

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Bhoi, you are asking question after so many days.

[*English*]

Are you fit now ?

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI. Completely Sir

Honourable Speaker, Sir, the main question is about the modern water policy and about the modern marginal farmer. About the ground water the Ministry is giving the powers to the National Sensing Satellite Agency, Hyderabad to go and find out the underground ancient formations geologically, and the second thing is whether the stroma titic lime zone has been delineated so that they can delineate the zone of underground water in different parts of the country so that the Ministry can do the needful. I would like to know whether the Minister is aware of the fact that under the DPA Programme, up till last year lift irrigation points were allowed throughout the DPAP area, but this year whether the Government has discontinued that area by which the small and marginal farmers will be left out from the lift irrigation points.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Sir, we are making use of the remote sensing techniques for detection of ground water and we have a Directorate in the Central Water Commission as well as a Directorate in the Central Ground Water Board which interprets the aerial photographs and satellite imageries and we have been giving advice to the State Governments and we use them for our surveys also as to where the ground water is available. But this will give only an aerial view of the whole thing and it has to be followed up by a lot of other investigation on the spot and other scientific people like geologists also have to be involved. I can assure the House through you, Sir, and the hon. Member that remote sensing is a very important part of the surveys that we undertake for ground water inspection.

[*Interruptions*]

SHRI SOMNATH RATH. I would like to know whether any survey has been conducted throughout the country about different water basins so that these basins can be connected and the water that damages during the floods can be utilised for irrigation.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Sir, as I said earlier, we have a very well organised and ambitious programme of carrying on the survey of the water availability in the whole country. As I said earlier, we have divided our surveys into two parts; one for the Himalayan rivers and the other for the peninsular rivers. After these surveys are over, we would be able to say how much surplus water is available in the river basin and how it can be transported to the desert-hit areas.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether according to the new water policy, Ganga water would be utilised for irrigation purposes? Is there any scheme under which Ganga water would be utilised for irrigation purposes? Secondly, I would like to know whether any scheme is being formulated to control floods in the rivers?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: There are many old and new schemes for power utilisation of Ganga water. With a view to controlling the fury of floods, we are implementing several schemes and various State Governments are also cooperating in this task. A lot of work is being done in this field.

[*English*]

Facilities to the Freedom Fighters

*271 SHRI G⁺ BHOOPATHY

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state

(a) the number of freedom fighters get-

ting pension in the country;

(b) the other facilities at present being provided to the freedom fighters apart from pension;

(c) whether there is any proposal to provide additional facilities to freedom fighters; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI) : (a) to (d). A Statement is given below

STATEMENT

(a) to (d) Under the 'Freedom Fighters Pension Scheme, 1972 renamed as the Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme, pension has been granted to 1,44,310 persons including their dependents upto the end of October, 1987

Apart from the Samman Pension, a scheme for extending I class free railway card pass facility to the freedom fighters in receipt of Central pension accompanied by respective spouse/one attendant has been in operation since 19 11 86 for a period of one year. Free medical treatment at par with Group A officers of the Central Government can be availed by the freedom fighters drawing the pension at all Central Government Hospitals and hospitals run by the public sector undertaking under the control of the Bureau of Public Undertaking. In deserving cases, prominent freedom fighters of all India Standing are allotted accommodation from General Pool at Delhi/New Delhi, as per rules framed by the Directorate of Estates, upto a period of 2 years for the purposes of medical treatment. The Government have recently decided to give free voyage facility to visit A&N Islands. Necessary modalities are being worked out

Besides, the State Governments have formulated their own pension schemes with provisions for facilities such as free medical

aid, free land/plots and free education for the children of freedom fighters etc. in addition to pension.

The Government are in touch with the concerned bodies regarding the question of providing additional facilities to the freedom fighters.

[*Translation*]

SHRI G. BHOOPATHY. Mr. Speaker Sir, I have gone through the statement of the hon. Minister. I would like to congratulate him that he has made arrangements for the payment of quite a substantial amount of pension to the freedom fighters. But there is a problem in it, towards which I would like to draw your attention. The procedure or method of payment of pension to the freedom fighters still leaves much to be desired. A large number of brokers are active in this field and they submit a bogus certificate to the Government. They charge an amount of Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 for each case and look after 50 or 60 cases. These brokers stay generally in Five Star Hotels in Delhi and get bogus certificates issued to the people. As a result, actual freedom fighters are not able to get pension.

I would request you to look into the matter and eliminate bogus freedom fighters and the brokers. I would also like to know as to what steps are being taken by the Government to streamline the procedure of sanctioning pension ?

[*English*]

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: In the statement, we have given the detailed information. I am grateful to Mr. Bhoopathy that he has mentioned about some bogus certificates which have been produced. He has said that some Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 are being taken by brokers or like that. Last time also, I have repeatedly mentioned to all the hon. Members in the House that whenever any complaint has come, we have outright rejected those pension cases. Perhaps during the last 7 or 8 months, we have

rejected many cases whenever it has come to our notice. If any particular case, Mr. Bhoopathy has in his mind, if he just gives that reference to us, we shall inquire into all the cases and if it is found that they are not genuine cases, they shall be rejected. Therefore, our mind is open on this. We do not allow any brokers. We have only different committees for looking into this so that freedom fighters' pension cases are expedited. But if anybody has found that some broker is doing this job, well you give the names to us and we will try to see that no brokerage is allowed in this kind of cases. I am appealing to you that you kindly give those names so that it would be of great help to us.

[*Translation*]

SHRI G. BHOOPATHY: I would like to request that with a view to eliminating bogus freedom fighters, a Committee should be constituted at district level. I would also like to know from the hon. Minister the number of applications pending with him as on date and when these would be finally disposed of?

[*English*]

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: This was only in relation to the facilities that we are providing. But as far as I remember, we have already sanctioned 1,44,310 samman pensions. If the hon. Member gives us a separate notice scheme-wise, we can give the information as to which application is pending.

SHRI BASUDEV ACHARIA: On the very first day of the Session, the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri Chintamani Panigrahi, announced the names of some freedom fighters for Samman pension.

May I know from the hon. Minister the criterion for selecting the names of freedom fighters because all the veteran freedom fighters have been left out like Shri Ganesh Ghosh, the living legendary of Chittagong Armoury Raid. What was the criterion that was

adopted for selecting the name of freedom fighters?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: This question 'Why were the veteran freedom fighters left out?' was raised in the Rajya Sabha also and I have told them that it is not the exhaustive list. Whatever information we could gather about freedom fighters, we have announced the names according to that information. The name of Shri Ganesh Ghosh was already given to us and I think we are going to sanction the pension.

(*Interruptions*)

We get the information from the various reference materials, books and freedom fighters' organisations and if there is any difficulty, we also write to the State Government to give us the names which have been left out. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Those names are given by the State Governments?

MR. SPEAKER: No discussion on that.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN VAIRALE: I am happy that the Government has always taken a very sympathetic attitude towards the freedom fighters. In this context, I would like to say that the number of freedom fighters is diminishing. This tribe is a diminishing tribe. It is good that Government is giving concessions. The Railway Pass concession was given only for one year. I would like to know whether it is going to be continued in future or is it a fact that Government thinks that one year concession in their whole life is sufficient for the freedom fighters. I would rather give a suggestion that it should be extended.

Secondly, there was a proposal to increase the pension of the freedom fighters in view of the increasing prices. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what has happened to it.

Third point is.

MR. SPEAKER : No.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN VAIRALE: Have all these concessions been made applicable to freedom fighters who participated in Goa freedom fight?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS(S BUTA SINGH): Hon Member's suggestions are well taken and we will definitely examine these suggestions at an appropriate time.

SHRI SUDARSAN DAS: Is it a fact that the Government of Assam recommended as many as 61 long suspended Central Revenue Pension cases of Karimganj and Cachar districts of Assam on 24th December, 1984 ?

Is it also a fact that after restoration of pension to 23 freedom fighters of that list of 61, the Ministry of Home Affairs has still held up the rest 38 cases? Why?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI Sir, as I explained earlier, this related only to the facilities provided to the freedom fighters. Regarding the individual cases, I have taken note of them. I will again write back to the hon. Member as to what happened to the rest of the 38 cases. We are looking into this matter

[Translation]

SHRI D L BAITHA: Mr Speaker Sir, we have just been informed that pension has been sanctioned to the freedom fighters. So far as I understand, only those names which had been passed on to the Government might have been included. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he would collect the information available with the Members, have it verified and then included those names in the list ?

[English]

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI In fact, we presented them this list. The hon. Members have got the privilege and facilities also to let us know it informally. I have also asked

all the hon. Members if they know any eminent individual freedom fighter who has been left out to inform us. We are getting the names from them.

SHRI S.B. SIDNAL: Sir, I congratulate the hon. Minister for having recognised the freedom fighters. But I am sorry to say that there are many genuine cases which are pending with the Government of India for clearance on the ground that they should be recommended by two veteran freedom fighters who have suffered more than one year or two years. The second point is that they should be recommended by the State Government. But when they have been recommended and when the certificate by two freedom fighters is attached, the cases are still pending. The third point is that whenever the recommendations along with the certificate have come, the Central Government has sent them again for verification which has created room for corruption at that level. So, I would like to know as to what the Government has to say in this regard.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI There is a guideline

(Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER Please read out the guideline

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.S. RAO Sir, you allow an half-an-hour discussion on this subject

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: There should be a full discussion, not an half-an-hour discussion.

(Interruptions)

SHRI ASUTOSH LAW Sir, let us have half-an-hour discussion on this subject. Please allow half-an-hour discussion in this matter...(Interruptions)... A number of cases are still pending. Many freedom fighters

have not got their pensions. They are suffering.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Look here. We are doing a very patient job and I am allowing certain questions. I know it needs some attention.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Now, you put the question.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K. S. RAO: Sir, it must be discussed at length.

MR. SPEAKER: Let us see, if we find time.

(Interruptions)

SHRI S. B. SIDNAL: Sir, he has not replied to my question.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: Yes, he has asked me a question.

(Interruptions)

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: Please listen to me. All of you would get a chance to speak. All of you cannot speak together.

[*English*]

Please sit down.

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA: You allow an half-an-hour discussion on this subject because this is an important question. Many members would like to ask questions.

MR. SPEAKER: Don't you think that I am giving importance? I am already on it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA: That will not do. The full information is not coming out. Let us have all the information.

MR. SPEAKER: Let us see.

MR. CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: Sir, we have got highest regard and respect for all the freedom fighters of our country.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: There is a question in my name - Q No. 282 - on the same subject. That may also be taken up along with this.

MR. SPEAKER: If you had asked earlier, I would have clubbed it. But at this stage, I cannot do it. I sympathise with you. I have got all the appreciation of your point. But at this stage, I am unable to do it. If you had done it earlier, I would have clubbed it. Now, it is not possible.

(Interruptions)

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: Sir, let me submit one thing. We have got the highest regard and respect for all the freedom fighters of our country and no genuine freedom fighter will be left out, we shall be doing our best.

(Interruptions)

[*Translation*]

S. BUTA SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as a matter of fact, the issue of paying Samman Pension to the freedom fighters had been initiated by late Shrimati Indira Gandhi at her own level. It is a matter of great pride. It is, however, no compensation to the freedom fighters. It is a question of honour, because the entire country is grateful to them.

MR. SPEAKER: It cannot be called compensation in any case.

[*English*]

You cannot compensate that.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD. It cannot be called a compensation at all.

S.BUTA SINGH: The country is grateful to them. It was started as a token of respect towards them. This scheme was implemented throughout the country. Before that pension was being given in certain States on a very small scale, but she started the scheme at the national level on a large scale.

When rules were framed and the scheme was formulated by the Government of India, the State Governments should have given all the information regarding freedom fighters in every district to the Central Government. The difficulty arose, as this was not done. As a result a large number of individuals and some Associations started sending representations. Naturally, these representations were required to be verified. If these representations had been sent from each district duly verified, there was no need for verification at the central level. That is why verification was done.

First, communication was sent to some State Governments by the Central Government and the correspondence took a lot of time. It is a fact, as hon. Member has said, that in certain cases representations have been pending disposal for 3 years or 5 years. When this scheme was launched at national level, certain applications were received in respect of which facts could not be ascertained and the applicants were told that their applications were based on facts. But we cannot say so as our own people who have sent in applications must have record with them. Most of the records are not available. Rules have further been modified to make provision for these people who do not have documentary evidence of the periods spent by them in jails because a good number of the jails are now in Pakistan. Such people may get their applications verified by two such freedom fighters as are already getting pension and happened to be their co-prisoners and their documents will be ac-

cepted as authentic. Lakhs of such applications have been lying pending.

I remember that our hon. Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, had directed us last year to clear this large backlog immediately. A special cell was set up in the Home Ministry and thousands of applications were cleared on the spot by 15 August 1987. I have got their number. The Ministry of Home Affairs cleared them as per the orders of our hon. Prime Minister.

For most of the remaining applications, we have written to the State Governments to send their reports. Several of the hon. Members who are sitting here talk a lot about the freedom fighters. But it is a matter of regret that it is during their time that pension of thousands of freedom fighters had been stopped on political reasons and their facilities had been withdrawn. Those have now been reviewed (*Interruptions*)...Several of the opposition Members who are supporting this were fighting against the freedom fighters. Nevertheless, officers of the Home Ministry have been directed to visit the capitals of the States and process the cases of those freedom fighters whose applications are pending. The officers have been asked to hold regular meetings and take on-the-spot decisions so that no freedom fighter has any grievance about it. It is gratifying that the entire House is taking interest in it. We do not want that any freedom fighter should be deprived of his pension.

We are also looking into the cases of Goa, Andaman and Assam quite seriously.

[*English*]

SHRI A.CHARLES: What about widows of freedom fighters?

MR SPEAKER: Don't speak without my permission.

SHRI S. BUTA SINGH: We have taken a decision that the widows will be taken care of.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that after he made an announcement through a statement in this house regarding the Samman pension to be given to 97 eminent freedom fighters who had not actually applied for the pension, after that, is it not a fact that former Rashtrapati Sanjeeva Reddy publicly issued a statement expressing grave concern that even before this list of 97 men's were announced, no courtesy was shown even to consult men like him whose names were included? And whether it is a fact that many eminent freedom fighters in that list of 97, even to this day, have not been informed that we have decided to give pension. Concurrently, I will tell you that this morning, I came to know from one of the eminent freedom fighters Shri N.G. Goray who said, "I only read from the press that my name is included. But even, at this stage, I have not received any communication."

In this connection, I would like to tell that Indiraji was kind enough in this house to reply to my question that freedom fighters from the Royal Indian Navy Uprising 1946, they will be part and parcel of recipient of freedom fighters pension. Is it not a fact that Shri B. C. Dutt who led the freedom fighters fight Uprising in 1946 and who has written a fine book "Mutiny of the Innocents", his application has not even been considered for pension? I would like to know from the Minister

[Translation]

S. BUTA SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are very proud of what the hon. Member has said about it. You may feel ashamed of it. We are rendering very good service to the freedom fighters. Those hon. Members who are shouting "Shame Shame" should feel ashamed because they were neither freedom fighters at that time nor were associated with the freedom fighters. Any way, Prof. Saheb said that our former President Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy has made some Statement. In this connection, it may be recalled that it was an offer from Government's side.

When we make an offer to an eminent person, we do not ask him whether we should make this offer to him or not. We had made an offer to him. If he did not like it, we cannot do anything about it. There are some people who have their own views. We should honour all freedom fighters in this spirit. I feel that there is nothing wrong about it. If we offer a small amount to pay our respect to great personalities,

[English]

we are within our rights and duties.

[Translation]

As regards the two cases referred to by Professor Saheb, I would like to say that every promise made by Smt. Indira Gandhi to the freedom fighters will be fulfilled in letter and spirit.

(Interruptions)

[English]

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: That is very relevant question. I must have the facility of putting a supplementary

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: I would have allowed you had you put up the question earlier. Now the time is over.

(Interruptions)

[English]

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: We have already congratulated the Government for sanctioning the pension suo motu to 97 freedom fighters. This is a very good scheme. This should continue. I wanted to know through my question if it comes I do not know whether that will come up as far as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, what was the criterion in constituting a committee there? Secondly, is the Hon. Minister aware

that there are genuine freedom fighters who have not got the pension and yet there are those people, already I know, who have got this pension unduly? Whether the Minister, conscious of the fact that there are genuine freedom fighters who have not got it?

MR. SPEAKER: This question has been answered so many times. It can be answered and it can be looked into properly. He has given assurance that he will look into it.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI I can answer this. So far as J & K is concerned, 3,143 applications were received

(Interruptions)

PROF SAIFUDDIN SOZ: It is not that. I have put a supplementary. That question is separate

PROF SAIFUDDIN SOZ I wanted to know the criterion for the constitution of the Committee and whether you know that pension was not given to the people who deserved it and there are people who did not deserve it, got it.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: We had have appointed a special committee for screening the applications of the J&K freedom fighters and whatever unanimous recommendations come we have accepted them totally

Misuse of Foreign Funds

*272 SHRI JAGANNATH PATTNAIK Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the events in the last two years have clearly established that the foreign funds flowing into the country ostensibly for the promotion of religious, social and such other programmes of the voluntary agencies are finding their way to finance terrorists and other anti-national activities; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take to effectively control and regulate the flow of such foreign funds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). There is no definite information that foreign contributions received by the voluntary agencies are being used for such purposes. However, some amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976 are under consideration with a view to making it more effective

SHRI JAGANNATH PATTNAIK. According to official sources, Rs. 230 crores are received every year from foreign countries in the name of humanitarian and religious activities by various organisations of our country. All of them are required to register themselves under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976. I want to know from the Hon. Minister as to what are the methods and institutions to monitor their activities, to scrutinize their expenditure, to ensure that they do not spend it on the forbidden activities or to destabilise this country.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM We have today in our records over 11000 associations which are registered under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act. These associations are required to file an half-yearly intimation of foreign contributions received by them during the previous six months. They are also required to file an annual statement of accounts audited by a chartered accountant

The Foreign Contribution Division in the Ministry of Home Affairs has qualified personnel to go through these returns. We also get reports from our agencies and if we find any violation or any non-compliance with any provision of the Act or any inadequacy in the half-yearly account or the annual account, actions are being taken according to the provisions of the Act.