

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:233

ANSWERED ON:16.12.2004

CRASH OF HELICOPTERS

Nikhil Kumar Shri ;Singh Shri Chandra Bhushan

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of helicopters of Defence forces crashed during the past three years, till date;
- (b) whether the Government has ordered an enquiry into such crashes;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of compensation paid to the victims;
- (e) the steps being taken to check such air crashes;
- (f) whether it is a fact that the Government had decided to set up an expert group to probe the reasons for the frequent crashes of IAF fighters;
- (g) if so, the details thereof;
- (h) whether it is also true that a similar Committee was set up almost a decade ago;
- (i) if so, whether the Government had implemented the recommendations of the said Committee; and
- (j) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (j) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 233 FOR 16.12.2004.

Till date, a total number of 22 helicopters of Defence Forces have crashed during the last three years. Out of these, 11 belonged to the Air Force, 9 to the Army while 2 belonged to the Navy. After every aircraft accident, a Court of Inquiry is set up to find out the cause of the accident and to recommend remedial measures.

Of the 11 accidents on Air Force helicopters, 6 were due to Human Error, 3 were due to Technical Defect, 1 remained unresolved while 1 is under investigation. In the case of Army helicopters, 4 were due to Technical Defect, 1 was due to Human Error, 1 remained unresolved, 1 was due to operational problems in snow-bound areas while in the remaining 2, the investigation is under progress. Similarly of the two accidents which took place on Navy helicopters, 1 was due to Technical Defect while the other remained unresolved due to non-recovery of the wreckage.

Compensation to the next of kin of the deceased service personnel and to injured personnel is paid as per the rules. In case of the Air Force helicopter accident, which took place in May 2001, a compensation of Rs. 25,000/- was also paid for the damage caused to civilian property. In case of the helicopter accident in July 2004, compensation of Rs. 5,50,000/- was paid to the next of kin of the civilian killed.

The Defence Forces continuously undertake measures to enhance and upgrade flight safety. Steps to enhance the quality of training to improve the skill levels, ability to exercise sound judgment and situational awareness of pilots are being pursued. Constant interaction with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) of concerned countries are also maintained to overcome the technical defects of aircraft.

Government have not set up any fresh expert group to probe the reasons for the crashes of Indian Air Force's fighters.

A Committee on Fighter Aircraft Accidents (COFAA) was set up in February, 1997 by the Government under the Chairmanship of Scientific Advisor to Raksha Mantri, to identify the causes for the aircraft accidents and prepare a comprehensive action plan to reduce the same to a minimum. The Committee also considered the recommendations of the earlier Committees i.e. Kohli Committee and La Fontaine Committee on flight safety. The Committee submitted its report to the Government in August, 1997.

Out of a total of 84 recommendations made by the Committee, 53 have been implemented, 21 are under various stages of implementation, while 10 are treated as closed as it is not possible to implement them.