

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

*Tuesday, January 8, 1991/Pausa 18, 1912
(Saka)*

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Hijacking of Indian Airlines Aircraft

*162. SHRI BALGOPAL MISHRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that an attempt was made by a 27 year old youth to hijack the Indian Airlines aircraft on Coimbatore-Bangalore flight sometime in the second week of September, 1990;

(b) if so, whether the Youth was arrested and interrogated; and

(c) if so, the reasons for hijacking the aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The accused was an engineering

student and wanted to go to Perth in Australia to make a living. He was reported to be under mental tension.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BALGOPAL MISHRA: Sir, I would like to know through you from the hon. Minister under what circumstances this boy could enter into the aircraft without security check and all that; what was the instrument or weapon through which he tried to hijack the aircraft and if at all any weapon was found with him, how did he escape the security check.

SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the security check was there. When the investigation was completed, it was found that there was no hand-grenade as he alleged that he was having in his hand. Ultimately it was found that he had a pears soap, which was engulfed in his handkerchief. There was no arm with him.

SHRI BALGOPAL MISHWA: Sir, I would like to draw your attention to the second part of the statement of the hon. Minister, in which he mentioned that the youth was a technical graduate and he was under a tremendous mental tension. This very fact should not be taken very lightly. This shows that unemployment is leading to frustration and frustration is leading to all these sorts of activities. As a result of which we are having these activities in Punjab, Kashmir, Assam and other parts of the country.

MR. SPEAKER: Please put your question.

SHRI BALGOPAL MISHRA: I am com-

ing to the question. This should be an eye-opener for the Government of India. I would like to know from the Minister as to what are the opportunities they are going to create for the youth in future in Air India and Indian Airlines.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: This question does not arise out of the original question.

[*English*]

SHRI KADAMBUR M. R. JANARDHANAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to ask a supplementary. I am sorry to inform the Minister that there is lot of distortion of information in part (c) of his reply. He has told that the accused was an engineering graduate and was going to Australia. But on that particular day, in all the Tamil newspapers it was reported that the boy had come from Sri Lanka and was mentally retarded. Therefore, I want to know from the Minister that from which Department he has got this information, whether from the Civil Aviation Ministry or from the Home Department of Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Nadu Home Department has been giving such false news, hiding the Sri Lankan bulletins. Therefore, I want to know categorically from the Minister whether the reply has come from the Home Department of Tamil Nadu or from the Centre. In the Tamil newspapers it was not at all reported that he was an Australian. He was reported to be a citizen from Sri Lanka.

SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN: Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Member that Mr. Mahalingam, the 27 years old young engineering student was a native of Coimbatore and he had boarded the plane which was to go to Madras via Bangalore. IC-534 is the flight number. So, to say that he is a Sri Lankan citizen is wrong. The fact is that he was a native from Coimbatore and he was under mental tension and for his living he wanted to go to Australia. In fact, he told the cockpit crew people that he wanted to go to Colombo. This is the factual position.....(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Let him complete, Mr. Janardhanan.

SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN: I have report from Karnataka Government as well as from Tamil Nadu Government and the full facts are there. The case is already registered against the accused and the proceedings are going on (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat, Mr. Janardhanan.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM NAIK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if he is an Indian national we feel that the mental tension is an excuse. However, we would like to know the cause of mental tension. If the cause is valid the why a case against him?

[*English*]

SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Member that the case has been registered. From whatever investigations have so far been carried out, no motive has been attached to it. In fact, some fears were expressed that some organisation's support is there but nothing such has been established. It is just a whimsical thinking of the young man. He was out of job. For a living he wanted to go to Australia and he told the captain that he wanted to go to Colombo and from there he wanted to go to Parth in Australia. This is the factual position and the facts are there before us.

SHRIMATI UMA GAJAPATHI RAJU: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister that in the light of the problems in the troubled States of Assam, Kashmir and Punjab, what steps is the Government taking to ensure security measures and what type of equipment or security devices are they having to see that the hijackers do not pass through these security devices unnoticed, especially at the smaller airports.

SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN: Sir, although what the hon. Member has asked is

not connected with the question, but whatever has come to our notice is that there is a tradition of constant security check and various equipment are needed to check the things. I cannot right now say what action is being taken in this regard. As and when the situation arises, we are quite aware of it and we are going to tighten the security measures.

[*Translation*]

Electrification of Hilly Areas in Uttar Pradesh

*163. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have received proposals regarding the rural electrification of the hilly areas from the Government of Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any limit on expenditure per village, has been fixed by the Rural Electrification Corporation, for the approved schemes;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the programme to extend electrification facilities to the hilly areas is being adversely affected due to the limit fixed on expenditure; and

(f) if so, when these restrictions are proposed to be removed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI BABANRAO DHAKNE): (a) and (b). No separate proposal specially for hilly area of Uttar Pradesh has been received in the Central Government. The Districtwise RE activities are finalised at the State level basis on the availability of funds and inter-se priority fixed by the State Government. 206 rural electrification schemes sponsored by the UPSEB for electrification of 14757 villages in the 8 hilly

Districts of Uttar Pradesh have been sanctioned by the REC so far for financial assistance of Rs. 128.18 crores.

(c) to (f). No specific limit of expenditure per village has been fixed by the Rural Electrification Corporation.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, while expressing my dissatisfaction over the apathy shown in the matter of sanctioning rural electrification Schemes by Rural Electrification Corporation, I would like to know from the honourable Minister the number of rural electrification schemes forwarded by the Uttar Pradesh Electricity Board last year and how many of them have been sanctioned and also the reasons for not sanctioning them on a time bound basis by the Union Ministry?

SHRI BABANRAO DHAKNE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Uttar Pradesh Electricity Board submitted a State level scheme which included eight hill districts. In these eight districts, there are nearly 651 villages and electrification thereof has been sanctioned for this year. The work is likely to begin shortly.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are complaints of misuse of money allotted for such works and also of diversion of funds. But such complaints regarding these schemes of hill areas are more serious. On the basis of the information available, the Union Ministry has decided that, whatever be the population of the village as per the census of 1981, only 50 electric poles will be installed there. Problem is that in the hilly areas the distance between one village and the other is considerable. Moreover, the terrain is also difficult. Villages are small and the population is also scattered. The villages being electrified by the State Electricity Board are not being electrified fully. This is creating discontent among the local people. I would like to know from the Honourable Minister, through you, whether the norms for putting up electric poles and sanctioning of funds have been fixed by his Ministry on the basis of population?