

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:287

ANSWERED ON:22.02.2001

EXPLOSION DURING A MISSILE DEMONSTRATION

CHELLAMELLA SUGUNA KUMARI;DINESH CHANDRA YADAV;KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU;RAM JEEVAN SINGH;RENUKA CHOWDHURY;SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE;T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI;VSM (RETD.) COL. CHOUDHARY;YEMPARALA VENKATESWARA RAO

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether during the demonstration of a short range surface-to-surface missile `Milan` at Hyderabad on January 4, 2001, fire broke out with a bang killing a supervisor and injuring several others;
- (b) if so, the cause of fire and the explosion;
- (c) the reasons for exhibiting a live missile instead of a dummy;
- (d) the estimated loss of lives and property therein;
- (e) whether any enquiry has been conducted into the matter;
- (f) if so, the outcome thereof and the follow-up action taken thereon; and (g) the preventive steps taken to avert such situation in future?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) to (g): A Statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (g) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 287
22.2.2001

On 4th January, 2001 during the explanation of the working and loading of a launcher at Bharat Dynamics Limited, Hyderabad, the accidental firing of a missile took place. This resulted in outbreak of fire and also the death of a Quality Control Inspector, and injury to three other officers. The missile did not explode but there was slow combustion of the explosive.

2. A Committee was constituted immediately to investigate the causes of the accident; to list out the violations in the security and safety procedures which could have led to the accident and to fix responsibility for the lapses and also to suggest remedial measures to avoid such accidents. The Committee has since submitted its Report. The Committee has concluded that the accident was not as a result of any sabotage but because of human error in wrongly loading a missile and pressing the push button (triggering) on the launcher in the process of explaining its working. The Investigation has also concluded that the presence of the launcher in the building used for assembling the missiles was a contributory factor. The Committee has also drawn attention to some other security and safety violations. Estimated cost of repair of buildings, plant and machinery is Rs. 54.70 lakhs. Finished missiles and work in progress amounting to Rs. 26.64 crores were stored at the site during the incident. Extent of loss and damage of these missiles and material is subject to test and confirmation.

3. Major penalty proceedings against four officers of BDL have been ordered. It has also been decided to call for the explanation of the CMD, BDL, on the various lapses noticed by the Committee. A Committee consisting of representatives of the BDL, OFB, DGQA & DRDO has been set up to prepare a comprehensive Safety Manual for BDL so that stringent safety measures are put in place to avoid such accidents in future.