

[Translation]

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : This is the result of late night session.

MR. SPEAKER : Do you think they are still sleeping ?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : I think so.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Namgyal. It appears has descended from the Himalays.

[English]

SHRI P. NAMGYAL : I am ever ready, Sir.

Leasing Out MI-17 Helicopter to J and K State Government

*524. SHRI P. NAMGYAL : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Jammu and Kashmir Government has made a request to Union Government for replacement of the Westland Helicopter which has been already leased out to the State Government with a new MI-17 helicopter from his Ministry ; and-

(b) if so, the reaction of Union Government thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLY IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL) : (a) No, Sir. There is no proposal from the State Government for the replacement of the Westland Helicopter already on lease with them from M/s Pawan Hans Ltd. (Helicopter Corporation). However, a request has been received from the Government of Jammu & Kashmir for the procurement of 2 MI-17 helicopters for the State Government.

(b) The request of the State Government is being examined.

SHRI P. NAMGYAL : The Ministry of Defence on collaboration with the State Government of Himachal Pradesh operates twice a month, MI-8 helicopters

to the snow bound areas of Lehaul and Spiti districts. There are similar land-locked areas in the Kargyl and Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir, such as, Zangskar and Nubra and Linshed and Debjing etc., which remain cut off from the rest of the district headquarters for over six months in a year.

I would like to know whether the Ministry will consider to start a weekly MI-17 Helicopter service to Zangskar and Nubra on the same terms and conditions, as has been allowed to Himachal Government.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, this depends on the availability of MI-17 Helicopter and it has to be examined. Only after it is fully examined and found out whether it is available, a correct answer can be given to this question.

SHRI P. NAMGYAL : Sir, the westland helicopter already leased out to Jammu and Kashmir State is facing some operational problem in the high altitude areas and for that the State Government has requested the Ministry of Defence for leasing of two MI-17 helicopters. May I know how long the Government will take to examine this and whether the Ministry will take a decision at the earliest so that this problem could overcome.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, there is Helicopter Corporation established for providing helicopter service to citizens. At times, the Defence Ministry does extend help to others also. In this respect also, we would like to take a view which would be helpful, but everything depends on the availability of MI-17 helicopters. If we receive a request for purchasing the MI-17 helicopter and if the payment is made, certainly we can try to get the helicopter and make it available to the State Government.

Now, providing the helicopter from the Defence services itself is concerned, we shall have to examine it and only then I can answer the question.

Evasion of Excise Duty by Multi-National Companies

*526 SHRI RAM BHAGAT PASWAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :