

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3461
ANSWERED ON:22.12.2004
GOVERNMENT'S SECRET DATA
Nikhil Kumar Shri

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether most of India's topographical data is available for public as reported in the Statesman dated October 7, 2004;
- (b) if so, whether the country's spatial data is likely to fall into wrong hands since it is freely available;
- (c) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein ; and
- (d) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure that such type of secret data are not leaked from any sources?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL)

- (a) Yes Sir. It cannot be disputed that modern satellites with high resolution capabilities can generate topographical data on every part of the globe and most of the data so generated is available to the public through the internet.
- (b) The spatial data freely available to the public on internet may not be accurate, since remote sensing data collected from satellites needs correction. Data correction is possible only with information available with Survey of India which is not in the public domain. Consequently, based on the data derived from satellites, it is difficult to obtain precise coordinates of any place, (say like our vital installations).
- (c) The remote sensing data from satellites like Ikonos, or even Indian satellite IRS has to be corrected with the help of field measurements. Further, all topographical features appearing on the maps such as heights and place names cannot be extracted from remote sensing data.
- (d) Availability of authentic data prepared by Survey of India is subject to the map policy of the Government. Government are seized of the issue that public has increased accessibility to topographical data, due to the technological advancements in satellite remote sensing. Consequently, the revision of the present map policy so as to keep pace with the technological advancements, while at the same time ensuring the security of confidential topographical data is under active consideration of the Government.