

MSP paid to armed forces personnel

*26. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH MAHRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is paying Military Service Pay (MSP) to Armed Forces personnel, whose genesis is based on amount on the degree of 'Hardships and Risk Factor' they undergo while discharging their duties;

(b) whether the MSP being paid to the Armed Forces personnel is equal, and whether they face equal hardships and risk to life; and

(c) what measures Government contemplates to remove this discrimination?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) to (c) Military Service Pay (MSP) was introduced *w.e.f.* 1st September, 2008 for the first time in respect of Armed Forces on the recommendations of the Sixth Central Pay Commission (CPC). It is a compensation paid to the Armed Forces Personnel as a recognition for the intangible aspects linked to the special conditions of their service.

The MSP being paid to Armed Forces Personnel as per the recommendation of the 6th Central Pay Commission is in two slabs:-

(i) For Officers up to the level of Brigadier - ₹ 6,000/-p.m.

(ii) For JCOs/OR - ₹ 2,000/-p.m.

Besides, MSP Government has separately provided a number of allowances based on risks and hardships involved at a location/in an operation, such as High Altitude Allowances, Field Area/Modified Field Area Allowances, Counter Insurgency Allowances etc.

Incident of fire at Army's Central Ammunition Depot, Pulgaon

*27. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken note of fire incidents/tragedy in various defence establishments including massive fire at the Army's Central Ammunition Depot (CAD) in Pulgaon town of Maharashtra's Wardha district recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the total number of persons injured/killed during the last three years and the current year, fire incident-wise;

(c) whether Government has ordered any inquiry in this regard, if so, the details and present status thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to check such incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) to (d) Government has taken note of the fire incidents/tragedy in various defence establishments, including the major fire incident on 31st May, 2016 in Central Ammunition Depot (CAD) at Pulgaon, Maharashtra. In this incident, there were 19 fatal and 17 non-fatal casualties.

Apart from the above incident at CAD, Pulgaon there has been no fire incident in any Ammunition Depot/Armament Depot/Weapon Storage Area of the Armed Forces during the last three calendar years and the current year.

A 'Court of Inquiry' was instituted to investigate the circumstances leading to an outbreak of fire in Central Ammunition Depot, Pulgaon on 31st May, 2016. As per the findings/opinion of Court of Inquiry in its report, the most probable cause of the outbreak of fire was excessive exudation (bleeding) of TNT reacting with metallic container leading to self-ignition (spontaneous combustion) of segregated Mine Anti Tank held in store house.

On the basis of the recommendations of Court of Inquiry and subsequent deliberations with all stakeholders, the following has been approved by the Government in order to prevent recurrence of such incidents:-

- (i) Disposal of all defective segregated mines (Anti Tank Mines LAND) for exudation of TNT, held at various locations will be undertaken by Army Headquarters (AHQ).
- (ii) Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) will replace or repair the defective ammunition within three months.
- (iii) Army Headquarters in consultation with all stakeholders will finalize the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for:
 - (a) Disposal of defective ammunition in fixed time-frame, and
 - (b) Fixing up responsibility for defect and regularization of loss.
- (iv) Department of Defence Production (DDP) in consultation with all stakeholders will prepare a SOP for hand holding of Production Agency by the Designer till production stabilizes.
- (v) Army Headquarters will review the security (including surveillance) and fire safety arrangements at all ammunition depots.

Seventh Central Pay Commission recommendations

*28. SHRI NEERAJ SHEKHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has implemented the Seventh Central Pay Commission recommendations;