

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (d) A proposal received from the Government of Maharashtra for condoning Rs. 18 crores, being the scrap value of INS Vikrant, the decommissioned Aircraft Carrier of Indian Navy, and its conversion into a maritime museum has since been agreed to. Further action in this regard is to be taken by Govt. of Maharashtra in coordination with Mumbai Port Trust. Any recurring or non-recurring expenditure required for conversion to a museum and its maintenance is to be undertaken by the State Government.

[Translation]

Risk of Life to Civilians due to Firing Range in Rewa

884. SHRI CHANDRAMANI TRIPATHI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the firing range of Indian Army situated at Badwar hill of Rewa district has been proved dangerous to the life of the civilians;

(b) the number of civilians who have become victims of bullets in this firing range so far and the steps taken by the Government for the welfare by the family of the deceased; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that the range is shifted to somewhere else from there?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) No case of loss of life or injury caused to civilians has been reported so far.

(c) There is no proposal to shift this range.

[English]

National Maritime Policy

885. DR. SUGUNA KUMARI CHELLAMELA :
SHRI T.R. BAALU :
SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY :
SHRI K.P. NAIDU :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to formulate a national maritime policy to ensure safety and security in Indian waters by strengthening the coastal security force;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to keep a check on the activities of foreign powers in Indian waters?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) and (b) Safety and security in Indian waters is effected by Indian Navy and Coast Guard. Coordinated interaction with other concerned agencies is undertaken through well-established interactive fora. A close watch is kept over the security aspects and improvements in procedure are brought about on a continuing basis.

(c) The Indian Navy and Coast Guard maintain regular surveillance of the Indian coast, island territories and Exclusive Economic Zone and thereby keep a check on the activities of foreign powers in Indian waters.

Mineral Exploration Surveys

886. SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether mineral exploration surveys were conducted for limestone (mostly BF and SMS grades) in Jaintia Hills area of Meghalaya recently;

(b) if so, the findings thereof;

(c) the details of estimated reserves of different grades of limestones in Meghalaya State;

(d) the details of exploited limestones reserves;

(e) whether any such surveys have also been conducted in Meghalaya for exploration of Clay; and

(f) if so, the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Geological Survey of India (GSI) has conducted mineral exploration for limestone in Jaintia Hills area of Meghalaya recently and reserves established are as follows:

SMS grade	653 million tonnes
BF/LD grade	165 million tonnes