

problem is of those people who are living in jhuggi-jhonpris and slums in villages and towns. Only today, you have expressed your intension to introduce a bill relating to Urban Land ceiling, that means you want to protect land owners by removing ceiling. Thus the poor people living in cities and slum areas will move out of the cities. Whether you are going to make some arrangements for them in your policy? Your Department is giving funds for slum upgradation. Your Department is helping them by providing houses and other facilities. You have mentioned that 20 lakh houses will be given to poor people ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: you ask question.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: You have mentioned in your Agenda that 20 lakh houses will be built for the poor people. Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi had launched one housing scheme which is now called as Indira Awas Yojana. Are 20 lakh houses for the poor which the hon'ble Minister is mentioning under that scheme. In order to help the countrymen in meeting their basic needs, whether the government...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Lалуji, you please ask the question.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: I would like to ask for how long we will depend on foreigners? Whether only foreigners will construct houses here and provide basic facilities? What is your policy in this regard? Will you increase the number of houses being provided to people under Indira Awas Yojana and withdraw urban land ceiling Bill? Only then this government will be successful in getting houses constructed by giving funds to HUDCO or some other Agency for poor people. What is the intension of the government in this regard? You will depend on foreigners or depend on our countrymen?

[*English*]

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: I hope the hon. Member will have the patience to hear a very brief answer to the very long question that he has asked.

First of all, I appreciate the hon. Member's concern for the poor people of this country but what I object to is that you claim the monopoly of concern for the poor people. I do not accept it. We are equally concerned and we are more concerned about them. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER: Sir, this is not fair on his part ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Secondly, we are all appreciative of the Indira Awas Yojana which had been started some years ago but the hon. Member should

know that uptill now, a sum of Rs. 1100 crore alone had been allocated to the Indira Awas Yojana.

It is totally inadequate for the purpose of solving the problem of the rural poor. But please given us the credit that for the first time we have reversed the trend. The trend was to decrease the contribution to Indira Awas Yojana. In this Budget, we have increased it from Rs. 1,100 crore to Rs. 1,600 crore. ...(*Interruptions*)

Let us answer the last part of your question. The last part of your question needs only one answer that if the poor man in this country has not got the benefit of what is intended for him, if the things, which are intended for him, have not trickled down into his pocket, the major problem of this country is corruption. ...(*Interruptions*). There are people who have swallowed the pills. We are doing our best to clean up the system and to see that every rupee that is meant for the poor person trickles into his pocket without a single paisa being stolen in the process of distribution.

MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 225. Shri Bhagwan Shankar Rawat.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: This is a very important issue. Therefore, let us have a discussion in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: If the House agrees, I have no objection for half-an-hour discussion.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Please take consensus of the House. Let there be a discussion. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: All right.

[*Translation*]

Decline in Passengers of I.A.

*225. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state;

(a) whether due to the emergence of air taxi operators, the number of passengers of Indian Airlines has declined sharply;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the remedial steps taken by the Government?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANNANTH KUMAR) (a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b): Due to the emergence of air taxi operators, one number of passengers carried by Indian Airlines on the domestic sector had initially declined. The main reasons were:—

- (i) The private operators, in the absence of level playing field, pressed aircraft capacity on the lucrative trunk routes which were adequately served by Indian airlines. This resulted in passenger gain to the private operators primarily at the cost of Indian Airlines.
- (ii) Shortage of Commanders and qualified engineers due to their exodus to the private operators who offered much higher emoluments. As a result, aircraft utilization came down to all time low.

(c) The following remedial steps have been taken to increase the passenger carriage by Indian Airlines.—

- (i) Increased utilization of aircraft through:—
 - Increased productivity of Commanders.
 - Increased availability of commanders.
 - Increased availability of aircraft per day as a result of increased productivity of Engineers.
 - Launching of Alliance Air.
- ii) Attracting passengers by:—
 - Product improvement.
 - Innovative and aggressive marketing strategies.
 - Improved on-time performance.
 - Dissemination of information about the strengths of the Company.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Rawatji, now you speak.
...(Interruptions)

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I can ask question only when silence is restored.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

[Translation]

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: My request is that the Air Taxi Service which was earlier private service...(Interruptions)

SHRI LALU PRASAD: My reply has not yet come.

MR. SPEAKER: Laluji, reply has already come, you please sit down.

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: An amount of 150 crores is outstanding against the Air Taxi Service which was a private service. In spite of this, as compared to services of Indian Airlines, Air Taxi service earned profit. What are the reasons therefor? Reasons have not been mentioned in the reply. Second part of my question is that I would like to know that taxi operators were to operate on deficit routes also... (Interruptions)

SHRI LALU PRASAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this should be discussed.

MR. SPEAKER: Please don't do like this, reply has already been given, you please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: He has already answered the question.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please take your seats.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not good on your part, Shri Ramdas Athawale. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have already allowed half-an-hour discussion on this issue.

...(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker: I will give you time. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, no. I have already allowed half-an-hour discussion.

[Translation]

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Sir, Government dues to the taxi operators amount to more than Rs. 150 crore. Why government has done this. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: Sir, have you given your ruling?

MR. SPEAKER: I have already given time for half-an-hour discussion.

[Translation]

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Later on, they were engaged for certain routes but money has not been recovered from them? On top of that, the Union Government says that Indian airlines lagged behind in competition on lucrative routes. I would like to know as to why it lagged behind? I would also like to know that it was decided in the agreement that one percent of flights will operate on non-lucrative routes in North-East but why Air Taxi Services were not forced to operate on deficit routes? I want to know why government has done this and in future what is their plan in this regard?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI LALU PRASAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, please allow half-an-hour discussion on this issue...*(Interruptions)* Discussion should be held over this... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Laluji, please take your seat.

[Translation]

SHRI LALU PRASAD: Please allow discussion on this... *(Interruption)* We will expose them... *(Interruptions)* We want to see... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is not correct ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: No cross talk please.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Mr. Speaker. Sir, I have already mentioned in the statement that has been laid on the Table of the House that operations of the Indian airlines flights dripped because of allowing the private taxi operators. Now again it is picking up.

Sir, regarding the question asked by Shri Bhagwan Shankar Rawat about Route Dispersal instructions, I would like to submit that we have formulated Route dispersal instructions. We have categorised the air routes into three sectors. The prize routes have been identified as category one routes; the routes especially in the North-East, have been identified as Category-II routes; and the other routes, that is in the sub-regional places other than those falling under Categories I and II, have been identified as Category III routes. That is the Route Dispersal guideline.

According to this Route Dispersal Guideline, every operator, Indian Airlines as well as other private air taxi operators, would have to mandatorily fly at a required specific ratio of 51%:10%:1%. This has been adhered to. Wherever the air taxi operators have not complied with this requirement, punitive actions have been taken against them and it has been set rights.

[Translation]

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Mr. Speaker, my second question is whether the government have admitted that the Indian Airlines lags behind in the competition with Air Taxi Services? However, the hon'ble Minister has not mentioned any reasons therefor. I had asked the reasons therefor. Let us presume that Indian Airlines has lost out to the private operators in the competition and it will lag behind. There are routes where there is no air service at present like Agra-Delhi-Jaipur which is one of the triangular route and there are similar other tourist routes also. Has the Government any proposal to handover such new routes to air taxi operators so that the Indian airlines does not run into losses and its services could be expanded further?

[English]

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Speaker, Sir, at the outset I disagree with the hon. Member that after the emergence of private air taxi operators in the country, the share of Indian airlines in the market is declining. Actually, as of today, the Indian airlines has 65 per cent of the total market share and air taxi operators have only 34 per cent of the total market of the Civil Aviation. Out of 11 scheduled air taxi operators, there are now only two private air taxi operators. If we go back, in 1992 when there was a complete monopoly, the Indian airlines had 95.18 per cent of the total share. But, as he rightly said, when we opened the domestic sky for private operators, it started declining because of the competition. It came down to 76 per cent, 65 per cent, 59 per cent in 1995 and 58 per cent in 1996. But again in 1997 it went up to 64 per cent. Therefore, we have not lost the market. We are regaining the market. To regain the market, the Indian airlines are constantly taking up all sorts of

improvement activities especially, product improvement, innovative and aggressive marketing strategy and improved all time performance. We are engaged into all these things.

The hon. Member has given a suggestion regarding Agra-Jaipur-Delhi air connection. We will examine the whole thing and consider it favourably.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: At present, in India we have air taxis. The State Governments also are flying aircraft to different places. Indian Airlines is also there. Vayudoot has stopped working. The result is that we are not flying to the areas where the facility to fly was most needed. We are not flying to the North-Eastern States. Flights have been stopped to various districts because of which we are now suffering. Air travel is not a luxury in the present day time. It is a facility to take the industry to the backward and undeveloped areas. If you have the air facility, then the industry can go to any part of the country. In views of this, what is the policy of the Government to see that we continue flying to the North-Eastern States: we continue to fly to the places where we were flying in the past and what kind of policy we are going to adopt with respect to air taxis, the State flying the aircraft, Indian Airlines, Vayudoot and other corporations which the Civil aviation is having? Are they going to have any concrete long-term perspective and planning for this purposes so that the facility is provided, dispersal of industry becomes possible and all the districts in the country are connected by aircraft?

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: I entirely share the view expressed by my esteemed colleague, who is a former Speaker of this august House and my predecessor also. To answer his question, the Civil Aviation Ministry is working out a concept of democratization of Civil Aviation.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: It is a dangerous concept. Please do not democratise it...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: When I say democratization of Civil Aviation, I mean that we require a much more wider air cover to this country of 550 million people. I entirely agree with him that the present infrastructure and the aviation links are not at all adequate. There is much scope for improvement.

When we speak of democratisation of civil aviation, there are two specific aspects to it. I would respect the indulgence of Prof. Kurien on this. The two specific issues are: (1) the reach of the civil aviation and (2) the viability. The reach is created by two things: (1) the airport infrastructure and (2) the aircraft. We have 120 airports in the country now. Out of these 120 airports, 55 are functional and the others are quasi-functional. I am visiting

all the airports. I have visited 10 airports throughout the country till today. We are trying to upgrade the facilities of different airports. Regarding the aircraft, neither Indian Airlines nor the private operators, except one or two regional operators as the hon. Member has pointed out, have smaller aircraft on their fleets. If we do not purchase smaller aircraft, these sub-regional routes cannot be made commercially viable. I entirely agree with this.

We have got air link up to the regional headquarters now. However, in each State in the country, there are three-four places which are equivalent to regional headquarters in their importance which have to be air-linked. For that we have to acquire 30-seater aircraft and 50-seater aircraft. The Government is actively considering acquiring of these aircraft. Six 50-seater aircraft by Indian airlines and another sixteen 50-seater aircraft by private operators are going to be acquired in total in the next few days. I am very happy to inform this august House that in the next few days we will be giving clearance to acquire twenty-two 50-seater aircraft by which we can link all the sub-regional areas in the country. Once we do it, we can reach the sub-regional areas also by air.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Sir, the whole object of bringing private operators into domestic airlines was to create competition and improve the quality of service of Indian Airlines. The child is buried now and, unfortunately, high-sounding words are being used by the young Minister here. The hon. Minister should not simply go by the answers of bureaucrats.

I want a specific answer as to what is being done in regard to cleanliness in the aircraft. They are absolutely filthy. What about giving good food to passengers? The aircraft are not being maintained at all as a result of which they have become absolutely dirty. What about the bad condition of the domestic airports? A fire accident took place two years ago in Delhi airport. Nothing has been done to improve that international airport which was named after Shrimati Indira Gandhi. The Minister should answer as to what has been done in this regard. He should not go by the terms like product improvement, innovative strategy and aggressive movement. These are all high-sounding words signifying nothing. The Minister should answer each of these questions one by one.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR: Hon. Speaker, Sir, we have already launched a programme called 'Access' through which we are getting the feedback of the commuters. If the hon. Members goes through our performance chart, he will find that it is okay. Regarding the situation of the terminal at Indira Gandhi Airport in New Delhi, it got burnt down one and a half years back. Yesterday I inspected the entire thing. Within one month we are going to inaugurate and commission an entirely new terminal

which can cater to more than two and a quarter thousand of passenger with all basic and modern facilities.

SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY: Sir, by introducing air taxis in Andhra Pradesh, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has completely ruined the air traffic there. For example, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams have given Rs. 7 crore for improvement of the airport and air terminal.

12.00 hrs.

After assuming offices, the hon. Speaker has visited Tirupati. I do not know what he has promised to Lord Venkateshwara. Those who neglected Tirupati have not survived so far. Alliance Airlines are flying only two days a week. Will the hon. Minister look into the matter to improve traffic, irrespective of the losses? Lord Venkateshwara is there to take care of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. I want a specific answer from the hon. Minister?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister may send a written reply.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Production Cost of Steel

*223. **SHRI VIJAY SINGH SOY:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Alloy Steel Plants of Steel Authority of India are fighting a survival battle owing to high production-cost;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK) (a) and (b): Performance of Alloy/Special Steel Plants of SAIL is affected mainly due to lower sales realisation emerging out of competition, slow-down in demand and continuous increase in input prices.

(c) SAIL is taking steps on a continuous basis, to improve the performance of these plants, which include reduction in cost by improving the techno-economic parameters, demands oriented production, improving quality of products and increasing sales through aggressive and customer oriented marketing etc.

Increase in Domestic Air Fare

*226. **SHRI HARIN PATHAK:** Will the MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering to increase domestic air fare;

(b) if so, the main reasons therefor and the criteria being followed in this regard;

(c) the accumulated loss of the Indian Airlines till date; and

(d) the steps that are being taken by the Government to make up the losses?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b): Domestic air fares are not being regulated by the Government.

(c) the accumulated loss of Indian Airlines since the year 1989-90 to 1996-97 is Rs. 1045.60 crores.

(d) Indian airlines has taken/proposes to take the following steps to make up the losses:—

(i) Restructuring of routes; (ii) Creation of profit centres; (iii) Increase in international operations; (iv) Change in training pattern of pilots; (v) Creation of Alliance Air; (vi) Improvement in customer services; (vii) Improvement in corporate image by disseminating information about Company's strengths; (viii) Aggressive marketing strategies to improve market share; (ix) Strict control on recruitment and on capital expenditure; (x) Turn-around strategies suggested by the Kelkar Committee.

[Translation]

Inadequate Facilities Provided by Air India

*227. **SHRI SATNAM SINGH KAINTH:** Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that air India has been running at loss continuously during the last three years;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Air India does not provide the facilities which are provided in International flights by other Airlines;

(d) whether it has resulted in under-utilisations of the capacity;

(e) if so, the facts thereof; and