

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (c) Under Section 5(1) of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act), only an Indian national or a company registered in India can be granted a reconnaissance permit for exploration of minerals. On the recommendations of the State Governments approvals have been given by the Central Government under Section 5(1) of the MM (D&R) Act, 1957 for grant of reconnaissance permits in favour of private Indian companies many of which are subsidiaries formed by multinational companies. 58 Reconnaissance Permits have been approved for diamond and associated minerals in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa States.

The concept of reconnaissance permit has been introduced in the Act with effect from 20.12.1999. Reconnaissance Permits are granted for a period of three years. The full report of the work undertaken by the reconnaissance permit holder is required to be submitted by him within three months of the expiry of the permit or abandonment of operations or termination of the permit whichever is earlier. The first approval for grant of reconnaissance permit has been conveyed by the Central Government on 25.7.2000 and hence final reports are yet to be received by Indian Bureau of Mines, from reconnaissance permit holders.

Preparation of prospective Olympic Medal Winners by Army

2108. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government has sanctioned Rs. 60 crores for army to prepare a medal winning team for 2004 Olympic games in Athens, Greece;

(b) if so, whether the army authorities have started selection of players and athletes etc. and started training in this regard;

(c) the disciplines in which players are being trained; and

(d) the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) The Government has conceptualized a sports vision for the Indian Army to take part in Olympics, 2004. A sum of Rs. 60 crore has been approved 'in-principle' for creating infrastructure, procurement of

equipments etc. for preparing a medal winning team in Athletics, Aquatics (Diving), Archery, Boxing, Weightlifting, Shooting, Wrestling, Equestrian, Sailing and Rowing. Training of sports persons, selected by the Army, has already started in various Sports centres.

Export of Defence Equipments

2109. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreement has been reached between India and Russia, regarding export of defence equipment manufactured in India under licence from Russia;

(b) whether Government has explored the demand of such defence equipment;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of such defence equipments exported/to be exported by India to various countries?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) India and Russia have signed a protocol that export of defence equipment manufactured in India under licence from Russia, to third countries will be considered on a case by case basis.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has exported MIG 21 spares/services to 17 countries under agreements.

Safety at Defence Depots

2110. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the spate of blasts and fire at various defence depots and research centres have been due to human errors;

(b) whether Government and army officials undertake regular visits and checks the safety measures in such centres and depots;

(c) when was the last time such inspection was conducted and the number of such inspections conducted by (a) Government Officials, (b) Army Officials in a year; and

(d) what was the report of the last inspection in terms of Safety norms followed in these centres and depots?