

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES):
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Appropriate method of Medical protection against Chemical Warfare agents is to reduce their toxic effects. Different medical protections are available for different chemical warfare agents. For example indigenously available 2-PAM Chloride and Atropine are administered for nerve agents, and for Cyanides, Sodium Nitrate and SodiumThiosulphate are administered. No drug is known world over for sulphur mustard.

Abandoned ship detected by coast guard

2243. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem titled 'Was abandoned Lebanese ship AL-Qaeda's getaway vehicle' published in the Hindustan Times, dated 9th July, 2002;

(b) if so, the details in this regard and his reaction thereto;

(c) whether the ship was detected within the maritime zone of India, and whether it indicate security lapse on the part of the concerned agency; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to prevent recurrence of such lapses and to further strengthen the vigil on our coasts?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES):
(a) to (d) A merchant ship reported sighting of an abandoned merchant ship 'MV Al Murtada' on 3rd July, 2002 in position 84 nautical miles west of Ratnagiri (110 nautical miles south of Mumbai). Coast Guard Ship Vijaya was sailed to monitor the movements of the vessel and boarded her on 6th July, 2002 and subsequently anchored the ship about 5 nautical miles of Devgarh (155 nautical miles south of Mumbai). During the preliminary search of the vessel, two AK 47 rifles with words "ALLAH" and "YUSUF" inscribed in Urdu were recovered. On further rummaging, 3 loaded magazines of AK 47 bore (74 rounds) were also recovered. An Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team of Navy also embarked the ship on 9th July, 2002 to sanitise the vessel of any explosives. None were found. As intimated by International Maritime Bureau the last owner of the ship is Mr. Assem Nidal Beaini, Lebanon.

[12 August, 2002]

RAJYA SABHA

Enquiries have revealed that the ship had crew of 16 members which included Somalians - 6, Syrians - 4, and Lebanese - 4 besides 4 Indians. It developed some snag in mid-sea during its journey from Somalia to Dubai and remained floating in mid-sea. On receiving an SOS from the ship, US ship 'Vicks Burg' came to their rescue and airlifted on 16th June, 2002 all the crew members to another vessel 'MV Stolet Spray' which was sailing towards Kandla Port. Finally, the latter ship berthed in Kandla on June 18/19, 2002 and thereafter all the foreign crew members left for their respective countries via Mumbai after completion of immigration formalities through local Shipping Agent at Kandla. All the four Indian crew members on board the vessel Al Murtada have been identified.

The ship was not in the Maritime Zone of India when the incident occurred. But drifted into Indian waters after the crew was rescued by the US Naval ship and abandoned the vessel.

There has been no security lapse. The surveillance and patrolling off the West coast is jointly done by the Indian Navy and Coast Guard. Besides, Indian Coast Guard has institutionalised a system wherein merchant ships transiting through the Indian maritime zones are encouraged to pass information in case any suspicious vessel is sighted.

Compensation of land owners in J&K

2244. MIRZA ABDUL RASHID:
SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of Land compensation and rent paid by Army and para-military forces to the Land owners in J&K since 1995, year-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that the rent paid is inadequate and there are delays in making such payments;

(c) if so, when the rent was last assessed for enhancement;

(d) what steps are being taken for speedy payment to the land owners;
and

(e) how many compensation cases are pending and why?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES):
(a) to (e) The details of land compensation and rent paid by Army to the