

(c) whether any assurance was given by Government to the representatives of the organisation in the matter?

THE MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) and (b) The All India Plantation Workers Federation has submitted a Memorandum to the Government on 12-11-1977 making the following demands:

(1) Common Minimum Wage of Rs. 350 per month all over India;

(2) Strict enforcement of the 'Plantations Labour Act' with stringent punishment for the defaulters and passing of the Plantations Labour (Amendment) Bill, 1973;

(3) Implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act and removal of the loopholes existing in the present Act as suggested by the All India Plantation Workers Federation;

(4) Revival of the Industrial Committee on Plantations;

(5) Make Plantations Labour Act applicable to smaller units irrespective of the number of workers which are being fragmented in order to avoid application of Plantations Labour Act. The Plantations Labour Act also should include the Coconut, Cardamom, Cocoa and Cloves plantations etc.;

(6) Refund of Compulsory Deposit Scheme money in cash;

(7) Recognition of a Union of Workers' choice;

(8) Nationalisation of big plantations and trade and taking over of sick and closed gardens by the Government.

(c) The memorandum is under examination.

Appointment of Retired Government officers to Diplomatic Assignments

1213. SHRI SYED AHMAD HANSHMI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Foreign Service Association has represented to Government against the induction of retired or retiring Government officials into the foreign service for diplomatic assignments;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) what are the names of the retired/retiring Government officials together with their qualifications who have been recently appointed to senior diplomatic posts; and

(d) what are the reasons for not posting personnel from the Indian Foreign Services Cadre to these senior diplomatic posts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. KUNDU): (a) The Indian Foreign Service Association has drawn the attention of the Government to this matter.

(b) Suitability and eminence of persons have to be taken into consideration at the time of appointing persons to senior diplomatic assignments abroad. Retired officials in this service are treated like other non-career appointments.

(c) A list is placed on the Table of the House.

(d) The question of sending appropriate persons from within the I.F.S. or others to represent the country has to be decided not only in the context of availability of suitable officers from within the I.F.S. but also keeping in mind other factors.

Statement

List of retired Government Officers who have been appointed Head of Missions

Name of Ambassador/High Commissioner	Country	Date of appointment at the station	Remarks
1. Gen. G. G. Bewoor	Denmark	9-2-76	Ex-Chief of Army Staff.
2. Shri Chhedi Lall	Panama	5-10-76	Retired IAS.
3. Shri M.A. Qurashi	Saudi Arabia	25-4-76	Retired ICS.
4. Shri S. Sen	(a) Permanent Rep. of India to UN.	28-1-69	Retired ICS/IFS and re-employed.
	(b) Bangladesh	10-7-74	
	(c) Sweden	13-12-76	
5. Shri R. Jaipal	Permanent Rep. of India to UN.	7-11-74	Retired IFS and re-employed.

Ties with West Asian Countries

1214. SHRI SYED AHMAD HASHMI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any efforts have recently been made to further strengthen economic and political relations with the West Asian Countries; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and with what results?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. KUNDU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government attaches the highest importance to consolidating, expanding and diversifying India's political and economic relations with West Asian countries. The Union Minister of Works and Housing and Supply and Rehabilitation, and the Union Minister of Industry, have visited various countries in this region during the last three months as the Prime Minister's Special Emissaries. These visits gave a new impetus to our political and economic relations with these countries.

The Sixth Session of the Indo-Iranian Joint Commission met in New Delhi in September, 1977. The 3rd Session of the Indo-Iraq Joint Commission was held in Baghdad in June, 1977, and the 4th Session in New Delhi in November this year. As a result of these meetings new areas of co-operation and exchanges between India and Iran and India and Iraq have been identified which will lead to a further strengthening of our ties.

The annual Haj Delegation led by Shri Arif Beg, Minister of State for Commerce, Civil Supplies and Co-operation, visited Saudi Arabia in November, 1977.

Industrial Unrest in the Country

1215. SHRI SYED AHMAD HASHMI: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is widespread industrial unrest in the country;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for such unrest; and