

*[English]***Bomb Explosion**

3294. SHRI JAYSINH CHAUHAN :
 SHRI K.S. RAYUDU :
 SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN :
 SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT :
 PROF. OMPAL SINGH NIDAR :
 SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA :
 KUMARI UMA BHARATI :
 DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :
 SHRI S.P. JAISWAL :
 SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY :
 SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :
 SHRI D.P. YADAV :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a powerful bomb exploded in a local train at Lehra Khana Railway Station in Bhatinda, Punjab on July 8, 1997;

(b) if so, the number of persons injured/killed in the blast;

(c) whether the Government are aware that the ISI activities in the country are destabilising the nation by planting bombs etc. in trains;

(d) whether the involvement of ISI has been found in the said bomb blast in Punjab and recent bomb explosion in Delhi; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent such type of sabotage in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) Yes, Sir

(b) In the blast at Lehra Khana Railway Station in Bhatinda as many as 38 persons were killed while 67 persons were injured.

(c) Government is aware that under its current game plan, Pak. ISI has made fresh efforts to forge linkage between Punjab militants and insurgent groups of Jammu & Kashmir, fundamentalists groups and mercenaries to widen the arc of militancy in India. The recent incidents of bomb blasts in trains/terrorism in Punjab can be attributed to such an effort. However, adequate counter measures and coordinated efforts have been initiated to defeat such designs.

(d) Investigating teams of Punjab police investigating the Bhatinda train blast and Bagha Purana shoot out (which took place on 09.07.97) have achieved a major break through with the arrest of one Buta Singh, an active

conspirator aligned with International Sikh Youth Federation led by Pakistan based terrorist Lakhbir Singh Rode. The prime accused in the case Bhupinder Singh & Bhinda R/o Mari Mustafa PS Bagha Purana District Moga is however absconding. Efforts are on to nab him.

(e) To prevent acts of sabotage and to counter various activities of Pak ISI, the following steps have been taken:—

- (i) States/UTs have been requested to maintain extra vigil at public places such as Bus Stands, Railway Stations, Cinema Halls etc. and general public have been alerted about suspicious objects lying unattended at these places.
- (ii) Regular exchange of intelligence takes place between the States on the one hand and between these States and the Central Intelligence agencies on the other
- (iii) Barbed wire fencing and flood lighting on Indo-Pak border in Punjab (except some riverine gaps) and along major parts of border in Rajasthan has been erected. On the line of control and the International Border in the J&K which is a major source of infiltration from across the border, deployment of Army and BSF units have been strengthened on infiltration routes and in interior areas as a second line of defence.
- (iv) Effective vigilance all along the Indo-Pak border is maintained through patrolling by BSF with additional support from state police.
- (v) Militant cadres in J&K have suffered heavy casualties and many outfits have lost their top ranking leaders. In Punjab, a break-through has been achieved in many recent cases and several suspects of left over Punjab militants group who have cross-border linkages, have been arrested.
- (vi) Vigilance along Indo-Nepal border is also being strengthened.

*[Translation]***Animal Species**

3295. SHRI ANANT KUMAR HEGDE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the species of animals and birds which are on the verge of extinction in the country;

(b) the names of the species of animals and birds which have become extinct; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to protect the endangered species of birds and animals?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) Although a number of animal and bird species are endangered in the wild, they can not be considered to be on the verge of extinction. Some of the highly endangered species are: The Manipur Brow-Antlered deer, Hispid-Hare, Pigmy Hog, Mrs Hume's Barred Back Pheasant, Burmese Peafowl, Siberian Crane, Hooded Crane, Forest Spotted Owlet, Masked Finfood and Jerdon's Courser.

(b) The animal and bird species which are known to have become extinct are: Hunting Leopard or Cheetah, Lesser-one-horned Rhinoceros, Argiatri Two-horned Rhinoceros, Mountain Quail and Pink-headed Duck.

(c) A number of steps are being taken to protect endangered species. These include; Providing legal protection against hunting and commercial exploitation under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; providing assistance to the States for development of national parks and sanctuaries; implementing special projects for endangered species such as tiger, elephants, rhino etc; controlling poaching and illegal trade of wildlife through interdepartmental co-ordination and providing antipoaching infrastructure in specified areas. Besides, amendment of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and Indian Forest Act, 1927 has been taken on hand to make the penal provisions of these Acts more stringent.

Capturing of Boat by BSF

3296. DR. A.K. PATEL : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a boat was taken into custody by the soldiers of BSF on the bank of river in Kuchh Bhuj in Gujarat in January, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the material seized from the boat; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to stop such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a)

to (c) On 17th January, 1997, a fishing boat was seized by BSF near Koteswar in creek area containing the following arms and ammunitions:—

(i) Pistol	:	19 Numbers
(ii) Revolver	:	01 Numbers
(iii) AK 56 rifle	:	05 Numbers
(iv) Sniper rifle	:	06 Numbers
(v) Ammunition assorted	:	1320 Rounds

The following steps have been taken to check the smuggling of arms and ammunition and infiltration through the Indo-Pak border.

- (i) Additional Battalions have been sanctioned and deployed under expansion plan to reduce the gaps between the Border Out Posts.
- (ii) Patrolling and Nakas have been increased and intensified.
- (iii) Border patrolling on horses, camels and tractors is being done.
- (iv) OP towers have been erected.
- (v) Binoculars, goggles, twin telescopes, PNV binoculars and hand held search lights have been provided for enhanced vigilance on the border.
- (vi) Border fence/flood lighting has been erected in Punjab and Rajasthan. Feasibility studies for a modified type of fencing in Rann area of Gujarat have also been undertaken.
- (vii) Boats and Motor boats have been provided for patrolling riverine area.
- (viii) Border roads/tracks are being constructed and developed for vehicular patrolling in Punjab and Rajasthan sectors.

[English]

ULFA Activities

3297. SHRI K.S. RAYUDU : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ULFA rebels have set up camps in the forests inside the territory of Bhutan for launching violent activities in Assam;