

cases, I have mentioned it and about the criminal cases, if the hon. member wants it, I will furnish it.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER . He will collect the information and give it to you.

SHRI RAJ KUMAR RAI : About the criminal cases also, I want to know as to what action is being taken on the valuable information given to him by the public. So far, what has been done ?

Pak Firing on Indian Border

[Translation]

*5. SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Pak troops have opened fire several times on the Indian border;

(b) if so, whether any meeting has been held between India and Pakistan for a mutual settlement;

(c) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(d) whether Government of India are also taking counter measures ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI K.C. PANT) : (a) Yes, Sir; There have been some cases of unprovoked firing by the Pakistani troops across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir.

(a) and (c) Matters relating to such incidents are sought to be resolved in flag meeting between the local Commanders. However, no such meeting has been held during the last one year.

(d) Our Armed Forces maintain full defence preparedness at all times to meet any threat to the security of the country.

[Translations]

SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to submit through you that the hon. Minister has not given a proper reply to my question. The hon.

Minister has referred to some incidents but has not stated the exact number of the incidents and also the losses suffered by the Indian army. Will the hon. Minister kindly make this clear?

MR. SPEAKER : I will not allow an unclear reply.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.C. PANT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has asked whether Pak troops have opened fire several times on the Indian borders. Since many years both sides have been indulging in firing across the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir. There has been firing from the Pakistan side and our troops have also returned the fire. This has become a normal state of affairs there. Last year, the number of such incidents was somewhat more but this year it has been less. I am, however, not in a position to give you the exact number. Whenever there is a confrontation across the line of Control, then it is obvious that there would be some exchange of fire. In the absence of any confrontation such incidents do not occur normally. In the Siachen area, two such incidents have taken place. But I do not want to include them because these are quite different. The hon. Member has not asked a specific question in this regard and that is why I have not given a specific reply.

SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that no flag meeting has been held during the last one year between the local commanders. If these meetings had been held, then perhaps the losses would have been avoided. Therefore, may I know the reasons for not holding flag meetings between the commanders of the two countries to prevent recurrence of such cases and the names of officers responsible for such carelessness and when the next meeting is likely to be held ?

SHRI K. C. PANT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, two flag meetings were held in 1986. Flag meetings are held when some major incident occurs or there is some dispute over a certain position. In 1987, it was not thought necessary to do so. What has happened in Siachen, there is no question of any

carelessness about it. When we saw that there was an unusual concentration of forces on that side, our Army Commanders drew the attention of their counterparts on the other side towards this situation and expressed concern to them over the situation which might lead to confrontation, and asked them not to allow the situation to escalate. When we realised that an extraordinary situation was being created, we took precautions to the extent that we got in touch with them through the hotline at the military level and asked them to refrain from provoking us. Therefore, the question of carelessness does not arise.

{English}

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : The hon. Minister in replying to the first supplementary said that Siachen does not come under this question. But subsequently, he has referred to Siachen. Therefore, I would like to know his views about the recent informal talks that our Prime Minister had with the Prime Minister of Pakistan in Kathmandu.

Obviously, such types of incidents do start afresh. So, I want to know what is the response of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to the views put forth by our Prime Minister ?

SHRI K. C. PANT : Sir, this is a question I cannot answer. I do not know exactly what the answer of the Prime Minister of Pakistan was on this question. I have referred it to Siachen. I thought the hon. Member may have had that at the back of his mind when he put the question. I know that the country is concerned, the House is concerned, about the manner in which our posts were attacked. Our soldiers fought valiantly and attacks were repulsed. I am sure that I would be expressing the sentiments of the House if I extend my congratulations to our troops for the valiant manner in which they fought.

As I was just explaining, the responsibility for these attacks rests squarely on Pakistan, because through our own channels, our hotline between the two countries at the military level, we are in touch with them. When we saw there was an unusual concentration of forces, more coming in

and on the basis of the information of our Army Commander, we got in touch with the counterparts to say that this is a matter of concern for us and please do not allow the situation to escalate. Nevertheless it did escalate at two points. They did attack once in the last week of September and once in the first week of October. So, we tried to take this precaution of telling them not to allow the situation to escalate which is unusual. In order to avoid this kind of possibility, we took that step. It is not for want of a warning on all sides that this took place. It took place deliberately and therefore the response had to come from us.

SHRI G. G. SWELL : I think the Minister has been pettifogging when he says that he did not want to associate the Siachen incident and firings on the border. I think, he owes it to enlighten the House on this. Now, I would like him to enlighten us as to the strategic importance of this waste of snow and ice at 14,000 feet to Pakistan so that it was prepared to squander so many lives of its men. Our troops fought valiantly. We congratulate them. We are happy about it. We have said so.

Then, I hope the Minister must have heard about Makran, Badaber, Mowripur, Gwarda, Turbat, Pasani, Jwani and Panjguar. Do all these names have any military significance to him and what is their military significance ?

PROF MADHU DANDAVATE : Secret cannot be revealed.

SHRI K. C. PANT : I do not know if really one should discuss this matter in this manner in the House. I would be perfectly prepared to discuss this matter with Prof. Swell if he wanted to discuss it.

SHRI G. G. SWELL : I have put the question in the House.

SHRI K. C. PANT : I do not know if the military significance of a particular area should be discussed openly by us in the House.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Call him in your chamber.

SHRI K. C. PANT : I will certainly tell him. I have no objection to telling any hon. Member. I say openly here goes out and therefore, perhaps he will agree with me that it will be better to discuss this across the table.

SHRI P. NAMGYAL : Mr. Speaker Sir, I would like to know the number of times the Pakistani troops have made attempt to capture our posts in Siachen heights during the last one year and the number of casualties suffered by the Pakistani side as well as by our troops and also the number of sophisticated weapons deployed by the Pakistani side and captured by our troops. Whether any personnel of Pakistani troops on patrol duty have been captured by our troops in Siachen sector that is in the Ladakh Sector and if so, may I know the details?

MR. SPEAKER : No. For that also, you go to him.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Now Question 6—Mr Jagannath Pattnaik is not there. Next Question—Shri Tulsiram.

D. A. To Central Government Employees

7 *SHRI V. TULSIRAM : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a hike in the prices of commodities to the extent to 5 per cent during the period 1st January to 30th June, 1987 .

(b) if so, the reasons for not making cash payment of the DA arrears to the staff even after the declaration in this regard by Government ;

(c) whether Government are modifying the procedure to give DA to the staff ; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the time by which necessary action is expected to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B. K. GADHVI) : (a) The 12-monthly

average Consumer [Price Index on 31st December, 1986 was 661.03 and the same on 30th June, 1987 was 687.50. Thus taking the 12-monthly average CPI of 608 as on 1-1-1986 as base, the hike in prices of commodities was 8.73% on 1-1-1987 and 13.07% on 30-6-1987 resulting in an increase of 4.34% during 1st January to 30th June, 1987.

(b) to (d) Keeping in view the acute drought condition in the country and the overall situation, the Staff side has been requested to agree to deposit the D.A. due from 1-7-1987 in their GPF accounts. The discussions are still going on and the final decision is expected to be taken shortly.

[Translations]

SHRI V. TULSIRAM : Mr. Speaker Sir, it is good that the hon. Minister has admitted that prices have gone up. I was actually thinking that he may deny this fact.

SHRI B. K. GADHVI : We always speak the truth.

SHRI V. TULSIRAM : It is good that you speak the truth but Mr. Speaker, Sir, a very large number of Government employees draw very low salaries and due to phenomenal rise in prices, they are facing serious problems and are in great trouble. The hon. Minister is right in saying that our country is in the grip of a dreadful drought situation and the Government is thinking in the right direction to combat it but it is also true that the low paid employees of the Government of India have been seriously affected by the drought conditions and consequent price-rise. If you do not pay the dearness allowance at the earliest, then only two alternatives will be left to them, that is, either to accept bribes or commit thefts or indulge in some other unlawful activities. Thus the Government will be responsible for their wrong conduct. If relief is not provided to these poor people earning such meagre salaries, how will they be able to support themselves. Today they have to face many hardships due to phenomenal rise in prices. Besides, as an hon. Member has just referred to Pakistan border, they may not infiltrate elsewhere, we will have to give a serious thought to it as well.