

(f) the remedial steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (f): The details of losses incurred by Air India in the last three years are as under:—

Year	Loss (Rs. In crores)
1995-96	271.84
1996-97	296.94
1997-98 (Provisional)	280.43

Facilities provided differ from airline to airline. Air India, however, endeavours to provide quality services on its flights. Passenger amenities provided by Air India include the following:—

- (i) Improved audio and video system.
- (ii) Personal television provided in First Class and Executive Class of B747-400 and Executive Class of A310.
- (iii) Inflight telephone system provided on B747-400 aircraft.
- (iv) Inflight facsimile system provided on B747-400 aircraft.

The seat factors for all international airlines depend on the seasonality and the prevalent competition. However, to improve its seat factors, Air India is continuously providing new service concepts on its flights such as:—

- (i) Tele Check-in for First and Executive Class passengers.
- (ii) Multi Check-in at Mumbai and Indira Gandhi International Airport.
- (iii) Interactive computer flight information system.
- (iv) Upgrading of aircraft interior.

[English]

Panchayat Elections

*228. SHRIMATI RANEE NARAH:
SHRI ANIL BASU:

Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the elections to Panchayati Raj bodies are held regularly in all the States;
- (b) if not, the States where elections are not held regularly;
- (c) whether some States have not given necessary financial and administrative Powers to Panchayati Raj Bodies;
- (d) if no, the names of such States together with reasons thereof;
- (e) whether the Government propose to take steps to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions throughout the country, and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) to (f): Article 243-E of this Constitution specifies that all Panchayats unless sooner dissolved under any law for the time being in force, shall continue for 5 years and that elections to constitute Panchayats shall be completed before the expiration of its duration of 5 years or before the expiration of a period of 6 months from the date of its dissolution. According to information available with the date of its dissolution. According to information available with the Government elections are being held as laid down in Article 243-E of the Constitution in all States, except in Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Pondicherry, Zilla Parisads of Goa and Assam.

2. Some States have not yet given necessary financial powers to Panchayati Raj Bodies for want of reports of the State Finance Commissions (SFC). SFCs of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have submitted their reports to the respective State Government. The States of Assam, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and west Bengal have accepted most of the recommendations of the SFCs. Gujarat, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu have received Interim Reports of the SFC on which States/UTs have yet to take action. SFCs of Bihar, Goa and Sikkim have yet to submit their reports. Acceptance of the recommendations of the SFCs will considerably strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

3. Article 243-G of the Constitution enables the State Governments to endow the Panchayats with necessary powers, functions and responsibilities so as to enable them to function as institutions of self-government. A

Conference of the Chief Ministers on Panchayati Raj was held on 2nd August, 1997 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister to review the functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions where the outstanding issues like devolution of powers/functions and responsibilities upon PRIs were discussed. The Conference recommended that (a) detailed executive instructions devolving executive powers upon PRIs, specifying functions and demarcating responsibilities in unambiguous terms be issued; (b) States to devolve financial powers to panchayats and also prepare technical manuals for works so that panchayats at various levels are able to execute development works on the basis of transparent guidelines in these manuals; (c) Departmentally functionaries appropriate to the levels be made available to the PRIs alongwith powers of control over these functionaries; (d) Steps be taken to ensure transparency in the working of panchayats; (e) State Government to request their SFCs to expedite reports. Further, the Conference recommended setting up of a Committee of the Chief Ministers under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister to examine the issues regarding the devolution of powers, functions and responsibilities upon PRIs and to recommend measures to streamline the Panchayati Raj system. The Committee recommended to the States to make the Panchayats effective by taking steps, such as —

1. Leaving selection of beneficiaries to Gram Sabha.
2. Waiving the requirement of technical sanction for works upto Rs. 10,000.
3. Innovation to provide adequate manpower support to the Gram Panchayats.
4. Delegation of total control over such manpower to Gram Panchayats.
5. Zilla Parishad Chairpersons to be made the Chairpersons of DRDAs.
6. Providing reasonable opportunity of hearing to the PRIs before suspension/dismissal.
7. Gram Panchyat President to be accountable solely to Gram Sabha.
8. Expeditious constitution of District Planning Committee.

Devolution of powers is a continuing process. The States/UTs have been delegating powers gradually which would give Panchayats time to develop their capabilities in discharging their functions effectively. Regular monitoring is being done by the Government through meetings with

State Officials and letters to State Governments. Recently a meeting of State Ministers incharge of Panchayati Raj was held on 13.5.1998 to review the position. The draft resolutions adopted during the meeting have been circulated to all States/UTs for their comments. Comments from 13 States have been received. On receipt of comments from the remaining States/ UTs, these resolutions would be finalised and sent to all States/UTs for necessary follow up action.

Advanced Instruments Landing system at Delhi and Mumbai

*229 SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA:
SHRI NARESH PUGLIA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Airports Authority of India had decided to instal the advanced instrument landing system supplied by M/s. Raytheon of USA for Delhi and Mumbai airports to improve air safety;

(b) whether the equipment has failed to meet the international standards of safe landing facilities laid down by ICAO;

(c) if so, whether the agreement has been rescinded; and

(d) the steps taken to procure equipment conforming to the ICAO specifications?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a): Airports Authority of India has undertaken the work of upgradation/modernisation of the Air Traffic Control Systems at Delhi and Mumbai airports at an estimated cost of Rs. 423.89 crores. Installation of Instrument Landing Systems is a part of modernisation work being done by M/s. Raytheon, the turnkey contractor.

(b) to (d): The Category II Instrument Landing System installed at Delhi airport in May, 1995 is being operated as Category I because the equipment does not meet ICAO specifications. Airports Authority of India had taken up with the supplier the need to resolve the anomaly and make the system operational for Category II operations. M/s. Raytheon have agreed to instal the Category II system free of cost, within the next 6 months.