

Americans are insisting or the other importing countries are insisting, we ourselves are eager to see that the goods which are exported are of quality and according to the standards.

As regards to point whether Japan is importing from us and then exporting to the United States of America, I have no such information.

SHRI MUKUNDA MANDAL: A highly paid officer of the Fisheries Development Corporation, West Bengal after returning from China advised the Corporation to start production of prawn pickles. I would like to know whether these pickles are being sold both in the internal market and outside.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I have no such information.

Private Air Taxi Service

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*165. **SHRI D. P. JADEJA:**

SHRI R. L. P. VERMA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to introduce private air taxi service in the country;

(b) if so, the names of the companies as well as State Governments who applied for permission;

(c) the action taken by Government on their applications;

(d) when the final decision on the proposal is likely to be announced; and

(e) on which routes the private Air Taxi Service is proposed to be run by private operators?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION AND LABOUR (SHRI J. B. PATNAIK):

(a) to (e). The proposal to operate Air Taxi Services received from various private parties are under consideration of the Government. Air

Taxis are basically charter operations, and private parties can operate them in accordance with the provisions contained in the Air Corporations Act, 1953 and Aircraft Rules, 1937. The following private parties have applied for Air Taxi Services in the country:

1. Falcon Air, New Delhi
2. Khemka Aviation Private Ltd., New Delhi.
3. East India Hotels, New Delhi.
4. Saraya Aviation, New Delhi.
5. Shri Ramesh Kothari, Bombay.

No proposal for operating Air Taxi has been received from any of the State Governments.

As far as routes to be operated by private parties are concerned, this will be decided after all relevant factors including the type of aircraft are considered.

SHRI D. P. JADEJA: During the Fifth Lok Sabha I had asked a similar question and the answer was also almost the same as I have received this time. I would like to know from the Government as to how long they would take for a final decision and whether the Government is considering to have a study team to go into this matter before the final decision is taken.

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: The difference between that time and this time is that we are now going to hasten a decision in this regard. A committee had been appointed; it has submitted its report which is now under the consideration of the Government and a decision will be taken very shortly in this regard.

SHRI D. P. JADEJA: The hon Minister has mentioned in his reply that chartered flights can be operated in accordance with the provisions of the Act. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he has received any proposal from certain companies to operate charter flights from abroad into India where Air India does not operate. If

so, whether the Government is considering to allow them to operate in such areas?

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: This is in regard to air-taxi. Charter flights are quite different and if the hon. Member asks another question in that regard, I am ready to answer.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: May I know whether any guidelines have been formulated for starting a third level airline and whether any special preference will be given for operating in the backward areas?

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: The Committee has given some guidelines in this respect and we are considering those guidelines. I entirely agree with the hon. Member that the feeder airline service came up for decision because we have no air communication in some backward areas, particularly in the Northeastern states. That was the reason for which feeder service is being considered by the government.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: I should like to know whether the government is considering the introduction of shorter route service from Calcutta, Panagarh,—Jamshedpur,—Ranchi—Calcutta and secondly, Durgapur industrial belt—Burnpur Tisco—Raniganj coalfields—Shantiniketan? If the matter is under the consideration of the government, when it will be introduced? When will similar shorter routes be introduced, I want to know?

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: Certain routes have to be connected in this country so that air communication could be widespread. That is the very reason for which this committee was appointed. We want a third line or what we call feeder line. The Committee had submitted its report. After the government takes a decision on that report, the third airline which is called feeder

air service would be introduced in the country covering many points which are not covered by the Indian Airlines today. The hon. Member's question about covering certain points in West Bengal would be considered at that time. The state government has some idea to introduce its own airline. The private parties would also be asked to introduce their air service where the Indian Airlines or the state is not interested.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: In view of the fact that vast areas in sprawling states like U.P., Bihar and Madhya Pradesh are inaccessible in any part of the year for any emergency, and the Indian Airlines say that they are not interested in that, possibly from the revenue point of view, do the government propose to give time to the private companies or will they leave it to their convenient time and choice? In case they fall, will government come in and fill up the gap?

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: As regards feeder air service or taxi, government propose to give some guideline. If the state government is interested to operate between these points, the state government is free to choose the aircraft and operate between these points. If the state government is not interested and it is not covered by the Indian Airlines, private parties would be offered the opportunity to operate the service between these points. I think many private parties would be interested.

श्री गिब कुमार ठाकुर : अध्यक्ष जी, अभी माननीय महोदय ने बताया कि 5 प्राइवेट कम्पनियों ने एप्लाई किया है टैक्सी सर्विस के लिये तो मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि उन्होंने किस रूट के लिये एप्लाई किया है? और क्या उसमें जलगाँव और खंडवा के लिए भी प्रार्थना पत्र आते हैं तो आप उस पर विचार करेंगी?

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: First we have to give the guidelines regarding air taxi. After those guidelines are given,

all these factors will be taken into consideration.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Are the private industrialists allowed to own their planes in these days of fuel shortage? Is Government thinking of benefiting private industrialists who own their planes?

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: Private industries have got their planes. They are permitted to ply their planes.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: New ones.

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: That would be considered if they apply to the Government. It is already covered by their contract.

DR. KARAN SINGH: There seems to be confusion. He has mentioned about the third line feeder services. That is a public sector corporation, whereas the question is with regard to private air taxi. Am I to understand that third line feeder services are going to be given to private parties or are you going to set up third line public sector corporation and in addition supplementing it by private service. There is an important confusion here.

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: There is no confusion. A part of the feeder airline that is contemplated by the Government, will be in the public sector particularly North-East area where no State Government is going to operate its own airlines. In other sectors where private parties are interested or the State Governments are interested, they would be allowed to operate their services.

SHRI SANJAY GANDHI: In view of the fact that the number of operators are already operating air taxis on charter basis, would these operators be permitted to operate on routes like Delhi Agra where there is great demand by foreign tourists?

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: They would be permitted to operate on the lines they are now operating.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Existing operators, Indian airline routes.

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: It may be airline routes. Air taxi is different altogether. We are selecting an aircraft for air taxi which would be twin engine piston aircraft only carrying eight passengers or less. So, that is not going to affect our traffic. On the other hand it is facilitating air traffic between the two points.

Payment of Additional Excise Duty by Parles

*166. **SHRI SANJAY GANDHI:** Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have asked the Parle Group of Companies, who manufacture a soft drink known as 'Thums Up', to pay additional excise duty then applicable to soft drinks containing cola; and

(b) if not, do Government propose to do so now?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The concessional rate of assessment at 25 per cent *ad valorem* as against the statutory rate of 55 per cent *ad valorem* for aerated waters or soft drinks (as they are known) became operative from the 4th of July, 1977 and was dependent on the absence of extracts of cola nuts in them. This concessional rate was also conditional on a quantity limitation of the number of bottles being not in excess of 50 lakhs in a financial year, cleared by or on behalf of a manufacturer from one or more factories.

The chemical test conducted on "Thums Up" showed the presence of caffeine. Caffeine is the active ingredient of cola nuts, but there are other