

12.44 hrs.

STATEMENT RE : ACCIDENT TO
I.A.C. FOKKER FRIENDSHIP
NEAR KHULNA (EAST
PAKISTAN)

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH) : It is with deep regret that I have to inform this Honourable House that...

SHRI HEM BARUA (Mangaldai) : On a point of Order. We tabled Calling Attention Notices on this particular thing and we were told by your Secretariat that they are under consideration. Now the Minister comes and makes a statement on his own.

MR. SPEAKER : Call attention notices were given yesterday and they came before me today. But is he to wait on serious matters like this for those call attention motions to come up, tomorrow. Here a 'Plane has crashed and some people have died. Should he not come before the House immediately to give the information? Is this not an urgent matter needing immediate attention? Not only Parliament, but the whole country is waiting to know what has happened.

SHRI HEM BARUA : This is an urgent matter of course.

DR. KARAN SINGH : It is with deep regret that I have to inform this Honourable House that Indian Airlines Fokker Friendship aircraft (No. VT-DOJ) operating flight No. IC-260 from Agartala to Calcutta has met with an accident. The plane left Agartala at 7.16 p. m. Indian Standard Time on Monday 21st April, and was expected to land at Dum Dum at 8.17 p. m. Late last night Indian Airlines office at Dum Dum was informed by Pakistan International Airlines that a plane had crashed at Dumria near Khulna in East Pakistan territory, about 70 miles from Calcutta, at 8.25 p. m., and that

there was no evidence of any survivors. Another message received this morning from Civil Aviation authorities at Dacca has confirmed this.

According to our information the area in an eighty mile radius around Calcutta developed extremely bad weather yesterday evening, and it is likely that the plane was caught in weather turbulence commonly known as a norwester. At about the same time a Pakistan International Airlines Boeing 707 bound from Karachi to Dacca was forced to divert to Calcutta on account of bad weather.

On board the ill-fated Indian Airlines plane were 40 passengers and four crew consisting of two pilots Capt. R. Ghosh and First Officer M. M. Singh, one air hostess Miss Pushpa, and one steward Shri Digman. As soon as the passenger list is confirmed the next of kin will be informed. We have received a list, but it has not been confirmed. Therefore, we would wait. An Indian Airlines plane is leaving Calcutta for Jessore shortly, after obtaining necessary visa clearance, with officials of the Corporation and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

SHRI HEM BARUA : We are extremely grieved to hear of these deaths of the accident. We convey our feelings of sorrow on behalf of this House to the members of the bereaved families.

MR. SPEAKER : Yes, the Minister will please convey the feelings of House to the members of the bereaved families.

DR. KARAN SINGH : Yes, Sir.

12.48 hrs.

* DEMAND FOR GRANTS
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE—(Contd.)

MR. SPEAKER : The House will now resume discussion of the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence. We took 3½ hours yesterday and about 4½ hours

* Moved with the recommendation of the President.