

of standing orders on the basis of which the labourers are being exploited, I would like to submit that the standing orders are not above the law. However, if labour laws are being overlooked and standing orders are followed instead and such a thing comes to the notice of the Government, action will be taken. Apart from this, the suggestion of constituting a commission has a wider ambit. It is in the interest of the labour force that labourers are may not exploited and this suggestion is under consideration in the Ministry.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Committee has made certain recommendations and has given suggestions in this regard. I would like to ask the Hon'ble Minister as to what are the recommendations made by the Committee regarding abolishing the contract labour system. What steps does the Government propose to take to protect the labourers? Whether the Government intend to take any action to abolish the contract labour system or not? If it is going to take any action, the time by which it is likely to take and if not, the reasons therefor?

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA : The concern expressed regarding problems relating to contract labour system is genuine and this issue is under the consideration of the Government. An announcement is likely to be made in this regard very shortly.

SHRI CHANDRAMANI TRIPATHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Minimum Wages Act is being violated in Madhya Pradesh. Along with the contract labourers, the daily wagers working in the Government Departments are also drawing less amount than the stipulated minimum wages. I would like to know from Hon'ble Minister as to whether the Government is aware of it? If so, what action does the Government propose to take in this regard?

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA : Sir, the minimum wages stipulated in Madhya Pradesh is Rs. 26.46 and maximum is Rs. 55.19. Hon'ble Member has spoken of the violation of Minimum Wages Act in Madhya Pradesh. I do not have the information as to how much dearness allowance should be added to Rs. 26.46 but over all the minimum wages should not be less than Rs. 35.

SHRI CHANDRAMANI TRIPATHI : Will you look into it?

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA : It will be looked into and if the wages are found to be less than the required minimum wages, the State Government will be asked to rectify it.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Militancy in J & K

85. **SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN :**
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the recent massacre by the militants in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) if so, the number of persons killed by the militants in the State of Jammu and Kashmir since the beginning of 1998;

(c) whether the Government have found any evidence of the involvement of any of our neighbouring countries in encouraging the militancy in J & K; and

(d) if so, the efforts made by the Government to bring normalcy in J & K?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) Yes, Sir. A Group of armed militants killed 26 persons in the night of April 17/18, 1998 at Parankot and Dhakikot villages in Udhampur district.

(b) The number of persons killed by militants in 1998 (upto 30.4.98) is as below :

Civilian	Security Force
248	62

(c) It is a well known fact that Pakistan is sponsoring, aiding and abetting militancy in J & K. Interrogation reports of a number of militants arrested by Security Forces and diaries/documents etc. recovered from them have confirmed this fact.

(d) The steps taken by the Government to tackle militancy in J & K include sustained anti-terrorist operations by the Police and the Security Forces, including intensive patrolling on the border/LOC and hinterland, establishing pickets in vulnerable areas, strengthening of State Police, strengthening of the intelligence network and coordination of security arrangements among various agencies. Development needs of the State are also receiving urgent attention and the State Government is facilitated in its various efforts to restore normalcy.

Mahajan Committee on Sugar Industry

*86. **SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN :**
SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to decontrol and discontinue the sugar supply through Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Mahajan Committee constituted to review the sugar policy has submitted its report;

(d) if so, the details of the recommendations made by the committee; and

(e) the reaction of the Government thereto indicating the advantages of implimenting such proposals?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SARDAR SURJIT SINGH BARNALA) : (a) to (e) The Mahajan Committee constituted to review the Sugar Policy, has submitted its report on 15.4.1998. The Committee has made the following major recommendations :-

- (i) Reservation of sugarcane areas for mills should be on a permanent basis. Permission to lift cane from another reserved area should be given only after the requirement of the linked mill are fully met. Any decision to de-reserve an area earlier allotted to a sugar mill should only be carried out after giving an opportunity to the mill to show-cause against such action.
- (ii) Continuance of the industrial licensing provisions. They have recommended that the concept of minimum economic size should be dropped. They have also suggested that the minimum distance between two sugar mills should be restored to the previous level of 25 kms.
- (iii) Complete de-control of sugar. As an alternative, they have suggested that this may be phased out over a period of 2 years. It has further been suggested that the statutory levy percentage be reduced to 20% from the beginning of the next sugar season, and that it be retained at that level for 2 years. After the expiry of those two years, the levy provision be abolished. Supply of sugar through the PDS be discontinued after implementation of de-control. Sugarcane prices be determined by a sugarcane Pricing Board, consisting of an economist of repute as Chairman, and with members from the various concerned Ministries/Departments, one representative each from the National Federation of Co-operative Sugar Factories and Indian Sugar Mills Association, and two representatives of cane growers (one from tropical and another from sub-tropical region). If Government wishes

to continue PDS, the sugar be obtained at market prices from the mills. In the interim period of two years, the statutory levy price be based on a cane price determined by the Statutory Sugarcane Pricing Board. The additional cost of purchase of sugar in this manner be met by increasing the excise duty. After complete discontinuance of PDS, the current level of subsidy of sugar be added to the subsidy on foodgrains under the PDS.

(iv) Distribution control under Sugar Control Order be continued after the de-control of prices.

The recommendations of the committee are under examination in Government.

Wheat Scam In FCI

*87. SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a multi-crore wheat scam has been detected in the Food Corporation of India during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have conducted an inquiry in this regard;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the action taken or proposed to be taken against the guilty officials?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SARDAR SURJIT SINGH BARNALA) : (a) to (e) In January, 1997, some reports appeared in the press alleging that FCI officials were flouting the norms of Open Market Sales Scheme (OMSS) and the Wheat was being sold to fictitious firms which caused shortage of wheat in the market which resulted in rise in prices of wheat. Taking cognizance of the press reports. The Hon'ble High Court of Punjab & Haryana *Suo-moto* initiated a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) proceedings (Number 915 of 1997). After detailed hearing in the matter, the Hon'ble High Court ordered on 25.7.97 that the Deputy Commissioners of Punjab & Haryana will look into the circumstances under which wheat under OMSS (Domestic) happened to be siphoned out of the State. The conclusions arrived at by the Deputy Commissioners in the report were to be examined by the CBI to pursue further course of action. In pursuance of the Hon'ble High Court's orders, the CBI has registered 13 cases so far in this regard.