

[20 December, 2000] RAJYA SABHA

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. Ammunition is unlikely to explode as a result of an earthquake as in most of the cases, the fuses and other matching components are stacked separately and not fitted with the complete round.

(c) There is very little threat of an accident due to an earthquake in COD Jabalpur. Till date there has been no accident due to earthquake.

(d) Yes, Sir. The magazines are designed and constructed in such a manner that the roof will automatically fall in on the ammunition stacks as and when any such incident occurs which would reduce the spreading of its impact to adjoining areas.

Pakistan's activities in Arabian Sea

*447. SHRI KA. RA. SUBBIAN:

SHRI R.K. ANAND:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the "Indian Express" dated the 16th November, 2000, captioned 'IAF crash BSF says, they were Pak fishing boats';

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to stop recurring of such incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The Government is aware of the news report, that had appeared in the Indian Express dated 16th November, 2000, captioned "IAF crash: BSF says they were Pak fishing boats". According to the Border Security Force, a few boats were sighted in the area of the crash and the survivors of the crash had seen the boatmen using nets in the nallah for the purpose of fishing. However, the identity of the boats could not be established by the Indian Air Force.

A Court of Inquiry had been ordered into the incident of Air Crash to find out its cause. Remedial measures shall be taken on finalisation of Court of Inquiry. The wreckage has been retrieved at Bhuj. Damaged components have been sent to the investigating

agencies for analysis. Besides this, steps have been taken by the Border Security Force to enhance vigilance of the area by increased patrolling, fortnightly aerial surveillance in Rann and Creek areas. Border Security Force is also taking steps for early procurement of twin engine Helicopter for aerial surveillance, Swamp boats and high speed interception boats for the purpose of strengthening the security of the area. Naval and Coast Guard ships and aircraft also carry out surveillance in the open seas.

Use of birds for spying

*448. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan has increased military activities along the border regions such as Gujarat and Rajasthan;

(b) whether they have used/are using birds for spying purpose; and

(c) if so, the preventive steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Certain low level defence construction activities and troop movements have been observed across the Indo-Pak border opposite Rajasthan/Gujarat. A marginal increase in military strength and equipment has also been reported in the area.

There is no authentic input to indicate use of birds by Pakistan for espionage.

Patrolling by our troops along the Line of Control/International Border continues as before. All developments having a bearing on India's national security are constantly monitored and all necessary steps are taken from time to time to thwart any attempt of misadventure on the part of our adversaries.

Power generation by private sector

†*449. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any target has been fixed for generating power in the power plants under the private sector during the year 2000-2001;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.