

[2 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

Plight of KargU Porter's Widow

1099. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the 'Indian Express' dated the 12th June, 2000 under the caption "Her husband died in Kargil, she skips meals to send kids to school" regarding the fate of Bina Devi, a widow of a Kargil porter and her children; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

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

(b) Shri Kamlesh Kumar, son of Shri Banarsi Das of Village Rehmbal, District Udhampur employed in No. 5 Porter Company, was killed on 10th July, 1999. His wife, Smt. Bina Devi was paid ex-gratia relief of Rs. 2 lakhs by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, in July, 1999 and another ex-gratia relief of Rs. 2 lakhs, released by the Ministry of Defence, was paid by the Army on 31st March, 2000. Her children have also been granted admission in Army School, Jammu Cantt.

Probe into Defence Deals

1100. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

(a) whether the Central Vigilance Commission investigating the controversial defence deals since 1989 has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that he had promised to probe into all the defence deals since 1985 and not 1989; and

(d) if so, the reasons for conducting the investigations into the deals since 1989 only?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERANDES): (a) No. Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Although initially the CVC was requested to get allegations of presence of agents, middlemen, middle companies in major defence deals probed from 1985 onwards, the year in which in the issue was brought into focus, subsequently the date was changed to 1989 as the Government's instructions regarding a total ban on agents, middlemen etc. in the procurement of weapons and weapon systems were issued on 17.4.1989.

Conversion of INS Vikrant as a Museum

† 1101. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been decided to destroy the INS Vikrant, which played an important role in the Indo-Pak war in 1971 and got Bangladesh liberated, after not succeeding in converting it into a museum;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether tenders have invited for the same; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) The State Government of Maharashtra had evinced keen interest in converting INS "Vikrant" into a maritime Museum. Accordingly, it was decided to gift the ship to the State Government for conversion into a museum. However, in April, 2000, the State Government conveyed its inability to implement the scheme. As such, it was decided to dispose of the ship as "Scrap". Tenders for the disposal of the ship were invited accordingly. However, on 4th July, 2000, the State Government of Maharashtra have renewed their request for conversion of the ship into a museum. As such, the process initiated for disposal of the ship as "scrap" has been kept in abeyance for the present.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.