

Coalfields Limited. On this basis 38 workers have been engaged in operation relating to pumping of water from Handidhua Colliery. Considering the present position there is no prospect of these workers being provided employment on a long term basis till the mining leases is granted.

Manning Scales for the Piloting of Ships in Bombay Port

3436. SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 'manning scales' (i.e. the complements of workmen) for the piloting of ships, their mooring and unmooring at the Bombay port were reduced during the emergency period;

(b) whether the said reduction has resulted in the death and incapacitation of crane-drivers and others, and if so, how many; and

(c) whether Government propose to restore the previous manning scales?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) According to the guidelines indicated by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Labour on 21st May, 1977 for promoting harmonious industrial relations in the Port, it was agreed not to implement the changes, which had not been implemented till then. The changes which were implemented partially were not to be implemented any further. As regards the changes already made, the Bombay Port Trust and the unions were to hold discussions and endeavour to reach mutually satisfactory settlement. These guidelines have been implemented by the Bombay Port Trust.

Setting up of News Agencies on the Lines of Samachar

3437. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether a decision has been taken to convert the 'Samachar' into an autonomous body;

(b) whether Government propose to set up more news agencies independent of Government control on the lines of the 'Samachar';

(c) if so, what facilities Government propose to provide to them at the initial stage; and

(d) whether any decision has been taken regarding the pay-scales and other perquisites of the employees of such news agencies?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) to (d). Government has appointed a Committee to examine the functioning of Samachar and to make recommendations regarding its future set-up. The Government will consider the recommendations of the Committee on these matters, when their report becomes available.

Retirement Age of Employees

3439. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal under their consideration for reducing the retirement age from 58 years to 55 years in all Government and semi-Government services; and

(b) if so, when it is likely to be made applicable and how many persons would get jobs as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHARAN SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.