

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: After Question Hour we can take it up.

MR. SPEAKER: No; not like this. Bargain cannot go on in the House. It is not like this. We will do it later. Now Question No. 265, Shri Chandra Jeet Yadav.

11.24 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

A-320 Airbus

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*265 SHRI CHANDRAJEET
YADAV:
SHRI M. V. CHANDRA
SEKHARA MURTHY:

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

(a) the existing number of A-320 Airbus with the Indian Airlines/ Air India;

(b) the number of accidents in which A-320 Airbus have been involved in the last two years;

(c) whether the Government propose to purchase more such aircraft;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether any request has been sent to Airbus Industries, France to send the preliminary report of investigation into the causes of accident involving A-320 airbus which crashed in Voges Mountains recently;

(f) if so, whether it is proposed to reexamine the safety of these planes; and

(g) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION

AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) to (g) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) At present there are 18 Airbus A-320 aircraft in the fleet of Indian Airlines. Air India does not have any A-320 aircraft.

(b) During the last two years there have been two accidents involving A-320 aircraft, one at Bangalore on 14.2. 90 and the other in France on 20. 1. 1992.

(c) and (d). An agreement has been entered into by Indian Airlines with Airbus Industries on 5. 6. 89 for purchase of 12 additions A-320 aircraft.

(e) Yes Sir.

(f) and (G) There is no finding yet which calls call for re-examination of airworthiness of this class of aircraft.

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV: Sir, in view of the fact that two accident of A-320 aircraft took place, one in India and another in France, and that the preliminary enquiry has shown the defective cockpit dosing of the plane and also the navigational problems, which is — it is said — a highly computerised system, there are doubts that even the software of the airplane's computers were also defective. Lufthansa and Air France have instructed their pilots not to use this became landing system. The pilots have also made several representations in France as well as in India. It is said that there is always a possibility that a wrong button can be pressed and the accident can take place. I would like to know from the Minister whether he has taken up this issue with the A-320 Airbus, manufacturing company and whether they have assured that they are taking certain necessary steps to rectify these defects in the cockpit. I would like to know from the Minister as to what has been done in this regard.

SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA: Sir, after

this air crash at Stasbourg, the DGCA, France was requested by the DGCA, India to provide details which may be pertinent. And the DGCA, France has made a preliminary inquiry and they have said that there is no major problem in operating this aircraft except for a few directives that should be issued, which would avoid possible confusion between vertical speed and the flight path angle. These directives have been issued by the DGCA, India. And even before this crash took place, the matter that you are referring to, the Air Inter and Air France had given up the use of VORDME approach. But the DGCA, France has convened a meeting after the crash. They have discussed it with the Airbus Industry and with the two Airlines concerned. They have come to the conclusion that a ban of the VORDME approach is not really required provided certain other safety procedures are carried out; which is a VORDME approach with a manual feedback, which can then both be monitor. So, providing these procedural directives are issued, they have felt that there is no need to ban the VORDME approach and these directives have been issued by the DGCA.

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV: I will say from my experience. Only three weeks before, I was flying by this aircraft from Varanasi to Bombay. And at Lucknow, it was landed for four hours. A Swedish priest, who was also travelling with me when we were asked to get out of the plane; said: "there is a God. If this defect had occurred ten minutes before when we were in the air, where would we have been?" After four hours of stay at Lucknow Airport in the midnight, it was found that there was no engine trouble only a computer defect. The Captain while taking off again after four hours announced that there was no serious trouble with the engine and it was only a wrong message of the computer. And that is what I am saying. As this plane has highly computerised, gadgetry there is always a possibility of committing a mistake. And that is what the pilots have also said. Even the French pilots said now there are only two pilots in the cockpit...
(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Put your question please.

SHRICHANDRAJEET YADAV: In spite of missing instructions, board serious defects continue to be there. When the people take A-320, they always go with a thought as to what will happen to them? The Government going to purchase additional 12 A-320s. I would like to know from the Minister that in this background...

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI SRIKANNTA JENA: Please ask him to conclude. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Accidents can occur even while riding on bicycle (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV: Sir, everybody should take care. Please do not make it so lightly. Otherwise, the Minister will be very much interested to go ahead and not to look into this problem. The fact is that country had to lose almost Rs. 500 crores because A-320s were grounded here for a long time. now, I am asking the Minister again that before purchasing these twelve A-320 additional aircraft, will he please ask the manufacturing company at least to remove those defects which have been preliminarily found in India I would also like to know how much he is going to spend to purchase these aircraft and when are they likely to join the Indian Airlines.

SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA: Sir, the agreement was signed to purchase these twelve aircraft way back in 1989 and unless a major flaw appears in these aircraft, I am afraid, we do not have much option. However, this does not mean that I am in any way, inferring that there is anything wrong with the aircraft. Neither the hon. Member is a technical man nor I am a technical man. We can only depend on various engineers and technical experts who go into this mat-

ter, both in India and abroad. As far as the findings so far are concerned, as I said, no major flaw seems to have appeared in these aircraft. I can only go by that. These airbuses are coming in from 1993 to 1994 and we will be spending something like 958 million on their purchase.

MR. M. V. CHADRASHEKARA MURTHY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether it is a fact that the pilots in India and in France have argued that these A-320 airbuses cannot be flown by a two member crew; it requires another member so as to keep a watch over the altitude as well as other instruments at the time of landing. If so, I would like to know what action has the Government of India or the Indian Airline taken so far to rectify these defects.

SHRIMADAV RAO SCINDIA: Sir, some suggestions have come in from different quarters from time to time. But, as I said the matter has been gone into in depth, both on Indian soil and also abroad and at present it has not been found necessary to have a three-member crew.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Sir, since the technical people here are not only engineers but also pilots, I would like to know that what they feel in India. Is it a fact that they are very much reluctant to fly these aircraft? If so, because they are the most important people, because they are the most important people, what is the opinion of the Minister about that?

SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA: Sir, as I said, suggestion have come in from different quarters from time but there is no reluctance on the part of the pilots to fly these aircraft. They are flying them everyday. Our pilot are certainly technically amongst the most capable pilots in the world. So, I do not see any major problem with the pilots.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Have they not represented to you about this?

SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA: I have said that some suggestions have come. But, as I said, there is no major reluctance on the part of the pilots to fly these aircraft.

National Thermal Power Corporation

*266 **SHRI M. V. V. S. MURTHY:** Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the amounts payable by the States to the National Thermal Power Corporation;

(b) the steps taken for collecting the same;

(c) whether is any proposal to commence new NTPC projects in the Eighth Five Year Plan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) to (d). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) Details are given in Amendment in Annexure-I attached.

(b) The steps taken for recovery of dues include frequent visits to State Electricity Boards and State Government by Senior Executives of the NTPC, organising meetings, recovery through Central Appropriation etc.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Eighth Plan is yet to be finalised. However, the execution of the following on-going/approved projects would be continued by the NTPC during the 8th plan: