labour Ministers and District Collectors. These meetings are also yielding very good results in implementing the NCLP Scheme in the interest of the child labour.

Some new initiatives are there under the Director-General of Employment and Training. The Government has taken up a skill development initiative programme to improve the working standards of our workers and to make them on par with the world standards. Sir, the Government is modernising ITIs. Our thrust is on North-East and Kashmir under this programme. A new scheme for upgrading 37 existing ITIs in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and for starting a new women ITI at Jammu has been taken up during the financial year, 2005-06, by spending Rs.37 crores. A hundred per cent Centrally-sponsored scheme for the North-Eastern States including Sikkim with a total outlay of Rs.100 crores for establishing 22 new ITIs and for upgrading 35 existing ITIs is also under implementation. This will result in doubling the seating capacity in ITIs in the North-East from 7,244 seats to 16,144 seats. Under a new scheme of testing and certification of skills acquired by workers through informal means, competency-based standards in 46 hilly areas have been developed and eight thousand construction workers have been tested and certified. These are the initiatives. The main initiative is upgrading the ITIs. Now, Sir, 100 ITIs have been taken. Four hundred ITIs are also going to be

modernised with the cooperation of the World Bank. Discussions are going on with the World Bank.

Most of the Members have shown their concern regarding the construction workers and the workers working abroad. Sir, as far as workers working abroad are concerned, it is not my subject. But, I also faced problems. People do come from my constituency, from the district from where I come, regarding bringing back the dead bodies from the Gulf countries. It is a problem. Even I personally faced this problem. I have received so many representations. So, I would assure the Member, Shri Chandrasekar Reddy, that though it is not the subject of my Department, I will definitely take up the matter with the hon. Prime Minister and with the concerned Minister. There is a need to look into this matter. As the Labour Minister, this is my duty to take care of the workers. I assure the Member that I will definitely take up this matter with the concerned Ministry.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Can't your Ministry do anything?

SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO: No, Sir because this subject is not with me. Shri Manoj Bhattacharya, while referring to so many issues, said that the Labour Minister and the Department is sleeping. It is not correct, Sir. I beg to differ with the Member. We never sleep. We do our work. We take keen interest in the welfare of the working class of this country.

Now, Sir, I would like to touch upon certain issues and certain actions taken by the various Departments under the Ministry of Labour. For example, penal actions taken by the Provident Fund Department from 2001 to 2005. Sir, the number of prosecution cases filed against the violators and defaulters is 21,524; the number of convictions obtained is 7,174; the number of complaints filed under Criminal Code, that is, under section 408 and 409 of IPC, is 3,534; the number of convictions obtained under this is 30; the number of immoveable properties attached is 1,627; the number of moveable properties attached is 2,259; the number of bank accounts attached is 62,398; the number of arrest of defaulters is 567. These kinds of actions are taken by the Provident Fund Organisation wherever there is default or violation of rules of any establishment or any management. Sir, so many Members have also shown their concern regarding the violation of minimum wages under the Minimum Wages Act. Members have also

pointed out that can't we have a floor level, a national level, minimum wage. Sir, there is a floor level minimum wage rate fixed by the Government of India, that is, Rs.66. But this particular issue depends on the socio-economic conditions, the prevalent conditions, of the particular area or particular State because the living standards and so many other factors are the factors which are taken into consideration while fixing the minimum wages. The Government of India takes up this matter with various State Governments for revising the minimum wages, from time to time. Our Secretary keeps writing letters to the Labour Ministers and the Chief Secretaries, and he also conducts the review meetings as far as the implementation of minimum wages is concerned. Though this is a subject dealt with by the State Governments, the Government of India also takes keen interest for ensuring the minimum wages paid to the workers. According to the information available with me, the number of inspections made by the States and the Centre, put together, there are about 1530 scheduled employments which are looked after by the State Governments, in the Central Sector, there are 46 scheduled employments which are taken care of by the Government of India. Both put together, the inspections made were 9,86,856, the number of irregularities detected was 6,47,111, the number of irregularities rectified was 4,75,502, the number of claims filed was 67,445, the number of claims settled was 33,523, the number of persons prosecuted was 14,952, the amount realised was 1,09,00,000. These were the actions taken against the violations of the Minimum Wages Act. We take keen interest, and I assure the Members that where there is a specific problem in any State, or, in any part of the country, if it is brought to my notice, if need be, I would request my Secretary to go, or I would go myself, according to the intensity of the problem, and we will take up the matter with the respective State Governments to tackle the issue.

As far as the child labour is concerned, from the year 1997-98 to 2004-05, the number of inspections carried out was 21,80,129, the number of violations detected was 33,959, the number of prosecutions launched against the violators was 51,695, the number of convictions obtained was 19,636. The Department never sleeps. This is considerable action which has been taken by the Department. We do act upon wherever things are brought to our notice, wherever we receive complaints.

As far as the ESIC is concerned, which is another important organisation under the Ministry of Labour, the number of cases filed by the ESIC was 20,514. In the year 2004-05, 1453 cases were decided, the

number of convictions with imprisonments obtained was 403, the number of convictions with fine was 696, the number of cases acquitted was 151, the number of cases withdrawn on compromises was 39, the number of cases closed by courts was 974. So, these are the actions taken.

श्री जयन्ती लाल बरोट (गुजरात): मंत्री जी, जो प्रश्न उठाए गए थे यदि आप उनका जवाब दें तो अच्छा रहेगा। आप अगर इस तरह से जवाब देंगे तो क्या होगा, यह सब तो हमारे पास भी है।

श्री के० चन्द्रशेखर राव : मैं आपके प्रश्नों का उत्तर देने का ही प्रयास कर रहा हूँ। जब आपके वक्तव्य हो रहे थे, तब आप लोग कह रहे थे कि डिपार्टमेंट काम नहीं कर रहा है, कहीं कोई एक्शन नहीं ले रहा है, इसलिए ...(ब्यवधान)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Let the Minister reply. If you want to put any question, you can do so after the reply is over. But, let the Minister reply in his own way.

SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO: So, Sir, these kind of actions are taken. During the course of review meetings also, we take up the zonal level meetings, regional level meetings by extensive tours of the senior officers of the Ministry of Labour. Sir, whenever there were issues, even I went to those places myself. There was a problem with the Dunlop company in West Bengal. I went to that place myself. I tried to tackle the issue on my own. So, this is the way the Labour Department functions. It is not that the Labour Department is not functioning. It is not correct. I would like to inform the hon. Members, through you, Sir, that two, three important things, about which I am going to assure the Members, are that the concern shown by the Members regarding the unorganised sector workers, which is a huge workforce of the country, the Government is sincerely pursuing the matter to bring in a legislation. I will come back to the august House within a very short period. It has almost come to the final stage. I will definitely come before the House with a legislation to address the problems of the workers who are working in the informal sector. That is one thing which I would like to inform the Members because all the Members have shown their concerns regarding that sector.

Another thing is child labour. As far as child labour is concerned, we are very keen; the Government is prepared to spend any amount on that. You can also understand the substantial increase, in the Tenth Plan, from Rs.178 crores to Rs.600 crores. The figure itself shows the interest which the Government is showing. So, this area is also an area of concentration. We understand the density of the problem; we try to

address that problem with all sincerity. I also appeal to all the hon. Members to take keen interest because this programme is implemented in 250 districts of the country. So, I would request all the Members also to take some interest in their respective areas, in their respective States, and bring any specific thing to my notice so that we can take serious action and take it up with the respective State Governments to redress the problems faced by the children. So, these are the important things which are touched upon by the Members. These are the actions taken by the Labour Department. If there is any specific question by any Member, I am prepared to answer.

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, you have reduced the rate of interest on the Provident Fund from 9.5 to 8.5. Are you going to increase the rate of interest in the interest of the labour?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Mr. Minister, you note down all the questions and answer them in the end.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, yesterday, during the debate, I raised two important questions. One was with regard to the woman workers. You have not touched upon that. They are facing problems during the night shifts, and there are cases of assault and molestation. All those things are taking place. Surprisingly, the hon. Minister has omitted to mention them. Sir, he has not uttered one word regarding the woman workers. This is one aspect.

Number two; I had raised a question regarding bonded labourers. Sir, 2,80,000 bonded labourers were identified, but you have tried to rehabilitate to the extent of 2,66,000, leaving a gap of 20,000 workers. Out of 20,000, 6,000 are in Andhra Pradesh alone. I would request the hon. Minister to clarify that.

And the third aspect I had touched was increasing the hospitals for *beedi* workers. There are 13 hospitals in Andhra Pradesh, and 11 in Tamil Nadu. When compared with the labour force, people working in the industry, not only the hospitals are inadequate but the money allocated also is meagre. Please try to increase that.

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, the Ministry set up a Regional Vocational Training Institute. That is meant for only those who have passed the tenth and twelfth classes, not for others. So, I request

him to set up this institute in every district and allow the girls who have failed even in the tenth class.

My second point is...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Only ask a question. ...*(Interruptions)*... You can ask a question or seek a clarification on that. Don't raise a point.

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: ILO implemented Phase-I Project in Andhra Pradesh, and also, in the process of Phase-II ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): No, no; no more questions.

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Okay, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): From what you spoke, there is no question to be answered. Don't bring in new points.

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: I would request the hon. Minister to implement this Project in every district of Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI (Gujarat): Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister one thing. One serious point is arising regarding the increasing unemployment in labour force and farmers who are connected with the silk and textile industry due to import and dumping of silk cloth....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): No, no; that has nothing to do with the Labour Ministry. That question is not allowed. You put the question to the concerned Ministry.

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI (Maharashtra) : Sir, so far as legislation for agricultural labourers is concerned, the matter has been left to the States. As regards other unorganised labour, no legislation has come forward. As regards legislation for protection, it has come to mere constitution of an authority to look after the matter. It is actually a no action taken report. Even in the Minister's reply, there is nothing more than that.

SHRI CHITTABRATA MAJUMDAR (West Bengal) : Sir, I don't want to put questions. I have raised many issues which have not been replied to. Today I want to raise the same important issue - I am repeating it - that is about non-implementation and violation of labour laws by the management and by some State Governments.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): That question has already been replied.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry) : Sir, while replying to the debate, the hon. Minister stated that the Ministry is taking all possible steps to protect the interests of the labour. Yes, the Ministry is working and the Minister has been putting in a lot of efforts. The National Common Minimum Programme provides that the interests of the labour should be kept uppermost and the labour should be given full protection. It is also the policy of the UPA Government. Sir, when we go to some States, where the Labour Departments are working and where the Labour Ministry is the nodal Ministry, we find that their tilt is in favour of the management, whether it is the conciliation process or signing an agreement or resolving the disputes between the employees and the management. There is a lot of criticism that the interests of the labour are not being protected because the labour laws are not being implemented properly. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether to enforce the existing legislations -- there are umpteen legislations -- the Government will....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): No speech please.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, I will give only one example.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): No speech.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, I am concluding. The hon. Minister has given a brief reply.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): You put your question.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, I am putting the question. Sir, to enforce the existing legislations effectively at the State level, the Minister is having meetings with the Ministers and officers and discussing it with them and giving them guidelines.

My second point is about child labour. The hon. Minister has said that the Government is trying its level best to see that the child labour is abolished. I would like to tell the hon. Minister that the child labour is on the increase today.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): He has already replied to this point.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, his reply is not satisfactory. It is a common fact. Everybody knows it. Until and unless the Child Labour Abolition Act is implemented properly, this problem cannot be solved. The Minister can go through the papers and reply. But what is happening at the ground level? Today, the child labour is on the increase.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): That is enough.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, I am not blaming the Central Government. The respective State Governments are not taking positive steps to see that the child labour is abolished.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): You have made your point.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: But the reply has to come from the hon. Minister. My third point is about vocational training which is very important, which has also been raised by some of the hon. Members. Now, this country wants skilled and trained labour. All the States want to have skilled and trained labour. How are you going to do it?

SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN (Assam) : Sir, I want to bring to the attention of the hon. Minister one point which has been left out. In every State, throughout the country, there are Labour Tribunals. These Tribunals are taken care of by the State Government by appointing judicial officers in them. But this area has been neglected in almost every State all over the country. Hundreds of cases are pending, and the people are denied justice. I hope the hon. Minister will kindly bear it in mind and take action.

श्री नंदी वेल्लैया (आन्ध्र प्रदेश) : उपसमाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं श्रम मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे आन्ध्र प्रदेश में जो ईएसआई के हॉस्पिटल हैं, उनमें अब सिस्टम ऐसा हो गया है कि परमानेंट लेबर की रिक्रूटमेंट नहीं की जा रही है, परन्तु कांट्रैक्ट लेबर के द्वारा क्लीनिंग कराने का एक सिस्टम इंट्रोड्यूस किया गया है, लेकिन वहां पर उनको मिनीमम वेजिज नहीं दी जा रही है। मेरा निवेदन है कि मिनीमम वेजिज को पहले देखा जाना चाहिए। नम्बर 2 यह है कि प्रोवीडेंट फंड भी उनका कवरेज नहीं हो रहा है। आपके लेबर डिपार्टमेंट में काफी इन्सपेक्टर्स हैं, लेकिन वे इसके बारे में कोई कार्यवाही नहीं कर रहे हैं।

सर, मेरा दूसरा प्रश्न यह है कि लेबर डिपार्टमेंट के बारे में, शायद श्रम मंत्री जी को जानकारी नहीं है कि अस्पतालों में जो स्कैनिंग मशीनें होती हैं, हम लाखों-करोड़ों रुपये अस्पतालों पर खर्च कर रहे हैं, लेकिन मरीजों को स्कैनिंग करवाने के लिए बाहर जाना पड़ता है, इससे उनको बहुत दिक्कत होती है। सर, जहां पर मिनीमम वेजिज की प्राश्तम है, जैसे कि बीड़ी वर्कर्स हैं, एग्रीकल्चरल लेबर्स हैं, बहुत सी इंडस्ट्रीज भी हैं, उनके बारे में हमारा लेबर डिपार्टमेंट कुछ नहीं कर रहा है। ... (व्यवधान)...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो० पी० जे० कुरियन) : बस-बस हो गया।

श्री नंदी वेल्लैया : सर, सुनिये, यह बहुत इम्पोर्टेंट है। आप वर्किंग क्लास को नहीं देखेंगे, तो कौन-सी क्लास को देखेंगे? इसीलिए हम चाहते हैं कि इन तमाम चीजों पर ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए। हर तीन साल में मिनीमम वेजिज रिवाइज होती है, लेकिन इस बात को कोई देखता नहीं है कि उनको रिवाइज्ड मिनीमम वेजिज मिल रही है या नहीं मिल रही है? मेरा निवेदन है कि वर्किंग क्लास की तरफ देखा जाना चाहिए और उनको सही वेजिज मिलना चाहिए।

श्री धर्म पाल सन्नवाल (पंजाब): धन्यवाद उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय। मैं मंत्री जी से असंगठित क्षेत्र के बारे में स्पष्टीकरण चाहता हूँ। असंगठित क्षेत्र में जो मजदूर काम करते हैं, जिनमें खेत मजदूर हैं, सड़क पर काम करने वाले मजदूर हैं, बीड़ी बनाने वाले मजदूर हैं, ईट-भट्टे पर काम करने वाले मजदूर हैं और सफाई कर्मचारी हैं। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ, जैसाकि मेरे साथी ने मिनीमम वेजिज नहीं मिलने के बारे में कहा है, आज ऐसा समय आ गया है कि उनको टेकेदारी व्यवस्था की तरफ धकेला जा रहा है, जो खेत मजदूर है, जब कभी कोई सूखा पड़ जाता है, तो भूमिपति को तो कुछ न कुछ राहत मिल जाती है, लेकिन जो उसमें काम करने वाले खेत मजदूर हैं, वे भूखे रह जाते हैं, इनके लिए मंत्री जी क्या व्यवस्था करेंगे? इसके साथ ही, जो गंदगी की सफाई का काम करते हैं, जो सफाई मजदूर हैं ... (व्यवधान)...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो० पी० जे० कुरियन) : आप प्रश्न पूछिये। नो स्पीच। आप जल्दी पूछिये।

श्री धर्म पाल सन्नवाल : सर, मैं प्रश्न ही पूछ रहा हूँ। जो सफाई करने वाले मजदूर हैं, उनको भी टेकेदारी सिस्टम में धकेल दिया गया है। यह असंगठित क्षेत्र है, यह अपनी आवाज नहीं उठा सकता है, इसका कोई संगठन नहीं है, यह किसी अदालत में नहीं जा सकता है, क्या इनको भी मंत्री जी लेबर एक्ट में शामिल करेंगे? क्या मेरी इन सब बातों का स्पष्टीकरण मंत्री जी देंगे?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY (Karnataka) : Sir, recently, the Government introduced a housing scheme for the beedi workers. This is a new scheme as well as a very good scheme. Under that scheme, the Central Government is providing Rs.40,000 as grant...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN) : Please put a question.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Yes, Sir. And the beedi workers have to contribute Rs.5,000. Unfortunately, these beedi workers are not getting even two to three days of work in a week. This is the plight of the workers, and you are also aware of that. When that is the case, why can't the Government think of giving this amount of Rs.5,000 as well? Otherwise, this scheme is going to fail.

SHRI SURENDRA LATH (Orissa) : Sir, the Minister, in his reply, mentioned about defaulters in the matter of provident funds. But, as for

the conviction rate, he stated in his reply that it is only around 10 per cent. So, when you look at the number of defaulters and the conviction rate, the conviction rate stands at a mere 10-15 per cent. I want to know what action the Minister is contemplating so that these defaulters are convicted and penalised in more and more numbers and an early action is taken. Secondly, can the minimum wages be linked with the Consumer Price Index because the Consumer Price Index keeps on fluctuating all the time whereas the minimum wages are not increased correspondingly? So, the minimum wages should be linked with the Consumer Price Index. I want to know whether the Minister is thinking on these lines.

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA (Andhra Pradesh) : Sir, I have only one question.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIAN): No, no. No more.

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Sir, only one.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): All right. But only one, as a consideration for women Members.

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Sir, I want to ask the hon. Minister regarding women workers. Most of the workers in the unorganised sector are women, particularly in the agriculture sector. But, till today, they are not being given wages equal to what is being given to men. They work more but get only a small remuneration. There is a difference between the wages of men workers and women workers. Are you taking any steps in this regard?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): That is a very pertinent question.

SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL (Madhya Pradesh) : I have only one question, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): No more questions now. Please. You cannot convert it into a discussion.

SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Just one question, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): All right.

श्री प्यारेलाल खंडेलवाल : सर, प्रोविडेंट फंड का बहुत घोटाला हो रहा है। माननीय मंत्री जी बताएं कि जिन मजदूरों को प्रोविडेंट फंड अभी तक नहीं मिलता है, फैक्टरी वाले उसको दबा जाते हैं, उनके बारे में सरकार क्या करने वाली है?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Mr. Minister.

SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO: Sir, as far as the Provident Fund rate of interest is concerned, I will not be able to say anything now because I am bound by the Code of Conduct of the Election Commission. Elections are on in five States and this is a policy matter. So, I cannot say anything on that because of the Code of Conduct. Of course, this can be discussed later.

Shri Reddy had asked about women workers. Sir, I had brought a Bill in the Rajya Sabha for providing adequate protection to women workers, particularly those who work in nightshifts. After the Bangalore incident also, we had taken up the matter with all the State Governments for provision of adequate safety measures, deployment of police personnel, provision of vehicles etc. So, this matter has been taken up. I wrote letters to all the State Ministers and my Secretary wrote to all the Chief Secretaries. We will address this problem. If there is any specific problem brought to my notice, we will take action on that also.

Another point was about the bonded labour in Andhra Pradesh. Shri Reddy mentioned that 6000 workers were yet to be rehabilitated. I know this is pending because of the non-receipt of the Utilisation Certificate from the Government of Andhra Pradesh. This matter has been pending. Otherwise, there is no problem as far as the funds are concerned. We have a lot of money to spend.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: It is a long-pending problem.

SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO: Yes, it has been pending because of inaction on the part of the State Government, and not the Central Government. We are waiting for the Utilisation Certificate from the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

There was another point regarding the setting up of Regional Vocational Centres in all the districts. There is this demand from the women Member. I will have this matter considered and examined in a sympathetic manner.

Shri Sharad Joshi mentioned about the agriculture labour. I once again assure the House that problems of workers in the unorganised sector will be addressed adequately through an appropriate legislation very shortly.

The Government is ceased of this matter. The hon. Prime Minister is also taking keen interest in the matter. We have had many meetings with senior officers. It is almost in the final stages. We will come to the House with a suitable legislation to address the problems of workers in the unorganised sector. The workers in the unorganised sector also include the agriculture labour. We will come forward with a suitable legislation.

Shri Narayanasamy wanted to know whether there was need to strengthen our labour laws for providing adequate protection to labour. Sir, there are 47 Acts being implemented by the Labour Department. Almost all the Acts are very old Acts, some of 1948, some of 1952 and so on. There is a need to review all the Acts of the Labour Department, and, we have to see what measures can be taken to strengthen the enforcement of these legislations. The Government is taking care of it. Sir, we are reviewing it. I have already requested my Secretary in this regard. The Department is reviewing all its Acts, wherever amendments are needed, we will come back to the House with the necessary proposals.

Sir, as far as child labour is concerned, I have very sincerely confessed to the House that this is a hazard on the face of the country. Even my heart beats for them. If anywhere, any specific problem is brought to my notice, I assure the Members of the House that we will take all possible firm action with all determination. The Government is fully determined to abolish child labour from the country. We have made a beginning. In 58 hazardous areas we are working now. We are rehabilitating children, wherever we are receiving complaints. We have kept the amount available with the District Collectors. We are giving two lakh rupees to each district to create awareness also. This year, we are going to give some huge advertisements to create awareness among the people and the civil society that a person who engages children as labour should feel ashamed. Those kinds of efforts are on, Sir. The Government is firm on its resolve to abolish the child labour.

Sir, there was a question about non-working of labour tribunals. There are about 22 Central Government Tribunals. These tribunals are called CGIT-cum-Labour Court. There are some courts in the States also. About 14,906 cases are pending, and, 4,567 applications are also pending. Recently, we had a review meeting. We are also going to have a review meeting at the national level. We will see to it that these cases are disposed of, as soon as possible.

In the ESI hospitals, the work relating to washing of bed-sheets and other things has been given to the contract labour. The hon. Member informed me that the minimum wages are not being paid there. If the hon. Member brings to my notice any such thing, I will, definitely, act upon that. I will ensure that the wages are paid.

Sir, Mr. Poojary was referring to *bidli* workers' housing...

श्री नंदी येल्सेया : सर, हमने कहा कि मिनिमम वेजेज में जो उल्लंघन हो रहा है, मैं उसके लिए बोल रहा हूँ कि मैंने लिखकर ...(व्यवधान)...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो० पी० जे० कुरियन) : इसका जवाब दे रहे हैं। जवाब सुनिए, आप बैठिए।

श्री के० चन्द्रशेखर राव : इसका मैंने बहुत विस्तार से जवाब दे दिया है कि कितना उल्लंघन हो रहा है, कितना detection हो रहा है, कितनी surveillance हो रही है, इसके बारे में मैंने सब कुछ बता दिया है।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): No more question please. ...*(Interruptions)*... You need not respond to new questions. You only reply to the questions which have already been put.

SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO: If any specific case is brought to my notice, I will take action.

Sir, Mr. Poojary was referring to the contribution of the *bidli* workers. Actually, I fought with the Finance Ministry because the Finance Ministry has proposed for a contribution of Rs.10,000 from a worker. I and my Secretary took initiative, spoke to the officials in the Ministry of Finance and got it reduced to Rs.5,000. There are representations from various backward States like Jharkhand; some delegation came to me and said that they cannot pay that amount. We will, definitely, try to reduce this amount, as far as possible, Sir.

Sir, a question about default in provident fund was also raised. We are taking action in this regard. I have sufficiently informed the House about the cases filed. If anywhere any specific default is brought to the notice of the Ministry, we will, definitely, take action on that.

Sir, there was a question about equal remuneration to women. As far as equal remuneration is concerned, there is an Act for that. I think this is enforced all over the country. This is also implemented by the State Governments. Anywhere, if any specific problem is there, please bring it to my notice. The hon. Member was saying that in the agriculture sector still

there is some injustice being done to women as they are not paid on par with men. If any specific case is brought to my notice, we will, definitely, take action.

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Everybody knows that they are not being paid equal remuneration.

SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO: Sir, if the whole issue is generalised like this, I cannot act on that. The Acts are there; the State Governments are implementing it.

Sir, another thing which I want to inform the hon. Members and to this august House is that most of the labour laws like equal remuneration, minimum wages, etc., are implemented by the respective State Governments. Powers were delegated by this august House only. The State Governments are also Constitutional Governments. If things are told in a general way, we will not be able to do anything. If specific things are brought to my notice, we will act upon it. Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIAN): Now, discussion on the working of the Ministry of Labour and Employment is over. Before we take up Appropriation (Railways) No.3 Bill, 2006, for consideration and return, I would like to inform the House that Special Mentions will be taken up before we adjourn for lunch.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Appropriation (Railways) No.3 Bill, 2006

रेल मंत्री (श्री लालू प्रसाद) : महोदय, मैं प्रस्ताव करता हूँ कि :

"रेलों के प्रयोजनार्थ वित्तीय वर्ष 2006-07 की सेवाओं के लिए भारत की संचित निधि में से कतिपय राशियों के संदाय और विनियोग को प्राधिकृत करने वाले विधेयक पर, लोक सभा द्वारा पारित रूप में, विचार किया जाए।"

The question was proposed.

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the House about a serious concern of the people of Tamil Nadu over the deliberate decision of the Railways Minister to exclude setting up of freight corridor between Mumbai-Chennai, Chennai-Delhi and Chennai-