

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO.181
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 29TH JULY, 2016

FIRES IN ORDNANCE DEPOTS

*181. SHRI KALYAN BANERJEE:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE j{k k ea=h
be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of recurrent fires in the Ordnance depots in recent past, if so, the details thereof along with the loss incurred as a result thereof;
- (b) whether any Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) exist to prevent ammunition fires in Ordnance depots, if so the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has undertaken any safety audit of Ordnance Depot and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the action proposed to be taken by the Government to tread caution on blast probability and to restore adequate ammunition supply therein?

A N S W E R

MINISTER OF DEFENCE

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(SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR)

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(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 181 FOR ANSWER ON 29.7.2016

Apart from the fire incident at Central Ammunition Depot (CAD) Pulgaon, Maharashtra on 31st May 2016, no other fire incident has taken place in any Ordnance Depot of the Indian Army during the last three years. In the fire incident at Central Ammunition Depot (CAD), Pulgaon, Maharashtra on 31st May 2016, there were 19 fatal and 17 non-fatal casualties, and the total loss of equipment and stores as per preliminary estimation is approximately Rs.7.90 crores.

There are existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and regular advisories are issued for prevention of fire. In addition, the following measures are also in place for preventive checks:-

- (i) The ammunitions are stored / handled as per the established norms and regulations.
- (ii) Annual administrative inspection of all ammunition depots / units is carried out.
- (iii) Regular fire fighting practices are carried out.

The safety audit of Ordnance Depots is a regular exercise. The outcome of these audits includes the measures to be undertaken to avoid such incidents.

The ammunition storage is inherently a risky proposition. These risks are minimized by adapting prescribed storage norms laid down by the regulatory body i.e., Centre for Fire, Explosives and Environment Safety (CFEES). With regard to regular ammunition supply, annual provisioning review of all ammunition items is carried out by Indian Army and the deficiencies are made up through established procurement procedures from Ordnance Factory / Trade / Import.

On the basis of recommendations of Court of Inquiry on recent fire incident at CAD, Pulgaon, Maharashtra 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 Board (OFB) will replace or repair the defective ammunition within three months.

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- (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 hand holding 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.**
