

[Sh. Sontosh Mohan Dev]

(2) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (3) of section 22 of The Central Industrial Security Force Act, 1968:-

- (i) The Central Industrial Security Force (Second Amendment) Rules, 1988 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 315 in Gazette of India dated the 23rd April, 1988.
- (ii) The Central Industrial Security Force (Fourth Amendment) Rules, 1988 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 609 in Gazette of India dated the 30th July, 1988. [Placed in Library. See No. LT. 6796/88]

(ii) Fortieth Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 4th Report (Eighth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Industry (Department on Public Enterprises)—Reservations for and employment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (Hyderabad and Hardwar Units).

(iii) Forty-first Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 30th Report (Eighth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Welfare—socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

12.11 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF
SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED
TRIBES

[English]

**Thirty-ninth, Fortieth and forty-First
Reports**

SHRI ARVIND NETAM (Kanker): Sir, I beg to present the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes:-

- (i) Thirty-ninth Report on Action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 29th Report (Eighth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Civil Aviation—Reservations for and employment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Air India.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF
URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

[Translation]

**One-day token Strike by Employees of
Indian Airlines Resulting in Dislocation
of Air services and Inconvenience to
Passengers**

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of State of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon.

"One day token strike by large number of employees of the Indian Airlines resulting in dislocation of air services and inconvenience to passengers and the steps taken by the Government to resolve the issue in-

volved.”

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): Sir, the Air Corporation Employees' Union (ACEU) and the Indian Aircraft Technicians' Association (IATA) representing approximately.....(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI BHADRESWAR TANTI (Kaliabor): Sir, because of the devastating floods that had taken place in Assam.....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, that is all. Tomorrow we will see. Give me in writing, I will see to it.

SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI (Srinagar): Sir, there is acute electricity shortage in Kashmir valley. The Energy Minister should visit the valley.....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have already listened to you. I will find out the facts.

SHRI BHADRESWAR TANTI: Sir, a serious type of disease has affected the fishes in Brahmaputra and its tributaries and almost all the fishes have died. Ten lakh fishermen have been rendered jobless.....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You write to me, I will see to it. Give me in writing.....

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister is making a very important statement. Please listen to him.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankurai):

Sir, lakhs of industrial workers are on strike. At least you allow us a discussion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Acharia, you have given a Calling Attention and I will consider it....

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is too much. I cannot do anything.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have told you already that you have given a Calling Attention and we will consider it...

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: When?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will discuss it in the Business Advisory Committee and find out.....

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BHADRESWAR TANTI: Sir, a serious type of disease has taken place in Assam. The water in Assam has also become polluted, as a result of which, different diseases have taken place. Some people have also died because of this. I want immediate steps to be taken by the Government.....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You give in writing, I will pass it on to the Minister. Give in writing whatever you want to say.

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Panaji): Why don't you listen to me, Sir? I want to know what is your ruling.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ruling on What?

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: On the matter raised by Shri Bhatia last week.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, nothing doing...

(Interruptions) **

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record except Minister's statement...

(Interruptions) **

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): Sir, he wants to make a submission about a problem. Why don't you listen to him, Sir?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have already listened to him....

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is not the way. I cannot allow. I have already listened to him. I have told him that I will pass it on to the Minister. What else do you want?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI (Guwahati): Sir, the Member wants to raise a matter. Why don't you listen to him? *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What can I do? Can I order anything now itself when he wants to raise it? What more do you want? You are crossing your limits for everything. I have listened to him, I have told him that I will pass on that to the Minister and I will take action. What else do you want? I have told him many times...

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You go on repeating the same matter when the Minister is on his legs. I have told Mr. Acharia also that it will be considered...

(Interruptions)

SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, please listen to me. *(Interruptions)* There is acute shortage of electricity in Kashmir Valley...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This matter has been raised so many times. If you give it to me in writing, I will pass it on to the Minister concerned.

SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI: Our people are suffering there.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: What can I do?

SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI: Why does not the Minister go to Kashmir and see there? Hon. Speaker promised that he will ask...

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Soz raised this matter several times.

SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI: Why don't you direct the Minister?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I can't direct him.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing goes on record.

(Interruptions) *

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I cannot do anything now.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If you persist, I will name you.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing goes on record.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): Sir, kindly request the Minister not to read the statement now because we have to participate in the Calling Attention discussion. We cannot hear a single word he is saying. Please restore order and then direct him to read. My name is there in the list and I can't hear a single word. (*Interruptions*)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: May I make a most humble submission? We do wish that the entire proceedings should not be obstructed. Shall I request you to at least assure the House and the Member concerned that the matter will be looked into by the Minister concerned?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: How many times should I say? I have already told him and he is going on repeating. What can I do? I told him already that I will pass it to the Minister. I cannot give any assurance. What assurance can I give now?

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI: Tell the Minister to go and see the problem in Kashmir.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I can't direct the Minister. I can't give any assurance on behalf of the Minister. When the time comes, you raise this issue.

SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI: This is the right time and I am raising it.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Have you given anything in writing in this matter, tell me? You have not given anything in writing. I can't listen to you like this. You have not given it in writing.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You please give it in writing.

SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI: All right, I am giving it now.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: This

could have been said at the very outset. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL: Sir, I will read the statement again from the beginning.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF
URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—
CONTD.

[*English*]

**One-day Token Strike by Employees of
Indian Airlines Resulting in Dislocation
of Air Services and Inconvenience to
Passengers—Contd.**

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): Sir, The Air Corporation Employees' Union (ACFU) and the Indian Aircraft Technicians' Association (IATA) representing approximately 83% of the employees of Indian Airlines, vide their letter of the 17th of November, 1988, informed the Managing Director, Indian Airlines, that they would launch an agitation to highlight their grievances. The action programme, as intimated by the two Unions, inter-alia, included a one-day protest strike commencing from the night shift of the 21st of November, 1988. The major demands of the two Unions were:

- i) Revision of pay scales with a minimum of not less than Rs. 1080/- and improvement in the rate of increments;
- ii) Point to point fitment in the revised scales of pay;
- iii) Wage increase of a minimum of Rs. 180/- of the minimum basic pay as on 1.10.85, which should be applicable to various pay slabs at the escalated rates as notified by the Government;
- iv) House Rent Allowance at the rate of 30% of the pay;

[Sh. Shivraj V. patil]

- v) City Compensatory Allowance at the rate of 10% of the basic pay;
- vi) Compensation for loss of the Special Allowance which was proposed to be merged in the basic pay.

The other demands were non-financial in nature such as career progression of the employees etc.

Indian Airlines had entered into Wage Settlements with the various Unions/Association of its employees, which had expired on the 30th of September, 1985. Fresh Charters of Demands were raised by the various Unions including the ACEU and IATA. Negotiations between the management and the employees' Unions had been held from time to time and were continuing. During the course of negotiations, the management made concrete offers to the Unions/Associations but these were not found acceptable by the ACEU and the IATA. The management has besides paid as advance, pending finalisation of the wage settlements, monthly sums ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 420, depending upon the basic pay of the employees, with effect from 1.10.85 till date, which represents an increase of approximately 9% to 10% on the total emoluments.

On receipt of the Strike Notice on the 17th of November, 1988 from the ACEU and the IATA, the management of Indian Airlines approached the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central), New Delhi, for intervention in the matter. The Joint Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) held a conciliation meeting on the 21st of November, 1988. Both the management and the Joint Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) made strong appeals to the leaders of the ACEU and the IATA to defer the proposed strike; however, the Unions continued to maintain their stand. The management held several rounds of discussions in which they advised the Unions not to resort to agitational methods; appeals were made by the Regional

Directors and the Secretary at the Corporation's headquarters requesting members not to participate in the proposed strike pointing out that it would lead to dislocation of scheduled flights, resulting in grave inconvenience to the travelling public and in financial loss to the Corporation.

Once it became clear to the management of Indian Airlines that the two Unions were determined to go on strike, Indian Airlines had made announcements on the T.V. advising passengers to travel light.

Anticipating the strike, Indian Airlines decided to revise its schedules for the 22nd of November, 1988. Against the 125 flights, normally scheduled for the day, Indian Airlines planned to operate 100 flights but actually operated 94 flights. Of the 31 flights not operated by Indian Airlines on the 22nd of November, 1988, most were to, from and within the Eastern Region.

The passengers of these 31 cancelled flights were certainly put to inconvenience. With a view to minimising and alleviating the hardship to the affected passengers, announcements were made through the press and on the T.V. advising the passengers to check the position regarding operation of flights and also to travel light. All possible assistance and facilities by way of food, hotel accommodation, surface transport, etc. were also provided to stranded passengers.

The one day strike of employees of the ACEU and the IATA did take place from 9 P.M. on the 21st of November, 1988 to 9 P.M. on the 22nd of November, 1988. The vast majority of the employees represented by both the Unions joined the strike.

The management had been maintaining continuous dialogue with the Unions to resolve the issues within the confines of the broad parameters prescribed by Government.

Once the management of Indian Airlines and the Unions at a settlement, the management of Indian Airlines will approach

Government for approval.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister with reference to our Call Attention Motion is very unsatisfactory and it does not serve the purpose for which the notice had been given. As a matter of fact I had got the reply earlier, but today I was totally disappointed to listen to the reply of the hon. Minister. First of all I would like to point out that the hon. Minister is perhaps not aware of the inconvenience which was experienced by the passengers due to one day token strike by about 15,000 employees of the Indian Airlines. The main reason behind the strike was that the Government did not fulfill the conditions laid down in the last agreement arrived between the Government and the employees of the Indian Airlines. The Government have not taken any follow up action so far on the points which were accepted by them. Who is responsible for that? Had the Government implemented the said agreement the present situation of holding a strike would not have at all arisen and other related issues would not have also come up. Had the Government provided all facilities to its employees in view of the galloping rise in prices, the strike would have been avoided. I, therefore, urge the hon. Minister to take action to implement the last agreement first. The employees have to resort to strike when their dues are not paid and when their genuine demands are not accepted. This causes a lot of inconvenience and difficulty to the passengers.

The second main reason of the difficulties and inconvenience experienced by the passengers is that flights are not operating in time. This attributes to 50% of the difficulties being experienced by the passengers. The remaining reasons include non-acceptance of reasonable demands and the disappointment caused due to depriving the employees of the facilities provided in the rules. The Indian Airlines suffers from the shortage of aircrafts as compared to the number of

passengers availing this service from one place to the other. There is a need to raise the number of the fleet. At present there are 38 aircrafts with the airlines out of which 11 are airbuses and 27 are boeing aircrafts. Out of these, two aircrafts are out of order. Secondly, there is a fixed timing for the departure of every aircraft which is called S.T.D. and the expected time of departure shown by big officers is called E.T.D. and the actual time of departure is called A.T.D. There is much difference between the S.T.D. and the A.T.D. which is not shown anywhere, but the passengers understand it very well. This is also one of the reasons of the inconvenience and difficulty being experienced by the passengers. The Government pays little attention to these problems. It acts as a silent witness to these hardships and does not take any action. Sometime ago Shri Rahul Bajaj, who had been the part-time Chairman in the Indian Airlines made a suggestion as soon as he assumed the charge of the post that the work related to ticket booking in the airlines should be entrusted to the private sector. He was of the view that the airlines suffer losses when they handle ticket booking by themselves and it also causes inconvenience to the passengers. If this job is entrusted to the private sector, the passengers will be comforted and the airlines will also earn profit. He had made this proposal on the basis of his experience in the private sector.

I am saying this for those people who are supporters of the public sector and who say that they will follow the very industrial policy, they have been following since long. Recently the Prime Minister said that his Government will stick to the industrial policy which was laid down by Pandit Nehru. Then, is it not a matter of humiliation or a course to weaken the public sector when people belonging to the private sector are brought to this field? I would, therefore, like that the airlines should be run by such persons in whose hands the public sector will expand and flourish further and the shortcomings of the sector could be removed.

Shri Bajaj had said himself that the

[Sh. Ramashray Prasad Singh] system is so faulty and worn out that it takes a lot of time for a proposal to come through, but the proposals received from the private sector are approved with ease. In this way they are trying to make a common man realise that better facilities can only be available in the private sector as compared to the public sector.

I would, therefore, like to request the hon. Minister to set right the mismanagement that has cropped up in the Indian Airlines and get the old demand implemented and also see that the new demands are considered and if found reasonable, these should also be accepted so that the employees could work properly and the passengers may not face any inconvenience. This is what I wanted to say. The hon. Minister has not dwelt on a number of points. I am hopeful that he will deal with those points in his reply.

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): The one day token strike which has taken place by about 15,000 technical and non-technical employees of the Indian Airlines is a vivid expression of the deep discontent which prevails today, not only among the members of this particular union, but also I regret to say, among the pilots. It is ironical that some time ago in the name of augmenting the efficiency of our airlines, both domestic and international, our Government and our Prime Minister thought it fit to induct two leading industrialists of big private business houses as Chairmen of both Air India and Indian Airlines and this House was told that the public at large has many complaints regarding the efficient working of these airlines and the best remedy was to bring two people from big business houses to act as Chairman of these two companies. Mr. Rahul Bajaj was inducted as Chairman of Indian Airlines and Mr. Rattan Tata as Chairman of Air India.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: So that airlines could run like scooters.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: I had protested here in the House at that time that both of them were having companies which were facing prosecution charges and allegations of tax evasion.

But that did not bother our Government.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: That is why they selected them.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: As a result of these changes in the Chairmanship, now the situation has developed as such in which I would challenge the hon. Minister to tell us whether as a result of this change in the Chairmanship, the efficiency of the airlines has really increased or it is actually now the worse then it was before. Everybody knows what is going on. We are travelling frequently by the Indian Airlines.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Only because of Lok Sabha Session. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Yes, thanks to the Lok Sabha. The situation is terrible; and as far as dislocation of flights goes, that has nothing to do with this particular strike at all. The Press is commenting widely on various things. I would like him to comment on some of those things. One factor is that the aircraft at the disposal of Indian Airlines are being terribly over-worked, they are being flogged round the clock without adequate time being given, opportunity being given, for proper maintenance.

Sir, the other day an accident took place in broad daylight—the plane crash near Ahmedabad—with heavy casualties. We do not know if we will ever get to know what was the actual cause of this accident. Perhaps, it might be due to some fault which could have been remedied by proper maintenance. But proper maintenance cannot be done if planes are going to be stretched out like this and over-worked to the limits and flogged round the clock.

My next point is that the Pilots have

complained about the poor condition of Night Landing Facilities which constitute a definite hazard. In many of our airfields and airports, they are asked to land and take-off at nights and landing is not possible without the special technical facilities. In many cases such landing facilities are not there or are not in proper shape. About a fortnight ago, I was due to travel back to Delhi from Calcutta. The plane did not take off for several hours. The reason which was revealed later on was that the Pilot who checked the Cockpit of the flight before he took off, found that the flight's Cockpit Voice Recorder—the black box-or whatever it is called, was not functioning properly. His name was also published. I think, the Officer's name is Mr. *Rajwade*. He complained about that and said that he was not going to fly that aircraft until that thing was put right. The report is that he was pressurised and threatened and was told: "Don't worry. You fly the plane." Again he said that he was not going to take the risk with so many passengers at his back. He was further told that this thing was not a vital part of the mechanism of the aircraft and so he could fly. The Executive Pilots told him that he must fly the plane.

Sir, you know when a crash takes place, after the crash, always we are hunting for the Cockpit Voice Recorder—black box - whether it has been found out or not. So, it is very important. Essential part of evidence can be found from that. But in this particular case, it was not working. Was the Pilot wrong when he said that he was not going to take this risk of flying the plane without the Voice Recorder working properly when he refused? He was ordered off the plane. Later on, the passengers, of course, were all put to great inconvenience. They had to disembark from the plane. Some hours later, one or two executive pilots flew that aircraft to Delhi apparently with the defective flight Voice Recorder. This is the kind of thing which is going on.

As far as the specific issue which has been raised in this Calling Attention is concerned, I would just like to point out that there appears to be a total lack of coordination

between the Board of Directors of the two Companies although the Managing Directors and the Deputy-Managing Directors of both are common. The Ministry is also represented on both the Boards. Then, there should be better coordination. What has happened? On the 12th September, an offer was made to the Air Corporation Employees Union and the Indian Aircraft Technicians Association. The offer was that the minimum wage would be raised to Rs. 1080/- per month. I may just remind you that their previous wage agreements have expired more than three years ago. The wage agreements expired in September 1983. Now, we are in November 1988. More than three years have passed. No new wage agreements have yet been entered into. In this situation, they were offered a minimum wage of Rs. 1,080 per month. The same offer was made separately to the employees of Air India. There was no trouble. They were waiting for the whole thing to be worked out how it would affect the different allowances and all that. Then suddenly, in the middle of this process, it was found that Air India has gone back on this offer of assurance of Rs. 1,080 and scaled it down to Rs. 1,000. Why did they do that, we don't know. No explanation has been given. And the Indian Airlines employees were apprehensive of whether in their case also there was a possibility that after having offered Rs. 1,080, their their management also would go back and reduce it to Rs. 1,000. They wanted a firm commitment. No commitments were coming. I may say that these offers were made with the full approval of Bureau of Public Enterprise. The BPE, a body which includes other public sector undertakings, is frequently intervening in order to see that certain wage levels are not exceeded. But in the case of Air India and Indian Airlines, this offer of Rs. 1,080 was made with the full concurrence and approval of the Bureau of Public Enterprise. What business had the Air India management to go back on this offer and to bring it down to Rs. 1,000? Now you may say that that was accepted by some unions there. Well, if it was accepted, so much the worse for the unions. It is going to be their headache to explain to their members why the

[Sh. Indrajit Gupta] management's offer of Rs. 1,080 was scaled down to Rs. 1,000. And if any particular union leader there has signed for that, it is his funeral. But as far as Indian Airlines is concerned, this is what was very much in their minds. There was an apprehension and they wanted a firm assurance, a commitment that the assurance would be adhered to. But it was not forthcoming. Then they gave a warning that they would go on strike. It was only to be a token strike as a mark of protest. And as the Minister himself admitted in the statement, the vast majority of the employees represented by both the unions joined the strike. That shows that the great majority of employees are very much discontented on this issue. What a mess is being created! First of all, these two Board of Directors are working at different tangents. Some people are common to both the boards—the Managing Director is common, Deputy Managing Director is common, Ministry is represented on both, two eminent gentlemen of the private sector are there who are supposed to understand these things better than perhaps the Government officials. Then what happened in the meantime? Nothing has been agreed yet, nothing has been settled. And another central public sector undertaking, that is, the Damodar Valley Corporation in the middle of all this, has entered into an agreement with its employees agreeing to a minimum wage of Rs. 1,430 union whose president happens to be our Hon. Labour Minister Shri Bindeshwari Dubey of the INTUC. When the unions themselves were demanding Rs. 1,180 and nothing more than that, it is very good. We should congratulate and I congratulate Mr. Bindeshwari Dubey that a union of which he is the president has gone and signed an agreement in the Damodar Valley Corporation for a minimum of Rs. 1,430.

Naturally, what do you expect the employees in other undertakings to do? I know negotiations are going on at present in the steel industries, public sector steel plant, in the coal mines, in the BHEL, still the settlement is not finalised. But everywhere the managements are offering something more than Rs. 1,000. How much more is yet

to be decided. One thousand plus is the offer which is being made and which is being negotiated. Air India, after assuring Rs. 1080 scales it down to Rs. 1000. Who is responsible for triggering off this unrest and provoking the employees to take to the path of agitation?

There may be an argument—I don't know if it is going to be offered—that Air India's financial position is weaker than that of Indian Airlines because Indian Airlines has more or less a monopoly on the domestic traffic and that is not the case with Air India which has to compete with international airlines and also adhere to certain norms of fares which are laid down by the international associations to these airlines. I don't know if that is the argument. But surely that was not discovered by them afterwards. They knew that all along. They made the same offer as the Indian Airlines had made and suddenly they scaled it down. This is a question of the minimum wage. Minimum wage has nothing to do with who is competing with whom. It is a question of the minimum.

Therefore I restrict myself for the time being to this specific issue.

Apart from the mess that is going on in the operating of the airlines and the mismanagement which is taking place I would say for goodness sake, if you want to avoid further trouble, please settle this thing. The wage agreements had expired three years ago. Employees have been waiting for three years; no settlement has taken place. Once you give an assurance, stick to it; don't go back on those assurances which only provoke people.

I would like to know what the Government has to say on this issue; whether they still stand by their assurance of 12th September or not. That must be known categorically, yes or no. If they stand by that assurance, that is one position. If they don't stand by it, they want to go back or equivocate, then more trouble will take place and who will be responsible for that, please tell us.

For the health of the Airlines I would strongly recommend that M/s. Bajaj and Tata be removed as soon as possible from the chairmanship of these companies and you put somebody else there who have got the interest of the public sector at heart and who are not people dedicated to the private monopoly sector.

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI (Sambalpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, you have allowed a Calling Attention notice only because workers are agitating and are on strike for one day. But our main aims and objectives are to see the health of the Indian Airlines and Air India. A few days back we had a great disaster of two aircrafts. Within this year four or five aircrafts have been crashed. So the main objectives of our discussion should be under 193 to discuss about the security and safety of the Indian Airlines.

My Hon. friend, respected Indrajit Gupta has asked as to what is the position of our Indian Airlines and Air India. About the position of different aircrafts what is the strength of our aircrafts? In the total for the year, how many hours the aircrafts are working and what is the international standard; whether we are maintaining the minimum standard or not. This is the main debate of today. For safety, it is debated and discussed in so many places, in so many seminars that our safety requirement under the rules is not particularly maintained. For that reason there are many criticisms. All these things should be discussed in the House in detail and the Minister should answer them. I think he has formed so many committees. Only changing a Managing Director is not enough. Tata is the best person. You can compare Tatas with the best public sector undertakings. In Tata firms there is no strike at all. They give much more benefits to their workers. So Ratan Tata or any Tata who is going the best management in the country— You can compare with any public sector. They are earning much more profits.—What is the use of criticising him. It is the duty of our Government to discuss and debate what are the loopholes and why air crashes have

taken place. The Minister has said in the statement:

“I will not rule out anything thus giving that impression that you are not disposed to believe that two major air accidents in two places as far removed from each other as Ahmedabad and Gauhati on the same day could be an unfortunate co-incidence.”

So he has not excluded that there may be sabotage or there may be some hand of the employees who are agitating for their wages. The Inquiry Commission is going into this matter but we would like to know is their any hand of the employees behind it who have been agitating since long?

My hon. friend has asked several queries from the Minister about the health of our airlines. In that context I would like to know many public sector undertakings in the country after the revised pay-scales have already arrived at a settlement. I would also like to know whether it is fact that the economic condition of Air India is very poor. It has appeared in the Press that one day one passenger from Bombay to London had travelled and on other day nine passengers had travelled. What is the economic position of Air India? Will Air India succumb to the pressure of the agitators? I would also like to know whether the economic position of Indian Airlines is good. If it is not good then let the Minister come forward with a proposal to the Planning Commission to acquire more aircrafts to increase the strength of the aircrafts. They also go into the matter of airworthiness of the aircrafts acquired since 1971.

Sir, there was a sudden strike of the employees in the Eastern sector. I would like to know out of the 15,000 employees how many people belonged to the Eastern sector. Why I am emphasising this is because when we are travelling from Delhi to Bhubneswar or Calcutta we come-across lot or problems. There are delays ranging from 10 hours to 15 hours. The food which is served is also below standard. So I would

[Dr. Krupasindhu Bhoi]
like to know out of the 15,000 workers how many belonged to Eastern sector. I would also like to know whether the sudden strike of 22nd is a legal strike. Did they give prior notice to their strike? If it was not a legal strike then what action the Minister is contemplating to take against those workers? Last March the public sector undertaking had given a clarion call for strike for the revision of their wage structure: Did the Airlines employees join that strike then? What preventive action has been taken by the Government? I would also like to know whether you are aware of the fact that before starting a flight the pilot has to take technical clearance?

Your staff in the eastern sector threatened the high officials. And they take a sign in the form that automatic clearance is being given. Are you doing the medical fitness of the pilot or not or medical fitness in six months is an obligatory duty? I think, when the pilot is going to fly, he has to get a certificate that he is not under the influence of any drug or alcohol.

The other point is about the maintenance. You have replied in so many places that it is due to bad weather and sloggy maintenance. My hon. friend has raised so many technical questions. About landing, you have landing facilities in the bad weather. You don't have sophisticated instruments which you mentioned at many places, including Rajya Sabha.

Further, without debating and discussing, many complaints have been raised against your bonafides and integrity to maintain your department. So, I want you to clarify in the House before compounding any tragedies in future, what is the position of the aircraft and their airworthiness. At the same time, are we going to bow down to the pressures of your workers who are not following the industrial discipline and the Industrial Disputes Act which is already there and debated by many public sector undertakings. Thank you.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, I am thankful to the Members for expressing their views on different points. Some Members have expressed their views on the general condition of the Airlines. Members have also expressed their views on strike itself. They have wanted to know as to what the Government is going to do to improve the general condition of Airlines to see that the employees are given full satisfaction and the dispute is settled.

I would take up the first issue first. I would like to say that we are aware of the fact that the delays have taken place, delays are taking place. We have taken certain steps to see that the delays are not there. In fact, we have a limited number of aircraft with us and the demands have come from different quarters. The Members as well as the public outside have been asking us to fly on more routes and to provide more frequencies also.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sir, I want to make a suggestion. What is happening is, when one flight is delayed, in order to adjust that, another flight is diverted. Once a flight is delayed, you cancel that. Otherwise, all persons have to suffer.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Yes, Sir. I am thankful to you. (*Interruptions*) We have already acted on the lines which you have suggested. (*Interruptions*) I was trying to say that we have already taken steps to see that there are no delays. The hon. Members would like to know what are the steps we have already taken. One of the steps is on the lines which you have suggested Sir. We would not like to cancel the flights one after the other. If one flight is delayed, we would like that flight only to suffer and other flights to go on time.

13.00 hrs.

We need not pass on the delay to other flights also. We were flying on so many routes. We have rationalised the flying on many routes and have reduced the number of flights to some of the areas where we were flying. If we were flying for seven days, we

have reduced it to five or four days a week. We have not completely cancelled the flying to these areas, but we have reduced the number and provided some more cushion.

This month we are going to get four more aircrafts. We have tried to get aircrafts on lease and they are going to come. With four more aircrafts, we have a little more cushion of flying on time. We have also contracted to purchase nineteen aircrafts and they are going to come from May of next year and once we have them, we would be in a position to meet the demand of the people as well as fly on time also.

In their anxiety to satisfy the demand coming from different people, our friends in the Indian Airlines have been stretching themselves to see that the demand coming from different parts of the country is satisfied. They had not thought that in doing that, probably they were also putting themselves in a difficult position. But now some sort of rationalization is there and we hope that the delays would be reduced. If there are any delays because of mismanagement or because of not-managing the things in a proper manner, we are looking into those things. We would be able to reduce the delay.

As far as the maintenance is concerned, we do have the maintenance facilities and I may be allowed to say that the facilities are quite good. But as we go on inducting new aircrafts, it would be necessary for us to raise the level of the maintenance facilities also and we are certainly looking at those things also and we would be raising the level of the maintenance facilities to meet the requirements of the new varieties of aircrafts which we are going to induct here.

The landing facilities etc—today, the question pertaining to that did not come—if I may state, we have very good landing facilities at our international airports. At other airports also, we have the landing facilities and there are procedures that have to be followed by the pilots, by the people on the ground etc. to take care of safety. Fortu-

nately for us, until the last two accidents took place, we were flying in a very very safe manner, but unfortunately these two accidents took place. I am not going to say who is responsible for these to accidents and what is the cause etc. The Court of Inquiry has been set up and the findings will be available to us.

This is as far as the general conditions of the Airlines are concerned. I hope I am not expected to go in greater detail than what I have said on the floor of the House on this point.

As far as the strike is concerned, I am told that no formal offer was made by the Indian Airlines management to the workers. This is the information I got.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: The offer was not made in writing but it was made verbally. I do not know what you mean by formal offer. It may not have been given in writing, but it was given to the union leaders verbally.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: BPE was not consulted in this matter. It is a fact that the agreement expired in 1985. But then, after 1985, they are not sitting quiet. After 1985 also, discussion are going on between the employees and the management. Not only that. They have also given an ad hoc increase in the pay.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Well, these are the usual tactics....

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I suppose, I am not expected to answer very question. If you want, I will sit down and you can make all your points and then I will reply.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: No, no This is a calling attention motion. You please carry on.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: What I have been trying to say is that an increase has already been given to the extent of 10 to 12 per cent. The questions whether it should be more than 10 to 12 per cent, what should be

[Sh. Shivraj V. Patil]
the settlement and what should be the amount that has to be paid ultimately, have to be decided between the employees and management. And they are certainly discussing this issue. There are certain difficulties. It is not as though they were just sitting on it without doing anything. But some sort of a rationalisation is required. The basic pay and the allowances have to be merged into basic pay and then the basic pay has to be decided upon. Once the basic pay is fixed, other things would have followed. But in fixing the basic pay also, they have some difficulties. These discussions were going on and then the report of the Fourth Pay Commission was given and the officers were given some increase in their salaries and the employees were also given some increase. This increase is about 10 to 12 per cent of the emoluments.

While all these things are being done, it is also necessary for the Indian Airlines to keep one point in mind. They do have their sister organisations such as the Air India, Pawan Hans and the Vayudoot. If the employees in the Indian Airlines can quote that the employees in the other organisations are paid more emoluments, the employees in the Air India, Pawan Hans and Vayudoot also can certainly quote that the employees in the Indian Airlines are given more emoluments. Therefore, it is necessary to rationalise the whole thing. Probably, an exact parity may not be possible but there has to be some sort of rationalisation, some sort of logic behing the emoluments paid to the employees in different organisations. Now, in arriving at a settlement which can be satisfactory to employees in all these organisations, they are facing some difficulties. I do not know the details or the fashion in which they are discussing these issues. I am told that formally it was not done. But probably, it might have been said casually or orally. I am not standing on that point. I am not saying that you do not stick to it. I am also not saying that you stick to it. We are trying to see that the employees of the Indian Airlines are given as much as is possible for the Indian Airlines to give. We would like to be sympathetic to

them. We would like to see that they are satisfied. We would like to see that they get as much as can be given. While doing that, it is necessary for the Indian Airlines as well as the other organisations to see that there are no financial implications which will cripple them. The issue has to be looked from different angles and it has to be decided in such a fashion that it gives full satisfaction to the employees in the Indian Airlines and it does not cripple the other organisations. It should not provide a handle to the employees in the other public sector undertakings to say that because in the Indian Airlines employees are paid this much in spite of their financial position, then they should also be paid in the same way. So here, some sort of balancing has to be done and we are trying to do some justice and at the same time we are trying to see that difficulties do not arise.

My appeal to all concerned is to settle the issue in the most amicable manner. The intention of the management should be to provide as much satisfaction as is possible for them and at the same time they shall also have to see that the guidelines given by the BPE are followed so that the other public sector undertakings are not put in a difficult position. If it were a private sector organisation, they can give any salary or any emoluments they like and that has no implications to the other private sector organisations. But that is not the case with public sector undertakings or the public institutions. Here difficulties are bound to arise. When we have the full sympathy and we want to understand their difficulties and give them as much as is possible, I would appeal that they should also understand the broader implications involved in it.

It should be possible for both the parties concerned to sit across the table and come to some sort of a settlement which will give satisfaction to them as well as it will not create financial burden not only on the Indian Airlines but also on other organisations. It is because of this that difficulties have arisen.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Would you kindly clarify one point only, whether that

offer which was made by the Indian Airlines was formal or informal—I do not know; now you are saying that it was not formal—whether the Indian Airlines is willing to stand by that assurance or they want to resile from it?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Now, I would not commit on anything on the floor of the House. I will leave this issue a little open. Let the representatives of the employees and the Management talk to each other and let them decide.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: They are talking for three years.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I am not saying that it should be done or it should not be done or I am not saying that they had not said this thing or that thing. I am not saying all those things. I am not going into details. I am just giving the broad policy lines which should be followed by the Management. On the one hand they have to be sympathetic and on the other hand, they have to act in a manner which does not cripple other organisations also and does not create difficulties. It would be in the interest of all the people who are in the public sector undertakings because if one public sector undertaking suffers, because of that other public sector undertakings also, ultimately, in the long run, suffer. Now, the intention of the Government is to see that the public sector undertakings become stronger and stronger and we are in a position to pay as much as is possible to the employees at the same time, we would like to provide the facilities to the people at large in a fashion which will give them full satisfaction also. Their satisfaction comes first the satisfaction of the employees, and the Management will come later. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: What is the effect of the new Board? How is it functioning? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Can you please tell us one or two specific areas in which the efficiency has improved after the

induction of these two Chairmen? In what aspect the efficiency has improved?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I would not discuss the individuals on the floor of the House. One individual here or there in an organisation like this may create some difference. (*Interruptions*)

What I am trying to say is that one individual here or there may be helpful or may not be helpful. But to say that because one or two individuals have come the difference have taken place this way or that way is not correct. But, if the hon. Members want, I can say that the profitability of the Indian Airlines has gone up a little. I can say that the machines and the manpower used in the Indian Airlines is a little better. The productivity has gone up. This I can say. But I would not say that because some individual has come, this has happened. If the credit has to be given, it has to be given to the individual, to the management and also to the employees. But on the other hand—this is a fact—at some places, the delays have taken place and at some places the consumers are not fully satisfied. We cannot be oblivious to this fact also. On one hand we earn money and at the same time we would like to provide the satisfaction of the consumers also and then the satisfaction of the employees. This is the broad outline of the policies that I would expect the Management in the Indian Airlines to follow and probably they are going to follow. We would see that the things will move in a proper manner.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We adjourn for lunch and shall reassemble at 2.15 P.M.

13.14 hrs.

The Lok Sabha adjourned for lunch till fifteen minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after lunch at nineteen minutes past fourteen of the Clock.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]