

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:473
ANSWERED ON:26.11.2012
SHRINKING OF DEFENCE LAND
Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether due to urbanisation, encroachment, unauthorized occupation, and land rights with the State Governments, the firing range land for armed forces is shrinking year after year;
- (b) if so, the number and details of the State Government denotified lands for public or private purposes;
- (c) whether the armed forces have requested the Union Government to interfere in the shrinking firing range land in different States;
- (d) if so, the steps taken or being taken by the Government in this regard;
- (e) the number of deaths so far reported due to firing in the fire range in different States so far; and
- (f) the remedial steps taken or being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY)

- (a) Yes, Madam.
- (b) Out of total 104 firing ranges held by Army in 2009, 38 firing ranges (Appendix 'A') were deleted from the list of firing ranges in 2009 due to their not being available for use by the Army and also not being re-notified by the concerned State Governments in spite of relentless efforts. Out of remaining 66 firing ranges of Army, 15 ranges (Appendix 'B') are currently de-notified by the various State Governments. As regard Air Force and Navy no firing ranges have been de-notified.
- (c) Yes, Madam.
- (d) Concerted efforts are being made at all levels to ensure early re-notification of the de-notified ranges. The concerned Army Commands are also taking up the issue of ranges in the Civil Military Liaison Conferences with the respective State Governments. Simultaneous efforts are on for acquisition of more ranges. In addition, efforts are on by the Army to impress upon the respective State Governments and Ministry of Environment and Forest for re-notification/acquisition of field firing ranges.
- (e) No civilian deaths have been reported during firing so far. However, a total of 10 deaths have been reported while unauthorized collection of metal scrap by civilians from field firing ranges.
- (f) The following safety/precautionary measures/ steps are already being taken to prevent such incidents:-
 - (i) Detailed safety instructions have been put in place in the form of Range Standing Orders for each range.
 - (ii) Clearance before firing is obtained from the civil Administration well in time.
 - (iii) Local inhabitants are warned of firing by the local civil administration.
 - (iv) Permanent notice boards are displayed to warn the public about firing. Red flags are also placed and sentries posted and the entry of civilian vehicles, personnel and animals is regulated along various roads/tracks leading to the ranges.
 - (v) Police representatives are also present during firing.
 - (vi) Clearance after firing is taken from the police, villages and civil administration.
 - (vii) All unexploded ammunition is searched, collected and destroyed to prevent the casualty.
 - (viii) Forest fire prevention measures are taken by restricting the firing of incendiary ammunition and by proactive fire fighting means.