

Strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions

1405. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking any steps to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions in order to bring economic reforms in rural areas; and

(b) if so, the salient features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) A Conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers in-charge of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj on "Poverty Alleviation and Rural Prosperity through Panchayati Raj" was organised at New Delhi on 29-30 June, 2004, jointly by the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. The Conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister.

Issues relating to effective implementation of Part IX and IX A of the Constitution on Panchayati Raj were tabled as agenda for discussion by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. These issues included effective devolution of functions, finances, functionaries, planning, Gram Sabha, women, reservation for SCs/STs, special problems of SCs/STs, elections, audit, parallel bodies, capacity building and training, and State of the Panchayats Report and jurisprudence. The Conference decided to hold seven Round Table Conferences to formulate a draft action plan towards achieving the objective of strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions to enable them to become true institutions of self-government for the planning and implementation of programmes of economic development and social justice as envisioned in the Constitution.

The first Round Table Conference on "Panchayati Raj: Effective Devolution", comprising Functions, Functionaries and Finances, as well empowerment of Gram Sabhas was held at Kolkata on 24-25 July, 2004 in which Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj and their representatives agreed to recommend to the respective Governments the conclusions reached during the meeting on the subjects under consideration. The schedule of the following Round Table meetings is given in the statement.

[17 August, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

Statement

Round Table Conferences on Panchayati Raj

Round Table II:

Sat-Sun., 28-29 August: Bangalore — "Panchayati Raj : Planning and Implementation and Rural Business Hubs", including the question of parallel bodies.

Round Table III

Wed.-Thursday 22-23 September: Raipur—"Reservations in Panchayati Raj", comprising Scheduled Tribes (including implementation of the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA)), Scheduled Castes and Women.

Round Table IV

Sat-Sun 2-3 October: Chandigarh — "Panchayati Raj in Union Territories and Panchayati Raj jurisprudence".

Round Table V

Wed.-Thur. 27-28 October: (Venue to be decided) — "Annual Reports on the State of the Panchayats" (including preparation of a Devolution Index).

Round Table VI

Sat.-Sun., 27-28 November: Guwahati—"Panchayati Raj Elections and Audit".

Round Table VII

Sat.-Sun., 11-12 December: Pune — "Capacity Building and Training for Panchayati Raj Institutions".

Role of Panchayats in developmental Programmes

1406. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to constitute a monitoring agency to go into the question of how best panchayats are undertaking small developmental programmes; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?