

may tell the House, it was the Assam Government which did not grant the licence so long to exploit the oil wells that were in existence in Assam. On the question whether it has been provided for in the Fourth plan the answer is yes.

**SHRI N. R. LASKAR :** The people of Assam welcome the announcement of the Prime Minister because it is the fulfilment of a legitimate demand. Primarily the State of Assam is concerned with it; since the Central Government is going with this project, may I know to what extent they would associate the Assam Government in this project ?

**DR. TRIGUNA SEN :** My hon. friend was also present yesterday when we discussed this question with the Assam State Government officials. They have submitted a scheme and they have agreed to see whether the two schemes can be considered together.

**SHRI P. G. SEN :** The hon. Minister just now stated that the Assam Government has now allowed the exploitation of crude. May I know the reasons why the Assam Government did not allow this earlier ?

**DR. TRIGUNA SEN :** Let us forget the past. Now they have done it.

**SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH :** For what reasons did the Assam Government disallow it ? You cannot simply say they have disallowed it.

**SHRI BASUMATARI :** We are glad to hear the statement of the hon. Minister that this is not a political decision but an economic decision and technologically it is a feasible proposition. But a feeling has gained ground in Assam that things will be done for Assam only when there is an agitation. Our request to the hon. Minister is to do justice to Assam, which is the poorest State, in the matter of economic development.

**DR. TRIGUNA SEN :** I am extremely sorry to say that the agitation that was started in Assam was by the political parties; I repeat that it was only by the political parties. Because, the leaders of the parties knew that we have appointed an experts committee, we were going to find ways and means to exploit the extra crude that was available in Assam itself. Still, they wanted to play it off and so they started his agitation, which was very unfortunate.

**SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH :** Sir, he is attributing motives to the political parties. Does it mean that political parties should not take up public issues ?

**DR. TRIGUNA SEN :** In this case there was no necessity because the decision was taken before.

**SHRI P. G. SEN :** Was the dispute with the Assam Government on the issue of the royalty ?

**DR. TRIGUNA SEN :** No, not on royalty.

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### Indian Pilgrims Drowned in Persian Gulf

\*873. **SHRI DHANDAPANI :** Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that one hundred and five Indian and Arab pilgrims to Mecca were drowned in the Persian Gulf on 11th March, 1970;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether their relatives in India were informed about their death and whether any compensation has been paid to the families of the victims ?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH) :** (a) to (c). Government have made enquiries in connection with the accident which occurred off the coast of Abu Dhabi on or about 11 March, 1970. According to the information available, no Indians were involved in it. The question of informing relatives or of compensation to families does not therefore arise.

### पाकिस्तान में पद्मा नदी पर गंगा बांध परियोजना का प्रभाव

876. **श्री हुकूम चन्द कछवाय :** क्या सिंचाई तथा विद्युत मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) पाकिस्तान द्वारा गंगा नदी की एक सहायक नदी पद्मा पर गंगा बांध बनाये जाने के कारण पश्चिम बंगाल के अनुमानतः