

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:714
ANSWERED ON:29.02.2000
DETECTION OF TUNNEL
VSM (RETD.) COL. CHOUDHARY

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned 'Protest over Pak tunnel across border' appearing in the 'Times of India' dated November 24, 1999;
- (b) if so, the facts thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Intelligence Agencies were failed to obtain any information about the digging of this tunnel early;
- (d) if so, whether the Government propose to investigate the matter and to take remedial measures to avoid such lapses in future; and
- (e) if not, the reasons thereof ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

(SHRI CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 714

Statement referred to in reply to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 714 due for answer on 29th February, 2000

(a) to (e) : BSF patrol party discovered an underground tunnel near Border Out Post Chandigarh in Dera Baba Nanak Sector on 17th November, 1999. This tunnel was about 5 to 5-1/2 feet below the surface, 3 feet in diameter and 200 meters long of which 30 meters was inside the Pak territory. A Joint verification of this tunnel was carried out by IG, BSF, Punjab Frontier (India) and DG, Punjab Rangers (Pakistan) on 23rd November, 1999. Subsequently, a protest was lodged by BSF with the Pak Rangers.

The area in which the tunnel was discovered is covered with thick sarkanda grass. Hence, it could not be detected immediately. However, it had not crossed the border fence on the Indian side and the other end of the mouth of the tunnel on the Indian side had not been opened. All the three attempts since March, 1997 to dig a tunnel under the border fencing in Punjab sector were detected by the BSF before any damage was done.

BSF is maintaining a strict vigil along the border to thwart such attempts in future. Steps taken include plugging of existing gaps in the riverine areas with proper/improvised fencing, conduct of surveillance operations, cleaning of sarkanda and other wild growth, upgrading the intelligence network, use of night vision devices etc.