

***50. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH:** Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Army buys a pair of woollen socks for Rs. 97/- from Ordnance factories when private Ludhiana manufacturers are offering better quality for just Rs.27/-;

(b) if so, the reasons for overpricing by Ordnance factories; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken against those involved?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir. The Army is buying two varieties of woollen socks as per laid down specifications from Ordnance Factories and private manufacturers at the following rates during 2000-2001;

(i) Socks Woollen Olive Green:

Ordnance Factories

Private Manufacturers

Rs.45/-

Rs.30.20 (inclusive of taxes)

(ii) Socks Heavy Khakhi:

Ordnance Factories

Private Manufacturers

Rs. 100/-

Not procured so far from Trade

(b) The rates of Ordnance Factories are higher than those of private manufacturers due to following reasons:—

(i) As a model employer, the Ordnance Factory Board is required to pay wages to its employees in accordance with the pay scales fixed by the Government which is often not the case with the trade.

(ii) Fluctuating demand and non-utilisation of full capacity of the Ordnance Factories adds up to the cost of the product. Moreover the Ordnance Factories cannot reduce their workforce when demand falls.

(iii) The provision to meet sudden increase in demands is also a contributing factor for higher cost.

(c) Not applicable in view of (b) above.

(c) Not applicable in view of (b) above.

Threat given by National Democratic Front of Bodoland

***51. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:** Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently the National Democratic Front of Bodoland issued a threat to blow up passenger trains in the North-Eastern Region from the midnight of the 20th October, 2000;

(b) if so, what steps were taken to counter this move; and

(c) what permanent measures are proposed to be taken to safeguard the passengers and railway properties and beef up security in the N.E. Region?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Vigilance on railway tracks has been intensified. Railway gangmen, Home Guards and GRP personnel have been deployed for joint track patrolling. State Police and Army Guards have been mounted on all the important railway bridges in the State. State Police and Railway Protection force personnel as well as Home Guards have been deployed in all passenger/goods trains. Security arrangements are also reviewed from time to time.

ISI activities along Indo-Nepal Border

***52. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA':** Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the activities of ISI along the Indo-Nepal border;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what action Government have taken for dealing with ISI activities;

(d) whether any joint action is proposed in collaboration with the bordering States, Nepal and the Centre; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) Yes, sir. It is a fact that Indo-Nepal border is being used by Pakistan ISI for its militancy operations in India. Militant groups with assistance from Pak ISI operatives/agents infiltrate into India through the porous Indo-Nepal border particularly during important festivals and national celebrations for subversive activities. The open nature of Indo-Nepal border has facilitated Pak efforts to launch their anti-India operations from the soil of Nepal.