

of Journalists. The Committee submitted its report on 23.04.2015 and made recommendations with regard to safety and security of Journalists. The Ministry of Home Affairs examined the said report and the existing laws are considered adequate to deal with such offences.

(f) In pursuance of its policy to uphold the freedom of press, the Government does not interfere in the functioning of media. The Government is committed to ensure the right to freedom of speech and expression enshrined under the Article 19 to the Constitution of India. Press Council of India (PCI), a statutory autonomous body, has been set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 with twin objectives to preserve the freedom of the Press and to maintain and improve the standards.

#### **Expansion of paramilitary forces**

3568. SHRI A.K. SELVARAJ : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has undergone one of the fastest expansions of paramilitary security forces in the world;

(b) whether it is also a fact that India's paramilitary strength is widely believed to be over 1 million, representing some 50 per cent of the country's total armed forces; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI NITYANAND RAI) : (a) to (c) Augmentation of the strength of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) is undertaken by the Government from time to time as per administrative and operational requirements. The present sanctioned strength of CAPFs and Assam Rifles is 999795.

#### **Smuggling of gold from Myanmar border**

3569. SHRI SANJAY RAUT : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Myanmar is turning into major transit point to smuggle gold into India;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto; and

(c) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to increase more vigilance at Myanmar border to check illegal activities/smuggling?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI NITYANAND RAI) : (a) to (c) Government has adopted a multi-pronged approach to contain smuggling/illegal activities which inter-alia includes multi-tiered deployment of security forces, conduct of intensive patrolling, sharing of intelligence, joint operations, liaison with police, intelligence agencies and local government agencies and use of improved equipments and surveillance devices. As a result of heightened vigil, 451.676 kgs of gold worth ₹ 142.83 crore was seized along Indo-Myanmar Border during 2018-19.

#### **Conference on capacity building of SDRF**

3570. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether conference on capacity building of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) was recently held in New Delhi;

(b) if so, the details of deliberation at the conference;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government felt the need to respond effectively to growing threat of forest fires;

(d) whether the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) are well equipped to handle forest fires effectively; and

(e) if so, the State-wise details thereof and if not, whether Government would consider providing all logistic support to SDRF to tackle increasing cases of forest fires more effectively?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI NITYANAND RAI) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Annual Conference on Capacity Building of State Disaster Response Forces (SDRFs) with participants from Civil Defence, Home Guards and Fire Services was held on 29th and 30th June, 2019 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. During the conference following issues were discussed:

(i) Road Map of Disaster Management in Next Five Years;

(ii) Operational challenges in Disasters;

(iii) Challenges in Activation of Resources and Manpower in Pre and Post Disaster Situations;