

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2517

ANSWERED ON:27.08.2012

WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS FROM SIACHEN

Bais Shri Ramesh; Nirupam Shri Sanjay Brijkishorilal ; Pandurang Shri Munde Gopinathrao; Thamaraiselvan Shri R.; Yadav Shri Om Prakash

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has been considering any proposal to convert the Siachen Glacier-Saltoro ridge region into a mountain of peace and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the Government proposes for disengagement / withdrawal of troops from Siachen and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the schemes for the welfare of the soldiers working in Siachen glacier;
- (d) the casualties in this region after operation Meghdoot launched in 1984 and the compensation paid to families of soldiers who died in Siachen glacier since 1984;
- (e) whether the recent talks held with Pakistan on the issue of Siachen and Sir Creek have failed and if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the stand of Pakistan on withdrawal of troops from Siachen?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY)

(a) & (b): There has been no decision to withdraw troops from Siachen Glacier. Any deployment / redeployment of troops in the area is contingent upon the threat perception, ground situation and other operational aspects.

(c) A composite package of welfare measures for soldiers deployed on the Siachen glaciers, inter-alia, comprises – Siachen allowance, provision of Separated Family Accommodation anywhere in India, free warrant to travel hometown twice in a year, special ration and food developed by DRDO, evacuation by helicopter during medical emergencies.

(d) A total number of 846 Armed forces personnel have made supreme sacrifices on the Siachen glaciers since 1984. The death during the course of duties on Siachen glaciers is treated as 'battle casualties' and enhanced compensation is paid to the next of the kin which includes -enhanced ex-gratia of Rs.20 lakhs, liberalized family pension equal to emoluments last drawn, Death-cum-Retirement-Gratuity, compensation from Army Group Insurance Scheme and ex-gratia lump sum compensation from the Central Government. Apart from the above, liberal contributions are also made from different funds, such as – Army officers benevolent fund, Army wives welfare association fund and Army central welfare fund. The family members of the deceased soldiers are also entitled for education concession card and air travel concession card.

(e) & (f): During the 13th Round of Siachen Talks between the Defence Secretaries of India and Pakistan held in Pakistan from 11th to 12th June 2012, both delegations reaffirmed their resolve to make serious, sustained and result oriented efforts for seeking an amicable resolution of Siachen. It was agreed to continue the dialogue on Siachen in keeping with the desire of the leaders of both the countries for early resolution of all outstanding issues. The talks on Sir Creek issues between Surveyor General on India and Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Defence of Pakistan were held in New Delhi on June 18-19, 2012. The two sides discussed the land boundary in the Sir Creek area and also delimitation of International Maritime Boundary between India and Pakistan. They reiterated their desire to find an amicable solution of the Sir Creek issue through sustained and result oriented dialogue.