

Measures for reducing mental stress in soldiers

1158. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of Government that mental stress and 'Traditional Bhaiya System' is one of the major reasons for loss of interest by the soldiers in their jobs; and

(b) if so, whether Government has taken measures for reducing stress and such practice among the Indian soldiers?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) The Government is aware of the mental stress faced by the soldiers. The same is owing essentially to the operational challenges faced by them and certain issues in the domestic domain.

There is no 'bhaiya' system in Army. Army has a well institutionalized approved 'buddy' system, where officers and men are grouped into buddies to share their daily chores as also to ameliorate stress. There appears no loss of interest of soldiers in their jobs. The turnout at recruitment rallies and soldiers opting for two years extension of service are manifestation of continued interest of citizens and soldiers in the profession of Arms in the Army.

(b) The Government has taken a number of steps to reduce the mental stress among the soldiers, which includes conduct of yoga and meditation as part of unit routine, psychological counseling by psychological counselors, liberalized leave policy, improvement in living and working conditions through provision of better infrastructure and facilities, improved accessibility of leaders and frequent interaction of leaders with the soldiers, provision for sports and recreational facilities, various training on stress management, provision of married accommodation.

Space and cyber warfare

1159. SHRI AVINASH PANDE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the People's Liberation Army of China has established a fifth wing of its armed forces, that is, Aerospace Force for the militarization of outer space and is working towards the integration of its military capability in space and cyber warfare; and

(b) what is the position of Government regarding the international principle of peaceful uses of outer space?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) Government has seen such reports that subsequent to latest reforms in China's People's Liberation Army (PLA), China has established the PLA Strategic Support Force which is aimed at protecting China's Cyber and Space domains.

(b) India is a member of United Nations Committee on the peaceful use of Outer Space (COPUOS) from 1959 and maintains its stand on peaceful use of Outer Space.

Rehabilitation and rescue measures of Siachen Glacier

1160. SHRIMATI SAROJINI HEMBRAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has proposed any new rehabilitation and rescue measures in the Siachen Glacier after the sad incident of avalanche where nine jawans were martyred in the first week of February this year; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) and (b) The posts in Siachen Glacier are sited after due mapping so as to ensure their safety from avalanche threat. This is reviewed on a regular basis.

Keeping in view the advances in technology, efforts are made to continuously upgrade the equipment for avalanche rescue, mobility and communication to enhance capability for avalanche rescue and survival in glaciated areas.

Security at airbases

†1161. SHRI HARIVANSH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Airforce does not have sufficient means of safety for the safety of its airbase;

(b) the number of airbases where sensor and electronic fencing is available;

(c) whether the Airforce is not trained like the Army to tackle the situation such as terrorist attack; and

(d) the measures for safeguarding items of strategic importance in the situation of terrorist?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) Adequate measures are in place to ensure safety and security of the air bases.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.