

cently increased the interest rate by half per cent;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) how much more India will have to pay on this account;

(d) whether India had protested against the increase; and

(e) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The prime rate of U.S. Banks is reported to have gone up by half per cent and is now 13 per cent.

(c) Since the prime rate of U.S. Banks is domestic to U. S. Banking system and we have not approved recently and significant commercial borrowings in the United States, the direct impact of the increase in prime rate on our debt servicing liability would be negligible.

(d) and (e) Since this is an internal matter concerning the U. S. Banking system, the question of our making any protest as such does not arise. However, along with other developing countries, in various international fora, India has expressed concern about high interest rates prevailing in the developed countries.

Offer from Kerala State Small Industries Development and Employment Corporation Limited for Supply of Uniforms for Defence Services

916. **SHRI K. MOHANAN:** Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Department of Defence Supplies has received an offer from the Kerala State Small Industries Development and Employment Corporation Limited regarding the supply of 'Disruptive Pattern Combat Uniforms' for the army;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what decision the Department has taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO): (a) and (b) A request has been received from the Kerala State Small Industries Development and Employment Corporation Ltd. for a sample order of 1,000 sets of 'Disruptive Pattern Combat Uniforms' being placed on them.

(c) The matter is under verification.

Murder of Brigadier Puri of the Sikh Regimental Centre, Ramgarh (Bihar)

917. **SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:** Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what were the circumstances which led to the murder of Brigadier S. C. Puri at Sikh Regimental Centre, Ramgarh in Bihar;

(b) whether any Court of Inquiry has been ordered into the incident;

(c) if so, what are the findings thereof; and

(d) whether any financial or other help will be extended to the family members of late Brigadier Puri?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO): (a) to (c) On the morning of 10-6-84 some Army Personnel including recruits indulged in acts of gross indiscipline in Sikh Regimental Centre, Ramgarh, owing to the incorrect and exaggerated rumours about the Army action in Punjab Brig. S. C. Puri was shot while trying to bring them under control. The court of Inquiry ordered as in progress.

(d) As an immediate relief, the family of the deceased officer has already been paid Rs. 19,000 from Army Welfare Funds and dues from the Army Group Insurance Scheme amounting to Rs. 1.4 lakhs. In addition, the wife of Brig. Puri has been given special residential accommodation in Delhi and has also been allotted a flat in the Army Welfare Housing Organisation Project Som Vihar. Liberalised Family Pension, Gratuity and ex-gratia award admissible under the Rules, will also be paid to the family of the late Brigadier.

Remote chances of promotion in the income tax and Excise Departments

918. SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the chances of promotion in the Income tax and Excise Departments are very remote generally and in the clerical cadre particularly; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA): (a) and (b) The chances of promotion in the Income-tax and Central Excise Departments vary for each cadre in different grades of services in Group 'A' to 'D'. It cannot, therefore, be said that the promotion chances are very remote generally for each grade. In the case of clerical cadre, the clerical services are organised in the Income-tax and Excise Departments according to one or more Commissioner's/Collector's charges. The promotion prospects in such cases vary from charge to charge. In the case of Group 'A' services, cadre reviews have been undertaken in the Income-tax and Customs and Central Excise Departments. It may be mentioned that Federations of service associations represent on promotion prospects for the respective grades to the Government and these are given due consideration.

Consignment tax

919. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that States have been asked to retain 50 percent of the consignment tax in the course of the State trade; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA): (a) and (b) The Constitution (46th Amendment) Act, 1982 enables Parliament to levy tax only on inter-State consignment of goods, the proceeds of which tax have been assigned to the States. The matter regarding the levy of the said tax (consignment tax) was considered in the Conference of all Chief Ministers held on 2nd November, 1983 and 28th May, 1984. It was decided in the Conference held on 28th May, 1984 that 50 per cent of proceeds of the proposed consignment tax should be retained by the collecting State and the remaining 50 per cent should be placed in a divisible pool, the proceeds of which will be distributed amongst the States as per formula applicable for distribution of basic excise duties or such formula as may be devised in future for this purpose by a Finance Commission. Since the Union Territories have their budgets funded by the Centre, this arrangement will not apply to the Union Territories.

Investigation against Didwania Group of Companies

920. SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1069 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 8th May, 1984 and state:

(a) whether the investigations regarding import of steel items under