

of the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the nation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. RAJA RAMANNA): (a) and (b). Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

(c) Upto two dependants of defence service personnel killed/disabled in action including war widow, are entitled to priority-II (a) (disabled over 50% disability and unfit for employment, but disability attributable to military service) for purposes of employment under Central Government, against Group 'C' and 'D' posts. In respect of IPKF casualties, as a special dispensation, Government have issued guidelines to various Government Departments and Public Sector undertaking to provide:

- i) Priority for employment to be given to disabled personnel for employment under Government over other normal cases of ex-servicemen against vacancies reserved for ex-servicemen;
- ii) Priority and compassionate appointment to dependants of IPKF personnel killed in Sri Lanka operations with suitable relaxation to the extent possible, especially regarding criteria for consideration of terminal benefits received while assessing need for such appointment.

Felling of Mango Trees

6928. SHRI VASANT SATHE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of large scale felling of mango trees for manufacturing timber packing boxes over the recent years in Maharashtra and other states;

(b) if so, estimated damage done by felling of mango trees for packing of oranges, and

(c) the strict measure/action proposed against felling of mango trees and banning the manufacturing of timber packing boxes as an effective step for preserving mango trees in Maharashtra-Vidarbha region in Particular?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (c). Information is being collected from the Government of Maharashtra and other States and will be placed on the table of the House.

Measures for Rural Growth

6929. SHRI G.S. BASAVARAJ:
SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJES-
WARI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission is considering some new measures to promote rural growth in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI BHAGEY GOBARDHAN): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir, The approach to the Eighth Plan, which is being evolved, puts emphasis, among others, on greater bias for the development of the rural sector. In this respect, it is envisaged to allocate 50 per cent of the public sector outlay, in the Eight Plan for programmes and projects which benefit agriculture and rural sectors. A guaranteed programme of employment would be a major element in this approach. It is also proposed

to take measures to ensure the spread of small industry to rural areas and give special emphasis to the development of village industries. In addition, it is also proposed to transfer a substantial part of the responsibility for planning and implementation of rural development programmes to elected representative institutions of local government alongwith financial resource so as to undertake integrated area planning through people's participation for maximisation of growth and employment in the rural areas.

Cultural Agreement with Pakistan

6930. SHRI. G.S. BASAVARAJ: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any cultural agreement with Pakistan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether Government propose to have any cultural agreement with Pakistan in the near future; and

(d) if so, the details of the proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Cultural Cooperation Agreement between India and Pakistan was signed on 31st December, 1988 at Islamabad and came into force from the 18th June 1989 with the exchange of Instruments of Ratification. It envisages the promotion and development of relations and understanding between the two countries in the realms of art, culture, archaeology, education, mass media, information and sports. Its chief features include exchanges of academicians, exports, artists, writers, musicians, sport teams, books, publications, art objects, art and other exhibitions; participation in seminars, international

film festivals; offer of scholarships and establishment of cultural centres.

(c) and (d). Does not arise.

Central School in Kottayam District in Kerala

6931. SHRIRAMESHCHENNITHALA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to start a Central School in Kottayam District of Kerala; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. However, the sponsoring agency has not yet been able to provide necessary facilities for opening the Vidyalaya. Pending this, the vidyalaya cannot be started.

Increase in Rate of Family Pension

6932. SHRI RAM SAGAR (Saidpur): Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rate of family pension is too meagre particularly in the case of low paid employees;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to increase the rate of family pension; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) No, Sir. Improving upon the recommendations of the Fourth Central Pay Commission that the minimum family pension may be fixed at Rs. 300/- p.m. the Government have fixed the