

pointed to certain 'dangerous' lacunae in the labour laws ;

(b) what are the details of these lacunae ; and

(c) what steps have been or are being taken to remove the same ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Some of the important points made are listed in the statement attached.

(c) Proposals for amending the Industrial Disputes Act to lay down a procedure for identifying the bargaining agent, etc. are already under consideration.

Statement

1. Certain safeguards in the structure of labour laws could alone prevent avoidable dangers to industrial harmony.
2. There is no provision in labour legislation except in the State Acts of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, for identifying the bargaining agent.
3. A fool-proof system of identifying a bargaining agent is such an essential pre-requisite for collective bargaining that, unless it has the approval of all trade union federations of the country, it would be putting the cart before the horse in reporting to collective bargaining for settlement of industrial disputes.
4. Unless this stalemate is resolved, inter-union and intra-union rivalry will jeopardise all prospects of industrial peace.

Increase in the price of Newspapers

441. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that certain newspapers, such as Financial Express have increased the sale price of the daily newspaper, with effect from June 1, this year ;

(b) if so, whether the increase has had the approval of Government ; and

(c) what is the extent of the increase and the justification thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The newspapers are not required to obtain approval of the Government for increasing their sale price.

(c) Some newspapers like the "Financial Express" and the "Patriot" have increased their sale price by 10 paise each. The increase has been generally attributed by the newspapers concerned to the rising cost of production and operation.

Fire at LPG Plant of Gujarat Refinery

442. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : SHRI UTTAMBHAI H. PATEL :

Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a fire broke out at the liquified Petroleum Gas Bottling Plant of the Gujarat Refinery on Wednesday 1 June, 1983 ;

(b) if so, what was the cause of the fire and the extent of loss of life and property involved therein ; and

(c) what steps have since been taken to prevent any recurrence of such incident ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PETROLEUM IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI GARGI SHANKAR MISHRA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Investigation carried out has revealed that the occurrence of fire might be due to venting of LPG from defective cylinders/valves and the possible sources of ignition could be on account of collision of cylinders against each other or static electricity generated by the venting operation. One contractor's labourer died due to burn injuries after hospitalisation. The loss of property is estimated to be around Rs. 10 lakhs. The damage to property was restricted to a portion of electrical cables, light fixtures, a part of asbestos roof and some mechanical equipment of conveyor system. Besides 371 cylinders were destroyed.

(c) Steps taken to prevent any recurrence of such incident are as detailed below :

1. Supervision has been tightened to ensure that leaky cylinders are evacuated through the system provided and not vented and that cylinders are not rolled.
2. Gas detection monitors are being installed.
3. Water sprinkler system is being provided.
4. Evacuation facilities for leaky cylinders are being provided at all LPG Bottling Plants.
5. It is being ensured that the repair facilities for cylinders are kept at a safe distance from the stack of filled cylinders.
6. In addition, special safety checks and safety audit systems have been introduced and platforms for loading/unloading of cylinders are being extended to ensure greater safety.

**Telecommunication System in
Saurashtra Region of
Gujarat State**

443. SHRI NAVIN RAVANI :
SHRI MOHANLAL PATEL :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that telecommunication system is badly affected in the flood-hit districts of Saurashtra region in Gujarat State ;

(b) if so, the details of damages done ;

(c) what steps are being taken to set the system right ; and

(d) by when will the telecommunication system function normally ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
(SHRI V.N. GADGIL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The damages caused by the cyclone in Gujarat were as given below :

(i) Telephone connections	20,000	Nos.
(ii) Telephone exchanges	108	Nos.
(iii) Carrier and VFT system	59	Nos.
(iv) Trunk Lines	2496	KMs.
(v) Local Lines	1739	„
(vi) Coaxial Cable Route	205	„
(vii) Microwave route disrupted	90	„

(c) (I) All out efforts have been made to restore the telecommunications on a war-footing.

(II) Additional staff, stores, vehicles have been diverted from other divisions on top priority basis.

(d) About 80% restoration work has already been completed on temporary basis. The remaining work is expected to be completed by the end of next month.

The restoration on permanent basis may take another three months.