

General Arrangement Drawing (GAD) of the same is under approval. Due to limited availability of funds and huge throwforward of already sanctioned works (₹ 31.700 crore), works are progressing to the extent possible.

Cash maternity benefits under NFSA

*101. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether pregnant mothers are entitled to cash maternity benefits under the National Food Security Act (NFSA);

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons for delay in implementation of this provision of the Act; and

(c) the steps taken by Government for early implementation of the provision?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Act provides for maternity benefit of not less than rupee six thousand to pregnant women and lactating mothers, except those in regular employment with the Central Government or State Governments or Public Sector Undertakings or those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being in force, subject to such scheme as may be framed by the Central Government.

The Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) for pregnant women and lactating mothers is being implemented as a pilot since October 2010, which presently covers 53 districts spread across States/UTs. Initially, pregnant women and lactating mothers of 19 years of age or above were receiving maternity benefit of ₹ 4000/- in three installments upon fulfillment of health and nutrition conditions. After enactment of the National Food Security Act, 2013, the maternity benefit was revised from ₹ 4000/- to ₹ 6000/- w.e.f. 5th July, 2013, payable in two installments.

Based on learning from the pilot, inter-Ministerial consultations have been held on a revised and expanded scheme for all districts.

Digitally connecting rural post offices

*102. SHRI PAUL MANOJ PANDIAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering to digitally connect rural post offices across the country and enable core banking facilities at 1,20,000 other post offices;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and