

conditions. Higher end-product prices or end-service prices would help lower aggregate demand and arrest inflationary pressures emanating there from.

(d) To lessen the burden of rising interest rates on the vulnerable sections of the society, the Government has been giving selective interest subvention in some areas. Besides, the Government is also addressing supply side constraints through a slew of measures.

#### **Quality of PMGSY roads in Bihar**

† \*110. SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the length of roads for which sanction for construction has been granted in Bihar recently under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), district-wise;

(b) whether Government is getting complaints about the quality of roads constructed by the Central agencies, such as these roads are breaking down within one year of their construction; and

(c) if so, what action Government is taking against guilty persons and the details of agencies and contractors against whom action has been taken so far?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Recently, the projects for construction of 1,900 kilometers of roads have been sanctioned for the State of Bihar based on Empowered Committee meeting held on 30th September, 2011. The districts benefitted are Aurangabad, Gaya, Jahanabad (including Arwal), Jamui, Rohtas and Nawada.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) As per the Tri-partite agreement between the Central Agencies, State Government and Central Government, the Central Agencies are responsible for constructing the roads and ensuring the quality for roads sanctioned to them. Also, all the roads are to be maintained for five years, after completion, by the same contractor who has constructed these roads. In addition, the Ministry also deposes National Quality Monitors (NQMs) to investigate the complaints and the Central Agencies are asked to take remedial actions as per reports.

#### **Revision of MGNREGS wages**

\*111. PROF. P. J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the current rate of wages being paid under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is less than the minimum wages prescribed under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government proposes to remove the existing conflict between MGNREGS and the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, by suitably revising/modifying the wages; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) In the States of Kerala, Mizoram, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan, the wage rate under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is less than the minimum agricultural wage rate for unskilled workers under the Minimum Wages Act.

(c) and (d) The primary objective of MGNREGA is to enhance the livelihood security of the rural households by providing upto 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a year to every household on demand for doing unskilled manual work and is, therefore, a safety net for insurance for those households or members of the household who are unable to get employment otherwise. Sections 6(1) and 28 of MGNREG Act give the Central Government power to determine wage rates for MGNREGA workers independent of other existing laws including the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. The MGNREG Act also provides for a host of other benefits to the workers which are otherwise not available to agricultural labour under the Minimum Wages Act. These benefits are in the nature of providing employment within radius of 5 km., in case distance is more than 5 Km, payment of additional 10% of wage rate as extra wages for meeting transportation and living expenses, free medical treatment for injury, expenses of hospitalization if required and payment of daily allowance, payment of *ex-gratia* in cases of death or permanent disability, provisions for safe drinking water, sheds/crèche for children etc., free medical treatment on injury to any child accompanying workers and *ex-gratia* payment. Till such time a separate and satisfactory index and mechanism for updation of MGNREGA wages is developed, wage rates under Section 6 (1) of MGNREGA has been indexed to the Consumer Price Index for Agriculture labourers (CPIAL). The revised wage rates were made applicable *w.e.f.* 01.01.2011 or the date of actual payment of the revised wage rates, whichever was later.

#### **Clearance to RIL-BP deal**

\* 112. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has cleared USD 7.2 billion, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and British Petroleum (BP) deal on 21 oil and gas blocks;
- (b) the price at which these blocks were contracted to RIL;
- (c) the investment made by RIL on these blocks so far and the amount earned so far by sale of gas;