

UTs in taking up housing and infrastructural facilities including basic facilities/amenities for the urban poor/slum dwellers in 65 select cities in the country including the State of Assam under Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) Programme. For other Cities/Towns, the Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) was launched. The duration of the Mission was upto 31.3.2012 which has been extended upto the March, 2015 for completion of projects sanctioned upto March, 2012.

Under this project, 18 projects with a total project cost of Rs. 193.43 crore and central share of Rs. 167.81 crore have been approved for constructing/upgradation of 10928 Dwelling Units (DUs) in 17 towns of Assam till 31st March, 2012. Of the sanctioned DUs, 2141 DUs have been completed. Rs. 87.61 crore has been released to the Government of Assam.

The Government of India also launched Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) on 02.06.2011 for providing houses and other related civic amenities to slum dwellers/urban poor. The Phase I of Rajiv Awas Yojana *i.e.* the Preparatory Phase, has been completed on 02nd June, 2013. The Phase II of RAY *i.e.* the Implementation Phase of Rajiv Awas Yojana, has been approved by the Government on 03.9.2013 for the period of 2013-2022. The Central support under the Scheme will be admissible to States/UTs and Central Government Agencies for providing housing including new houses, incremental houses, rental houses, transits housing and development/improvement of basic civic & social infrastructure & O&M of assets created under the Scheme. The implementation strategy of RAY is in two steps: (a) Preparation of Slum Free City Plan of Action (SFPCPoA) on whole city basis (b) Preparation of DPR on whole slum basis for prioritized slum. The State shall prepare Slum-free City Plan of Action for making their respective States/cities therein slum-free and seek central assistance under RAY.

State of Assam has been given Rs. 76.34 Lakh as first installment for preparatory activities to be undertaken for preparation of SFPCPoA.

Affordable houses for economically weaker sections

840. SHRI T. M. SELVAGANAPATHI: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering allowing States to have a tailor-made housing policy as different rules in different States make it difficult to have unified guidelines, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government has appointed consultants in consultation with the State Governments to draft policies for housing with special accent on affordable houses for the economically weaker sections; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (DR. GIRIJA VYAS): (a) 'Land' and 'Colonization' both being State subjects, are the responsibility of the State Governments as regards formulating their own housing policies, including those for the urban areas. Further, it is the prerogative of the State Governments to have their tailor-made housing policies to suit their regional, cultural and socio-economic context. States need not to take any permission of Central Government to prepare a tailor-made housing policy. However, Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation has been encouraging and supporting the States to prepare their respective State Urban Housing and Habitat Policy (SUHHP) and State Urban Housing & Habitat Action Plan, as outlined in the National Urban Housing & Habitat Policy (NUHHP), 2007. Some States have already prepared their State Urban Housing & Habitat Policy (SUHHP).

(b) No final decision has been taken to appoint the consultants to draft policies for housing with special accent on affordable homes for economically weaker sections.

Insurance and financial cover to Indian workers in Gulf Countries

841. SHRI S. THANGAVELU: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering to launch an ambitious scheme that would provide insurance and financial cover to over a million blue collar expatriate workers residing in the Gulf countries; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether Government has devised an elaborate formula that would govern the Government's contribution to the holders of the scheme; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) Government has launched Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana (MGPSY), a voluntary scheme to encourage and enable overseas Indian workers having Emigration Checked Required (ECR) passports going to ECR countries to:

- (i) Save for their return and resettlement;
- (ii) Save for their pension; and