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Title: Regarding missing of Indian Air Force AN-32 transport aircraft.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Madam, an Indian Air Force AN-32, transport aircraft, with 29 people on board, has gone missing over the Bay of Bengal amid inclement weather on 22nd July, 2016.

The Navy, Coast Guard and the Indian Air Force have launched a joint search and rescue operation but they have not succeeded so far. Today, when we are discussing about some incursion into Uttarakhand, the prominence of our forces transfer is of utmost vitality and here the transport Air Force plane plays a major role. It was between 1984 and 1991, these aircrafts were purchased from Soviet Union.

This reminds me – Mulayam Singh ji was expressing his opinion relating to the Chinese incursion of 1962 – when we were frantically asking the American Government to provide us transport plane so that we can transport our soldier to the NEFA border; that did not arrive. Later on, the Indian Government and our Defence Ministry started acquiring transport planes. We are not discussing for the last many years the Defence budget all; otherwise these things could have been discussed either in this House or in the other House.

But, my concern here is, this aircraft went through an overhauling in last September. There was some hydraulic problem; there was some pressure leak here and there. That is what has come out in the media. But it was fly worthy; that was mentioned repeatedly. Here, this accident took place and we are unable to recover neither any debris nor any body, though all the Wings of our Defence have started the search for the last seven days and today is the seventh day. Two Oriyas also were in that aircraft. One was Purna Chandra Senapati from Jajpur district and another was Charan Maharana from Ganjam district. One can understand, all the 29 families are yet to know the fate of these people. It is difficult today to say, with conformity, what has befallen them.

But my concern here is – I would like to draw the attention of the Government – these aircraft were purchased from erstwhile Soviet Union. Soviet Union's demise happened in 1991. A peculiar thing has happened relating to this aircraft. The engineering part is with Russia and the other technological part is with Ukraine. We all now that the relationship between Ukraine and Russia is not good. So, once the Indian Government is trying to purchase certain things from Russia, we do not get the support of Ukraine, and for purchase from Ukraine we do not get the support of Russia relating to this AN-32 aircraft. There are around 100 transport aircraft with us and they need overhauling.

Therefore, my question to the Government is this. Are we thinking something alternative to this AN-32 aircraft? I would not plead that you do away with the 100 transport aircraft altogether in one go. It would be fly worthy. It should not create any difficulty to transport our personnel, our Army personnel, Naval personnel or whoever from one place to another. It is necessary for our security. But, at the same time, alternative arrangement also should be made. I would like to understand from the Government, if the House is made aware of it, what steps the Government is taking for transport planes and what is the second source for the new transport plane, and the financial support that needs to be provided to the families that are in distress. Thank you, Madam....(*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: I know, from so many places people are there inside; they are from Haryana also.

...(*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Dushyant Chautala, Shri P. Kumar, Shri Rabindra Kumar Jena, Shri Rodmal Nagar, Shri Sudheer Gupta, Shri Bhairon Prasad Mishra, Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel and Shri Sharad Tripathi are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab.