

Pending demands of AFHQ Stenographers

2658. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of demands concerning AFHQ Stenographers are pending with Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time since when it is pending; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The Armed Forces Headquarters Stenographers Association has been making representations concerning carrier prospects of its members from time to time. The decisions taken on such representations were communicated to the Association from time to time. Presently, creation of additional posts in the grade of Principal Private Secretary, and the introduction of Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE) for induction of graduate PAs in the grade of Assistant Civilian Staff Officer (ACSO) are the two main issues raised by the Association.

(c) The Fifth Central Pay Commission has also made recommendations on both the above issues which are being processed for implementation.

Introduction of Limited Departmental Competitive Examination

2659. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Fifth Central Pay Commission has recommended introduction of an L.D.C.E. in ACSO grade of AFHQ Civil Services on the basis of C.S.S.;

(b) whether such an introduction was accepted by Government earlier in 1985, 1988 and 1995;

(c) if so, the reasons for these decisions at each time;

(d) whether Government propose to implement the recommendation of the Fifth Pay Commission; and

(e) if so, the time likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The question of opening the avenue of Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE) for PAs for induction in the Assistant Civilian Staff Officer (ACSO) grade has been examined earlier on more than one occasion. However, no final decision could be taken because the matter involved conflicting interests and remained subjudice due to pending litigation.

(d) and (e) Amendment to the relevant rules is being processed to facilitate implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission. As interdepartmental consultation is involved no time limit can be specified.

Agitation against use of powerful explosives by BRO

2660. SHRI KARMA TOPDEN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the people of North Sikkim have been agitating against the indiscriminate use of powerful explosives by the Border Roads Organisation resulting in the destabilisation of the whole area being mountainous and also destroying the rich natural environment of the area;

(b) if so, what action Government have taken in this regard; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to curb these type of man made destruction of ecology and environment in the entire Himalayan belt in view of the recent calamities which occurred in the U.P. Hills?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GORGE FERNANDES): (a) Some representations have been received against the use of explosives in North Sikkim Highway at Rafamkhola. In this regard it is stated that huge boulders had blocked the above road. Since these boulders could not be moved mechanically, controlled blasting was done to open the important road.

(b) and (c) BRO have been informed about the importance of preservation of ecology and environment and instructed to take all possible measures to minimise the use of explosives.

Firing incidents of Indo-Pak border

2661. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of firing incidents on Indo-Pak border during the last six months;

(b) the number of persons killed and property damaged; and

(c) the measures taken to protect the lives and property of persons residing in border areas?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) During the six month period from June to Nov. 1998 there were 182 incidents of exchange of fire on the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL). 1822 incidents on the Line of Control (LOC) and 175 incidents on the International Border (IB) in J&K. On Pak side 611 persons were reportedly killed/wounded. On our side 67 security personnel and 34 civilians were killed. Two hundred Seventy three security personnel and 116 civilians were wounded.

In so far as the border in Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat is concerned there were 3 incidents of unprovoked firing from Pak Rangers, in which one BSF personnel was killed and two were injured.

The Indian Army respond appropriately to any firing initiated Pakistan. Enemy weapon systems suppressed neutralised by effective from our guns. Further, with a view protecting the civilian population the administration provide shelters, bunkers and various schemes.

Fire and accidents at DRDO, Oriss

2662. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the fire accidents Chandipur Defence Research and Development Organisation in Orissa.

(b) whether the matter has been investigated; and

(c) if so, the action taken against the persons involved in the fire accidents?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The cause of the fire was auto-ignition experimental propellant due to chemical deterioration.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of reply part (a).

Steps to make Navy self-sufficient

2663. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Navy is entirely dependent on foreign sources for submarines; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to make the Navy self-sufficient?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Mazagon Dock Limited Mumbai has constructed two submarines with some material and equipment obtained from foreign sources. Various steps have been taken towards production of submarines in India. Steps have also been taken to indigenise various components.