

Seventeenth Loksabha

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Title: Regarding release of salaries and pensions to staff of Kazhakootam Sainik School, Kerala-laid

**DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM):** I wish to draw the attention of the Honourable Defence Minister towards the urgent need to make payment of salaries and pensions to the staff of Kazhakootam Sainik School—the only military school in Kerala in Thiruvananthapuram—to prevent its closure.

The staff members are aggrieved as they received merely 70% of their prescribed salaries for December last year and no salaries were given for January this year, as no amount was disbursed by the Department of Defence of the Central Government, which is responsible for providing their remuneration and benefits. Having waited till the last day of January, they went on a strike. Further, while the state government has agreed, the MoU between the Central Government and the state government regarding the school's operations remains pending.

Serving as a distinguished residential educational institution since 1962, the School nurtures talented and bright students hailing from both urban and rural areas. Given the compelling significance of the school, I urge the Minister to expedite the payment of salaries and pension to the staff, and finalise the MoU with the state government at the earliest to facilitate the smooth functioning of the school and to ensure that access to education in these difficult times is not restricted.