

employment and for the matters connected therewith or incidental thereto applicable as per the provisions of this Act. The Act is applicable to whole of India irrespective of the job being classified as white collar or blue collar.

Revision of EPF Pension

2240. SHRI S. THANGAVELU: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) is considering to commence a Rs. 1,000 pension scheme and if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that the EPFO is considering to raise the monthly wage ceiling for mandatory provident fund contributions from Rs. 6500 to Rs. 15000 and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI VISHNU DEO SAI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government has since approved a minimum pension of ₹ 1,000/- per month to the pensioners under Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995 and has also approved a proposal for increase in wage ceiling for coverage under Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 from ₹ 6,500/- to ₹ 15,000/- per month.

New technology for mining sector

2241. SHRI VIJAY GOEL:

SHRI PRABHAT JHA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that productivity of mining sector is not growing at sufficient pace due to lack of investment;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the special policy measures being taken by Government to improve the condition of investment;

(c) whether it is required to use several such new technologies for making mining activities more cost-effective and dynamic, which are not available with India, at present; and

(d) if so, the action plan of Government to bring suitable new technology in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI VISHNU DEO SAI): (a) to (d) The technology and investment required for exploration and mining varies for different minerals and areas. Under the liberalised economic environment, investment decisions, including choice of technology, are taken by the entrepreneurs based on their techno-economic judgements and commercial considerations. The National Mineral Policy (NMP), 2008 enunciates policy measures in order to reduce impediments to investment and technology flows in the mining sector in India. The NMP, 2008 enunciates that mine development and mineral conservation as governed by the rules and regulations will be on sound scientific basis, with the regulatory agencies, *viz.* Indian Bureau of Mines and the State Directorates, closely interacting with R&D organizations, and scientific and professional bodies to ensure optimal Mining Plans. In addition, the Policy seeks to strengthen the indigenous industry for the manufacture of mining equipments and machinery. The NMP, 2008 envisages streamlining and simplifying the procedures in grant of mineral concessions in order to attract investment including FDI, into the mining sector in India. The policy seeks to facilitate import of mining equipment and machinery.

Technology offer by Australia in mining sector

2242. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Australia has shown keen interest in developing economic ties with India in mines and minerals sector by offering technology and mining requirement, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the status of investment of India in Australia in different sectors; and

(c) the action plan to boost this investment further in the above country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI VISHNU DEO SAI): (a) Yes Sir. The issues relating to mines and minerals sectors for the benefit of both the countries *i.e.* Australia and India are being discussed in the meetings of India-Australia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Energy and Minerals.

(b) Sector-wise status of India's investment in Australia for last five years is as follows: