

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS: (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

**Foreign Mercenaries Operating in Kashmir Valley**

7780. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether more than 2,500 foreign mercenaries from Pakistan, Pak occupied Kashmir, Sudan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and other countries are at present operating in the Kashmir Valley;

(b) whether the presence of such a large number of foreign mercenaries to help train and abet the militants' outfit in the Valley, is to bring about a qualitative and quantitative change in the fighting capabilities of Kashmiri militants; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to counter this renewed threat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS: (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) to (c) There are reports of intensification of efforts by Pakistan to infiltrate foreign elements/mercenaries from across the border into J & K in a bid to further escalate and upgrade violence, and boosting the morale of the militants in the state. However, it is not possible to precisely estimate the number of such persons. Such elements are reported to include persons from Pakistan/POK, Afganistan, Sudan, Lebanon, Egypt, Bahrain, Algeria etc.

This challenge posed by the phenomenon is being faced in a determined manner. During the recent months, apart from intensification of steps to check infiltration/exfiltration across the LOC, security measures in the hinterland have also been further strengthened/streamlined, to bring in greater coordination in the operation of the various forces in the State and

sharing of information for better results. As a result, significant successes have also been achieved in terms of recovery of weapons and killing/apprehension of a large number of militants including foreign national/mercenaries.

**Massive Development Plan for Jammu and Kashmir**

7781. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Central Government has unfolded a massive development plan for revitalising the PDS, health facilities and employment insurance schemes for Jammu and Kashmir at the instance of the Prime Minister to improve conditions there and to bring about normalcy;

(b) whether Government propose to ensure the safe return of more than three lakh Kashmiri migrants to their hearths and homes in the Valley because without their return normalcy cannot be restored in the State; and

(c) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS: (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a): As a part of efforts towards restoration of normalcy in Jammu & Kashmir, and motivating the people to come into the mainstream, concerted efforts have been made, since the middle of last year, to step up the pace of economic/development activity in the State. With the aim of understanding in detail the problems relating to development efforts, identifying areas where decisions were required, including resource augmentation, and putting in place measures by which the actual implementation of various schemes could be more effective, there have been a series of discussion between the concerned Central Government and State Government officials, followed by a visit of a team of union Secretaries of the Ministries/Departments of Education,