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Title : The Minister of Defence made a Statement regarding Reported the News-Item captioned "Dhaka Grabs 2 Square Km of India's Land" appeared in 'The Pioneer', dated the 27th July, 2006.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Defence Minister, Shri Pranab Mukherjee is prepared to make a statement now on the issue raised by the hon. Member, Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra. Please allow him to make a statement.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, the hon. Defence Minister.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, yesterday my colleague and hon. Member, Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra raised the issue of India's land being in possession forcibly by Bangladesh and I told him that I would collect the information and keep the House informed. Sir, I have collected the information and I am making a statement now.

Sir, I rise to make a Statement in connection with the news-item "Dhaka grabs 2 sq. km. Of India's land" appearing in '*The Pioneer*' dated the 27th July, 2006.

The report regarding Bangladesh nationals, backed by their Army, uprooting boundary pillars along the Indo-Bangladesh border in Districts of

* Placed in Library, See No. LT 4523/2006

Dhubri and Karimganj of Assam and forcibly grabbing 500 acres (2.02 sq. km.) of Indian territory is incorrect. BSF deployed on Indo-Bangladesh border is on high alert and, no fresh adverse possession or illegal occupation of Indian land has been reported on any section of the international border.

No Indian population or border outpost has been shifted away from the International Border.

In Assam, there are three areas in adverse possession of Bangladesh. These are (i) Boraibari, Dhubri district – 189.06 acres (BP No. 1066/4S to BP No. 1067/5S); (ii) Pallatal Tea Garden, Karimganj district – 299.04 acres (BP No. 10369/3S to BP No. 10373/3S); (iii) Pamodnagar Tea Garden, Karimganj district – 11.73 acres (BP No. 1375/2S to BP No. 1375/3S, 5S, 6S). Thus, the total area in adverse possession of Bangladesh is 499.83 acres.

No intrusion by BDR or Bangladesh nationals has recently been reported from area of Mankachar in district Dhubri of Assam. 189.06 acre of Indian land in Boraibari area of Mankachar Revenue Circle from BP No. 1066/3 S to BP No. 1067/5-S is under adverse possession of Bangladesh since before 1971. The survey of India and Survey of Bangladesh are aware of these details.

The matter has been under discussion with Bangladesh. Recently, the Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG) meeting was held on 16th & 17th July, 2006 between India and Bangladesh in Dhaka. The issue of adverse possession was also discussed in the meeting. It was decided that joint visits by the two sides to the territories under adverse possession would take place without prejudice to their respective positions.

Both countries have adverse possession in certain pockets, but the exact details of such adverse possession are yet to be reconciled between India and Bangladesh. Efforts to do so continue.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, the House shall take up Item No. 14.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (BALASORE): Sir, I have just a small clarification.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: At this time, there is no clarification to be sought.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: Sir, one of the Ministers of the Assam Governemnt has told that 2 square kilometre of Indian land is occupied by Bangladesh.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Swain, this is not the way.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I clarifying their position. It is exactly the proceedings of the Assam Legislative Assembly and exactly the same figures. But the Minister of Assam Government did never say that it has happened recently. Those areas are in possession of Bangladesh even before Bangladesh was created. That is why I have mentioned the year 1971.

Hon. Members are aware of the fact ...(Interruptions)

Please listen to me. Hon. Members are aware of the fact that both sides are in adverse possession of land. These are called enclaves. These have not yet been sorted out since Independence. We are in possession of almost about 2,000 acres of land, which Bangladesh claims that belongs to them; and Bangladesh is in possession of almost equal amount of land which we claim as it belongs to us. That is why this Joint Survey is being organised. That is why the meeting took place in Dhaka between 16th and 17th July to identify and to sort out these issues.
