

Increase in Government's contribution to NPS fund

*276. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Cabinet has recently approved that Government's contribution to NPS fund for Central Government employees would be 14 per cent of basic and DA instead of 10 per cent earlier;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the date of notification;

(c) whether pension of those employees, who do not withdraw any amount from NPS fund will be 50 per cent of basic and DA would be admissible as is in the case of old pension scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government, on 06.12.2018, has approved enhancement of the mandatory contribution by the Central Government for Tier I accounts of its employees covered under the National Pension System (NPS) from the existing 10% to 14%. The employees' contribution rate would remain at the existing 10%. This would lead to an increase in the eventual accumulated corpus of all Central Government employees covered under NPS and greater pension payouts after retirement, without any additional burden on the employee. The issue of the Notification for the same is under process.

(c) and (d) The enhancement of Government contribution to 14% of the salary (Basic pay +Dearness Allowance) will increase the total monthly contribution from the existing 20% to 24% of salary. Further, the Government has also approved providing freedom of choice for selection of pension funds and pattern of investment to Central Government employees. The increased contribution, along with the choice of investment pattern and fund managers, is likely to result in an increase in the accumulated corpus at the time of exit from NPS on superannuation which will be used for purchase of annuity for pension. The concept of Dearness Allowance is applicable only in the defined benefit pension system.

Rise in food items inflation

†*277. SHRI SURENDRA SINGH NAGAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that food items inflation has been on the rise constantly in the country;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

- (b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to control this inflation; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (c) No. Sir. There has been massive moderation in food Inflation over the last four years. Food inflation based on the Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) averaged 6.4 per cent in 2014-15. It declined to 4.9 per cent in 2015-16, to 4.2 per cent in 2016-17 and further came down to 1.8 per cent in 2017-18. During the current financial year, it has declined from 2.8 per cent in April, 2018 to (-) 2.6 per cent in November, 2018 and has averaged 0.9 per cent upto November, 2018. Even the headline inflation based on Consumer Price Index - Combined (CPI-C) has reduced notably from 5.9 per cent in 2014-15 to 3.6 per cent in 2017-18. It was only 2.3 per cent in November, 2018.

Strengthening healthcare infrastructure in Visakhapatnam, A.P.

*278. SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that under National Health Mission (NHM), Government has identified Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh as one of the High Priority Districts which have weak healthcare infrastructure;
- (b) if so, the measures Government has taken under NHM to strengthen the healthcare infrastructure in Visakhapatnam;
- (c) the details of fund allocated, sanctioned, released and spent on healthcare infrastructure in Visakhapatnam and physical targets set and achieved so far; and
- (d) which are the other districts identified as High Priority Districts in Andhra Pradesh and status of each district?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA): (a) and (b) Visakhapatnam has been identified as one of the High Priority District in the State of Andhra Pradesh based on composite health index of districts. Public Health and hospitals being a State subject, the primary responsibility of providing accessible, affordable and quality healthcare and strengthening the healthcare infrastructure in the State including in the High Priority District of Visakhapatnam lies with the State Government. Following measures have been taken under NHM to strengthen healthcare infrastructure in Visakhapatnam:-

- The Area Hospital in Anakapalli upgraded as District Hospital