

Information has also been received that a section of employees attacked an armed Security Guard on duty at the Cash Room in the Factory Administration Office and that the employees snatched the firearm from the Security Guard, threw him out of the window and assaulted him causing multiple injuries. It has also been reported that two cartridges of the Security Guard's firearm were missing. Sensing the tense situation, the Management declared a lockout with effect from 6.00 a.m. on 12th February 1983. The lockout was lifted from 6.00 a.m. on 17th February, 1983. The situation is reported to be normal now.

Production loss due to the lockout is estimated at approximately Rs. 50 lakhs. During the period of lockout, the employees are not entitled to wages.

**Supreme Court decision about payment of minimum wages**

\*236. SHRI SURAJ BHAN:  
SHRI ATAL BIHARI  
VAJPAYEE:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Supreme Court on September 18 last decided that taking of labour or services for a payment less than the prescribed minimum wages was violative of Fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution;

(b) steps taken as the follow-up action; and

(c) whether labour officers have been advised to be alert that in their areas labour is not paid less than the prescribed minimum wages; if so, upto what level?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI DHARMAVIR): (a) Yes, Sir. The Supreme Court has issued certain directions in the matter.

(b) and (c) The directions of the Supreme Court have been communicated to the authorities concerned with the request that immediate steps may be taken to ensure that the provisions of the labour laws are strictly enforced.

3573 LS—2.

Proposals are also under consideration for amendment of the Minimum Wages Act, *inter-alia*, to make penalty provisions more deterrent.

**Coal reserves in Birbhum, West Bengal**

\*237. SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether coal resources have been found in Birbhum district of West Bengal;

(b) if so, what is the amount of reserves and the place where it has been found;

(c) has a Super-Thermal Plant been proposed to be built there;

(d) has the work begun; and

(e) when will it be completed?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Preliminary investigations in Kasta, Jaydev-Khagra and Dewanganj-Harisingha areas in Birbhum District have shown possible reserves of 840 million tonnes. Further detailed exploration has to be done to arrive at more reliable quantitative assessment of reserves.

(c) to (e) There is a proposal of NTPC to set up a Thermal Power Station in Birbhum district in West Bengal. The feasibility of project has not yet been established.

**Import of crude oil**

\*238. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been invited to a news-item emanating from Mexico City, published in the Calcutta 'Business Standard' dated 18 February, 1983 that Oil importing developing countries including India, will face serious hikes in the energy prices in the coming three years according to the World Bank Report Agencies;

(b) whether some Gulf States have begun to sell oil at below official OPEC prices to compete with discounts offered by other Members of the exporters group; and

(c) if so, how India proposes to build its stock of oil and make 'spot' purchases and thus conserve its future export earnings?

**THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR):** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Press reports have appeared that recently some Gulf States have offered some discounts in the spot market.

It has been the policy of Government to arrange imports of crude oil mainly through term contracts with national oil companies of oil exporting countries at official prices in order to ensure proper security of supplies even when there is a scarcity of crude oil in the world market as has been the case on a number of occasions. Overall this has proved advantageous also since frequently spot market prices have been higher than official selling prices.

Plans to further increase the domestic storage capacity of crude oil are also under implementation.

#### **Diminishing natural energy**

\*239. **SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI:** Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of the decisions taken to meet the challenge posed by the diminishing sources of natural energy in the Sixth Five Year Plan; and

(b) progress made therein?

**THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR):** (a) and (b) The Energy strategy for the VIth Plan includes the following major elements:

(i) Accelerated exploitation of domestic conventional energy sources.

(ii) Management of oil demand.

(iii) Promoting energy conservations.

(iv) Development of new and renewable energy sources.

(ii), (iii) and (iv) above contribute towards meeting the challenge posed by diminishing sources of conventional energy. A summary of decisions and actions in this regard are given below:

(i) Management of oil demand:

The following measures have been taken to curtail the growth of oil demand:

(a) Acceleration of railway electrification programme to reduce diesel consumption in railway traction.

(b) Emphasis on long distance transport being carried by railway rather than road transport.

(c) Oil or gas not being used as primary fuel in new utility power stations.

(d) Adopting rational pricing policy for petroleum products.

(e) Development and marketing of high efficiency kerosene cooking stoves.

(f) Scheme for replacing inefficient boilers in industry.

(g) Ministry of Transport are taking necessary steps to increase multi-axled heavy transport vehicles and for introduction of turbo charger to improve fuel efficiency.

(ii) Promotion of energy conservation:

Apart from measures taken for conserving oil as mentioned above, further measures to achieve higher energy efficiency are as follows:

(a) Whether combined generation of electricity and process heat is possible, this is being encouraged.

(b) In several States action has been started for improving the efficiency of pumpsets used for irrigation.

(c) Improved designs of domestic wood burning stoves have been evolved.

(d) Attention is being paid to measures for bringing down the proportion of energy consumed in production and distribution of electricity.

(e) Action has been taken for establishing Regional Load Despatch Centres, strengthening of the Regional Grids and execution of high voltage transmission lines for linked regions in order to ensure optimal utilisation of electricity generated.