

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SWARAN SINGH):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka and India have been in contact with each other on this matter.

(c) Government are cooperating fully in order to ensure the implementation of the Indo-Ceylon Agreement of 1964, which, as Honourable Members are aware, deals with the question of Stateless persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka.

President Nixon's Assurance to Pakistan to help release of P.O.Ws in India

*622. SHRI H. N. MUKHERJEE:
SHRI M. S. SANJEEVI RAO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the statement made recently by President Bhutto's Special Emissary, Mr. Ghulam Mustafa Khar, after his return from Washington, that President Nixon has assured Pakistan that he would use his good offices for the early release of the Pakistani Prisoners of War held in India; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SWARAN SINGH):

(a) Yes, Sir. Government have seen reports to this effect.

(b) Government are convinced that sub-continental problems can best be resolved through direct negotiations between the countries concerned without any third party intervention. This view has also been reflected in various statements made by U.S. Official spokesmen.

Purchase of war-ships from Yugoslavia via India

*627. SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is purchasing three War-ships from Yugoslavia; and

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(b) if so, the cost of these ships and how much foreign exchange is involved; and

(c) the time by which these ships will reach India?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and c). Do not arise.

Position of Orissa in total Minerals output and Export thereof

*632. SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state the position of Orissa in the total mineral output and export in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI S. MOHAN KUMAR RAMANGALAM): Orissa occupies the sixth position in the statewide order of value of mineral production during 1971 and 1972. Two statements showing:—

(i) The position of Orissa in the total mineral production in India during 1972, and

(ii) the despatches for exports of minerals for the whole of India and for Orissa during 1972.

are placed on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library.. See No. LT-4725/73].

Setting up of a Third Wage Board for working Journalists

*635. DR. GOVIND DAS RICHHARIYA:
SHRI P. M. MEHTA:

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

(a) whether the Government have since taken any final decision on the question of appointing another Wage Board for the Working Journalists; and

(b) if so, its terms of reference?