

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL) : (a) No, Sir, there is no programme of calling Chief Minister's Conference shortly.

(b) Does not arise ?

Firing on Indo-Pak Border

215. SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Pakistani troops continued firing on Jammu and Kashmir border even after flag meetings of both sides;

(b) if so, the number of innocent people killed or injured by such shelling during the last two years and in 1998 till date; and

(c) the steps being taken to check the firing across the border of the state ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (c) Pak troops continued firing along Jammu and Kashmir border even after flag meetings of both sides. Details of civilian casualties suffered during Pakistani firing along International Border (IB) portion of J & K border are as follows :-

		Killed	Wounded
a)	1996	03	04
b)	1997	08	20
c)	1998	—	09

BSF is deployed along the IB portion of J & K and a suitable response is given to Pak fire. Border contacts at post level and flag meetings at sector commander level are held periodically to de-escalate the situations.

French Delegation

216. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a French delegation on Higher Defence studies visited India on April 7, 1998; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the deliberations arrived at ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) and (b) A delegation of the French Institute for Advanced Defence Studies visited India from April 5-11, 1998. During the stay of the delegation in Mumbai, it visited INS 'Delhi' and INS 'Shishumar' at the Western Naval Command. At New Delhi the delegation was given a briefing by the Director, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses on "India's National Security and Strategic Concerns". The delegation also made a courtesy call on the Foreign Secretary.

[Translation]

Barren Land

217. SHRI MANIBHAI RAMJI BHAI CHAUDHARI :

SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY :

DR. MADAN PRASAD JAISWAL :

SHRI JANARDAN PRASAD MISHRA :

Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large area of land is lying barren in different States of the country ;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government are taking any concrete steps to make it fertile;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons, therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT : (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The State-wise details are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) to (e) Barren Land includes exposed steep-mountains slopes, desert, snow cover and such other areas which can not be brought under cultivation at an economic cost and classed as unculturable land. There is no programme to make barren land fertile. However, the Department of Wastelands Development is implementing a Central Sector Scheme on Integrated Wastelands Development Project to develop non-forest wastelands in the country through holistic development of watershed. The scheme aims at checking land degradation, putting such wastelands to sustainable use and increasing bio-mass availability especially that of fuel wood and fodder. The schemes strives to increase rural employment besides ensuring people's participation in the wastelands development programmes at all stages.

Statement

Statewise Area of Barren Land in the country

Sl. No.	State	Total Geographical Area	(Area in Ha.)
			Barren/Stony/Sheet Rock Area
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	27506800	391944
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	8374300	97059
3.	Assam	7843800	0
4.	Bihar	17387700	108219
5.	Goa	370200	1121
6.	Gujarat	19802400	426165

1	2	3	4
7.	Haryana	4421220	9646
8.	Himachal Pradesh	5567300	453081
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	13894200	2672819
10.	Karnataka	19179100	261725
11.	Kerala	3886300	14169
12.	Madhya Pradesh	44344600	785905
13.	Maharashtra	30769000	248380
14.	Manipur	2232700	0
15.	Meghalaya	2242900	0
16.	Mizoram	2108100	0
17.	Nagaland	1857900	0
18.	Orissa	15570700	46842
19.	Punjab	5036200	0
20.	Rajasthan	34223900	424975
21.	Sikkim	709600	62978
22.	Tamil Nadu	13005800	76730
23.	Tripura	1048600	0
24.	Uttar Pradesh	29441100	156003
25.	West Bengal	8875200	15812
26.	Union Territories	1097300	104
27.	Unsurveyed	8329400	0
Grand Total		328726300	6251477

**Damage caused in Khamaria Ordnance
Factory due to earthquake**

218. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Khamaria Ordnance factory has been damaged by the earthquake which struck Jablapur on May, 22, 1997;

(b) if so, the extent thereof and whether a division of the production department is proposed to be shifted to other Ordnance factories of the country as a result thereof; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

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

(b) and (c) 2650 buildings suffered major damages and 1473 buildings minor damages. These include production

facilities, residential quarters and public utility structure. About 100 persons of Ordnance Factory, Khamaria were injured in the earthquake, 7 of them seriously. The damages to the production building were of repairable nature and therefore there is no proposal to shift any division of the production department to other Ordnance Factories.

Shifting of SAIL Headquarter to Ranchi

219. DR. MADAN PRASAD JAISWAL : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the headquarter of the SAIL is proposed to be shifted to Ranchi;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the time by which it is proposed to be shifted ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

[English]

Visit of U.S. Army Chief

220. DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the U.S. Army Chief visited India in April, 1998 and had deliberations with him and the three Service chiefs; and

(b) if so, the details of the discussions held and the outcome thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) and (b) General Dennis J. Reimer, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army visited India from April 13-17, 1998. During his visit General Reimer called on the Raksha Mantri, the Chiefs of Staff of the three Services, Defence Secretary and Foreign Secretary. General Reimer also met the GOC-in-C Northern Command, GOC-15 Corps as well as the GOC in-C Eastern Command. General Reimers visit was a ceremonial and goodwill visit. However, during his meetings with Indian dignitaries, he discussed defence-related aspects of Indo-US relations and some international issues.

Development of Ahmedabad Airport

221. SHRIMATI BHAVNA DEVRAJBHAI CHIKHALIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) the latest position of development and upgradation of Ahmedabad Airport;

(b) whether a delegation of MPs from Gujarat had submitted a memorandum during October, 1997;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken so far in the matter ?