AIDS Vaccine

*218. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Scientists at the National AIDS Research Centre have recently begun test trials of India's first AIDS vaccine—modified vaccinia Ankara—to counter the strains of HIV sub-type 'C';

(b) by when the trials on human beings are expected to take place;

(c) whether the trials that have been conducted on animals were successful; and

(d) whether permission from the Drug Controller General of India has been obtained to get set for phase one of the human trials?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in December, 2000, with the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) to promote and accelerate efforts to develop an indigenous AIDS vaccine that will address the strain of the HIV-1 sub-type C, which is most predominant in India.

The Modified Vaccinea Ankara (MVA) based vaccine is being developed by two ICMR institutions namely, the National AIDS Research Institute, Pune and the National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED), Kolkata. This development of MVA vaccine involved innumerable complex and complicated steps and is yet to reach the stage of Phase-I clinical trials.

The HIV vaccine concept using MVA as a vector has been satisfactorily tested over the past five years on monkeys (macaques), in different laboratories across the world including at the National

Institute of Health (NIH), USA. The studies in respect of the immunogenicity and toxicity *vis-a-vis* the HIV vaccine appropriate for the Indian strain of HIV-I are being pursued at the Therion Biologics, USA where an Indian Scientist has been associated with developing the candidate vaccine (construct). The Phase-I clinical trials of MVA based HIV-I sub-type-C may start after these studies are completed.

As when the immunogenicity and toxicity studies in respect of the vaccine being developed are completed, and the data is available, the office of the Drug Controller General of India would be approached for permission to import the vaccine and to conduct Phase-I trials on humans in India.

Reimbursement of medical claims

*219. SHRI R.S. GAVAI:
SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of medical reimbursement claims of the Government employees and pensioners under the CGHS pertaining to the last financial year are pending;

(b) the number of claims and the amount unpaid, State-wise;

(c) by when these claims would be settled;

(d) the minimum time taken by Government to settle the claims;

(e) whether Government propose to modify or hasten the process of reimbursement; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) to (f) No, Sir. CGHS only deals with the individual medical reimbursement claims of pensioners and all the individual reimbursement claims received in the CGHS during 2002-2003 have been disposed of by CGHS except 125 medical claims in CGHS, Chandigarh and 11 claims in the Headquarters which have been