

(c) The Chief Justice of Patna High Court has made recommendations for filling up of 7 vacancies.

Demand of North-Eastern Region

*196. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH-EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) what were the demands of the Chief Ministers from the North-East in the recent meeting with the Prime Minister held in Delhi; and

(b) the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) and (b) The Memoranda recently submitted by the Chief Ministers of North East to the Prime Minister contain the following demands:

ASSAM

- Inadequate 11th Finance Commission Awards and need for special package to compensate Assam.

A special financial package for additional flow of resources to the State.

- Changing the funding pattern of rural development scheme from 75:25 to 90:10 ratio.
- Additional bank finances for Self Help Groups.

Release of balance amount of special compensation package as provided by the then PM to compensate the losses incurred by floods in the State of Assam.

- Special fund for protection of Majuli island.
- East-West Corridor Highway project to be extended to Jayrampur in Upper Assam.
- Special financial package to be worked out to provide assistance to the Tea Industry.

- Higher allocation to Assam from NEC and NLCPR.
- Proposal to set up Assam Gas Cracker Project.

MANIPUR

- Financial assistance to meet the fiscal crisis faced by the State of Manipur because of inadequate 11th Finance Commission Award and implementation of the recommendations of the 5th Pay Commission.
- Liquidation of opening deficit of Rs. 607 crore.
- Grant of Special Assistance of Rs. 400 crore for filling up the gap under Non-Plan Revenue Account for firming up resources for financing 2004-05 Annual Plan.
- Adequate measures against militancy in NE States.

MEGHALAYA

- Inter-State boundary dispute with Assam to be resolved.
- The Umroi Airport to be upgraded.
- The Baljek Airport runway to be extended by another 700 meters.
- The State of Meghalaya to be connected by railway with the rest of the country.
- The Indian Institute for Management (IIM) to be established in the North East to be located in Shillong.
- Additional financial assistance for bridging the Non Plan Revenue gap to be given to the State.
- NLCPR assistance should be provided as 100% grant.

MIZORAM

- Proposal for creating self employment opportunities for the educated/uneducated youth in the field of bamboo processing.

NAGALAND

- Lack of progress in the ongoing peace process between the Government of India and the Naga underground.
- Amendment of the Delimitation Act, 2002 to commensurate with the needs of multi-tribal traditional society of Nagaland.
- Restriction on the size of the Ministry as a result of the constitutional 91st Amendment in 2003 is creating problems in the multi-tribal Naga society.

SIKKIM

- Direct Tax Laws should not be enforced in the State of Sikkim.
- Declaration of Sikkim as a Tribal State.
- Scheduled Tribe and OBC Status for other Tribes of Sikkim.
- Inclusion of Bhutia (Bhooti), Lepcha and Limboo Languages in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution.
- Establishment of National Institute for Natural Resources Management in Sikkim.
- Establishment of national Institute of Adventure and Himalayan Eco Tourism Management in Sikkim.
- Setting up of Central Agricultural and Horticultural University/ College.
- More Investment in hydro-Power Sector in Sikkim.
- Special Central Assistance to procure 10 seater helicopter for air transportation.
- Construction of Alternative National highway from Nathula to Siliguri.
- Setting up of North Eastern Hill University Campus in Sikkim.
- Construction of 500 bedded hospital in Reshithang, Gangtok.
- Construction of an Airport at Kakyong, East Sikkim.

- Facilities required in higher medicine in Sikkim.

TRIPURA

- Release of Gap grant to the State by Department of Expenditure.
- Financial Assistance to resettle 700 families affected by Border Fencing in Tripura.
- Rehabilitation package for surrendered militants.
- Extension of railway line from Kumarghat-Agartala.
- Setting up of a medical college.
- Early sanction of Monarchak Gas Turbine for production of power.
- Mitigation of the plight of Refugees from Mizoram in Tripura.

2. The above demands have been communicated to the concerned Ministries/Departments.

Burden on children

†*197. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that alongwith pressure of studies burden of school bag has also been increasing on children;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to take some steps to reduce this burden; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Yash Pal Committee (1993), in its chapter on the subject recommended, *interalia*, the following measures for reduction of the burden of school bag;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.