

after the one day nation wide strike in coal belt by the coal mine workers;

(b) whether West Bengal Government has proposed to nationalise the coal mines on the basis of the unanimous resolution on the issue adopted by the West Bengal Legislative Assembly; and

(c) if so, what is the reaction of the Government of India thereto?

**THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI S. MOHAN KUMAR RAMANGALAM):** (a) to (c) The Government have taken over the management of all the coal mines in the country, pending nationalisation of such mines, under the Coal Mines (Taking over of Management) Ordinance, 1973 (No. 1 of 1973).

#### BENEFITS TO WAR WIDOWS AND EX-ARMY PERSONNEL

\*117. SHRIMATI VIDYAWATI CHATURVEDI:

SHRIMATI SATYAVATI DANG:

SHRI S. B. BOBDEY:

SHRI V. R. PARASHAR:

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI:

SHRI N. JOSEPH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have seen press report about a statement made by Lt. General Candeth in Nasik recently regarding inadequate benefits given to War Widows and Ex-Army Personnel; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to review the whole scheme of giving pecuniary benefits to War Widows and to Ex-Service personnel?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI J. B. PATNAIK):** (a) and (b) A Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

#### STATEMENT

Reports had appeared in some newspapers to the effect that some statements had been made by Lieutenant General Candeth, etc., at a function at Nasik on 4th December, 1972 in course of which Government were requested to look into delay and inadequacy in giving assistance to war widows. Further, three widows were reported to have complained of delay and insufficiency in the grant of land and other help in their own cases.

2. Government got these three specific cases investigated and found that the complaints were not true. Smt. Lila Lakshmanan, wife of late Gunner R. Lakshmanan, was sanctioned a life pension of Rs. 159 per month. She also received gratuities and grants totalling Rs. 111390 from Central and State Governments and in addition, an annual grant of Rs. 1,000 for 10 years from the Amalgamated Fund. Free education up to 1st Degree level was sanctioned for her child; this also includes cost of books stationery and uniform. Ministry of Defence arranged to get a Kerosene oil agency allotted to her. She was helped to undergo secondary-grade training which she has now completed. Her name was got registered with Employment Exchange and, depending upon a convenient vacancy, efforts will be made also to get her a job. In addition to all this, Government allotted to her 3 acres of land free of cost in the vicinity of some land already purchased by her with her own funds.

3. Smt. Krishnaveni wife of late Gunner Kanan, was sanctioned a life pension of Rs. 138 per month. She received a total of Rs. 12,630 as gratuities and grants from Government and various funds. Since Government land in her own village, was not available, she was requested to intimate whether she would accept land at some distance. She has now agreed to the allotment of plot of land; State Government are taking action for its allotment. Smt. Sushila Kudam, wife of

late L Havildar Shivaji Kadam, was also similarly sanctioned a life pension of Rs. 180 per month and gratuities and grants totalling Rs. 11,954. Facilities of free education, including cost of books, stationery and uniform, were sanctioned for her child. In addition, she was allotted 4 acres of agricultural land, free of cost.

4. The measures taken to rehabilitate the war widows have been intimated to the House on several occasions. These measures are considered adequate. Constant review, however, is made to ensure that the needs of individual cases are fully met, as far as practicable.

5. At the function referred to in the Press Report, demand was also made for increase of normal pension of ex-servicemen. This matter is under the consideration of the Pay Commission.

#### INDIAN MERCHANT-NAVY MEN HELD IN PAKISTAN

\*118. SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some Indian merchant-navy men captured during the last Indo-Pak war are still held by Pakistan;

(b) if so, what is the number of such persons; and

(c) whether Government are taking any steps for their release?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH): (a) and (b) According to information available with Government, there are 66 Indian seamen in Pakistan's custody.

(c) Yes, Sir.

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#### INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN LONDON

\*119. SHRI BANARSI DAS:

DR. K. NAGAPPA ALVA:

SHRI BHAGWAT DAYAL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Deputy High Commissioner of India in London decided to give up his existing official residence and to rent an expensive house costing 500 pounds per month;

(b) if so, what considerations prevailed with Government in sanctioning this transaction; and

(c) whether Government have any policy with regard to residential accommodation for its senior diplomats abroad and if so, what are the main points of the policy?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH): (a) Till recently the Deputy High Commissioner lived in a house owned by the Government of India. Recently Government rented an alternative accommodation for him at a monthly rent of £ 466. The house owned by the Government is now occupied by the Minister (Education).

(b) The house which was previously occupied by the Deputy High Commissioner is situated at a distance from Central London. Due to deteriorating traffic conditions it was found that more and more time was being taken up on the road which adversely affected the Deputy High Commissioner's official and representational duties. Government decided to rent accommodation in a more central area which saves the Deputy High Commissioner considerable time in travelling to the High Commission etc.

(c) Government always tries to buy or rent residential accommodation for its senior diplomats abroad which will enable them to live in reasonable comfort and perform their duties with maximum efficiency and effectiveness.