

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1048

ANSWERED ON:22.07.2016

Fire at Central Ammunition Depot in Pulgaon

Dhruvanarayana Shri Rangaswamy;Jadhav Shri Sanjay Haribhau;Kamal Nath Shri ;Owaisi Shri Asaduddin;Patil Shri A.T.

(Nana);Patole Shri Nanabhau Falgunrao;Reddy Shri Ch. Malla;Scindia Shri Jyotiraditya Madhavrao;Venkatesh Babu Shri T.G.;Verma Shri Rajesh

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a major fire broke out in the Central Ammunition Depot at Pulgaon in Maharashtra recently, if so, the details thereof along with the total loss suffered and the number of officers and jawans killed in the incident;
- (b) whether the Court of inquiry in its report has stated that defective anti-tank mines, packed with poor quality explosives have been the cause of the disaster, if so, the details thereof along with the other reasons identified for the incident;
- (c) whether the manufacturing defects in the anti-tank mines were brought to the notice of the Government / Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) / Ordnance Factories Board (OFB), if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon;
- (d) the number of such incidents reported from various parts of the country during each of the last three years and the current year; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to fix responsibilities in such a major fire at ammunition depot and also to ensure that such incidents may not re-occur?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR)

(a) A major fire incident took place at Central Ammunition Depot, Pulgaon (Maharashtra) on 31st May 2016. There have been 19 fatal casualties and 17 non-fatal casualties and loss of equipment and stores as per preliminary estimation is approximately Rs.8.00 crores.

(b) As per the opinion of Court of Inquiry, the most probable cause of the incident was excessive exudation (bleeding) of TNT reacting with metallic container leading to self-ignition (spontaneous combustion) of segregated Mine Anti Tank held in the store house.

(c) to (e): The manufacturing defects have been brought to the notice of Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for corrective action in the year 2010 when the same was noticed.

On the basis of the recommendations of Court of Inquiry and subsequent deliberations with all stakeholders, the following has been approved by the Government in order to prevent recurrence of such incidents:-

(i) Disposal of all defective segregated mines (Anti Tank Mines 1A ND) for exudation of TNT, held at various locations will be undertaken by Army Headquarters (AHQ).

(ii) Ordnance Factory will replace or repair the defective ammunition within three months.

(iii) Army Headquarters in consultation with all stakeholders will finalize the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for:

(a) Disposal of defective ammunition in fixed time frame, and

(b) Fixing up responsibility for defect and regularization of loss.

(iv) Department of Defence Production (DDP) in consultation with all stakeholders will prepare a SOP for handholding of Production Agency by the Designer till production stabilizes.

(v) Army Headquarters will review the security (including surveillance) and fire safety arrangements at all ammunition depots.

No other fire incident has taken place in any ammunition depot in the last three years and the current year.
