

MINIMUM WAGE

791. SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are evolving a policy so that minimum wage should be fixed so as to meet the minimum consumption needs of the worker and his family, and

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposals and what is the progress in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI G.VENKATSWAMY) : (a) and (b). The question of minimum wages in the context of a national Wage Policy is being considered.

INDIAN SAILORS IN PAK CUSTODY

792. SHRIMATI SITA DEVI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the Indian sailors captured by Pakistan during Indo-Pak war in 1971 are still in Pakistani custody;

(b) if so, the number thereof and the efforts being made by Government to get them released; and

(c) whether it is a fact that no Pakistani sailor is in Indian custody at present and all have been released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH) : (a) and (b). 21 Indian Merchant seamen have not so far been accounted for by Pakistan. Government is in touch with Pakistan through Swiss diplomatic channels to ascertain their whereabouts and secure their release.

(c) 101 Pakistani merchant seamen and 152 passengers captured from Pakistani merchant vessels apprehended on the high seas by the Indian Navy during the December 1971 conflict, who did not fall within the purview of the Joint Command of the Indo-Bangladesh forces in the Eastern Sector, have been repatriated to Pakistan.

Only one Pakistani Merchant seaman of this category remains in Indian custody and arrangements are being made for his early repatriation to Pakistan.

BREAK OUT OF FIRE IN INDIAN MARKET. SOUTH AFRICA

793. SHRIMATI SITA DEVI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any information to the effect that Durban's popular Indian market one of Natal's major tourist attractions in South Africa was totally gutted by a fire on the 16th March, 1973; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) Government of India regret to learn from Press reports that a fire broke out at the Indian market at Durban on the night of 16th March, 1973, causing extensive damage to the stalls and goods stored therein.

(b) The details are not exactly known, but according to the above-mentioned Press reports the loss due to fire is estimated to be of several million Rands.

COAL RECRUITING ORGANISATION

794. SHRI N.G. GORAY : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Coal Recruiting Organisation particularly the Gorakhpur Labour has been completely abolished;

(b) if so, Whether the outstanding amounts belonging to the Gorakhpuri Labour have been settled; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI G.VENKATSWAMY) : (a) After assumption of management of the Coal Mines, the Government has decided to stop recruitment of workers for the coal mines through the C.R.O.

(b) and (c) The matter is under consideration.