

(d) steps taken by Government for increased utilisation of Calcutta Airport by foreign airlines?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PURUSHOTATM KAUSHIK): (a) to (d). The development of tourism in any particular area depends upon a number of factors the facility of air service being one amongst them. While the number of international air services which touch Calcutta is less as compared to those serving Bombay and Delhi, this should not deter tourist groups from going to West Bengal as many foreign tourists arriving at Bombay, Madras or Delhi international airport do visit West Bengal travelling either by Indian Airlines flights or by trains.

2. Every possible efforts is being made by the Government to encourage foreign airlines to operate through Calcutta. Calcutta is invariably offered as a point of call to foreign airlines while route schedules to bilateral air services agreements are negotiated. However, initiative in this regard lies with the foreign airlines who decide such matters on purely commercial considerations.

3. The Government of India will welcome and encourage operation of scheduled air services by foreign carriers to/through Calcutta in accordance with their traffic entitlements and have taken a number of steps to make Calcutta airport a modern international airport in India. Rs. 3.00 crores have been spent in providing a new terminal building, an operational block, approach roads and in modernising radio navigational aids, besides extending and strengthening runways and installation of versatile and sophisticated radar equipment at Calcutta airport. Apart from this, India Tourism Development Cooperation have constructed a hotel at Calcutta airport at a cost of Rs. 2.60 crores to augment facilities for tourists. It is hoped that foreign airlines would come forward and take the necessary initiative in this regard.

Finalisation of dues of Retired Government Employees

1933. **SHRI RAJ KRISHNA DAWN:** Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that though several times Government have assured that the dues of retired Government employees will be finalised immediately after their retirement, it is observed that retired persons have to face immense difficulties and hardships to receive their dues; and

(b) what effective action Government are taking to avoid harassment to retired Government servants and delay in the finalisation of their dues?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI H. M. PATEL): (a) and (b) With a view to ensuring the authorisation of pension and gratuity on the dates on which they fall due, a revised and simplified procedure was introduced in February, 1976. A statement incorporating the salient features of the revised procedure is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The payment of pension and other retirement benefits are authorised by the Heads of Offices under the various Ministries/Departments scattered all over the country. To enable them to authorize the payments of retirement benefits on the due dates, the procedure was simplified and streamlined in February 1976. The salient features of the procedure are as follows:—

(1) The payment of superannuation pensions is to commence in all cases on the first of the month in which they are due. The payment of gratuity is authorized immediately on the retirement of the Government servant. In order to ensure this, a strict timetable for the work at various stages has been laid down for the Heads of Offices and Accounts Officers and firm cut-off dates have been prescribed for each stage.

(2) Pension is calculated on the average emoluments of 10 complete months instead of 36 months.

(3) In the absence of specific indication to the contrary, interruption in service between two spells of service rendered under the Central Government is treated as condoned and pre-interruption service counted for pension. Similarly, periods of extraordinary leave which are not covered by specific entries making them non-qualifying also count for pension.

(4) The requirement of an administrative sanction to pension has been dispensed with.

(5) If for any reasons, it is not possible to issue the Pension Payment Order before one month of the date of retirement of the Government servant, provisional pension and death-cum-retirement gratuity is sanctioned and disbursed by the Head of Office. The provisional pension becomes final after a period of six months.

(6) (a) In the matter of determining the dues outstanding against the Government servant (other than those pertaining to Government accommodation), the probe of past records is confined to a period of two years before retirement at the stage of preparation of pension papers.

(b) The procedure for issue of 'No Demand Certificate' for occupation of Government accommodation has been simplified.

(7) To keep effective watch for the preparation and finalization of pension papers, a Monitoring and Reporting system has been introduced in all the offices.

Whenever instance of delay in the authorization of the payment of pension and gratuity are brought to the notice of the Ministry of Finance, the matter is taken up immediately with the administrative Ministry/Depart-

ment concerned in order to ensure speedy settlement.

2. Apart from the steps taken to simplify the pension procedure, Government's decision to departmentalise the accounts would also facilitate timely settlement of all outstanding claims of retired Government servants. The payment of the balances in the C.P. Fund and the commuted value of the amount of pension is normally made on the due dates.

3. A scheme for the payment of pension to Central Government pensioners through public sector banks has been introduced throughout the country. A pensioner can opt to receive his pension and other retirement dues from any branch of the authorized public sector bank in a State. Under the scheme pension payment is automatic; no bill is required to be submitted. The amount of monthly pension is credited by the paying branch, selected by the pensioner, to his individual savings/current account at the commencement of the following month. The difficulties which the pensioners were experiencing by drawing their pensions from a Treasury have been mitigated to a great extent by introduction of the scheme for the drawal of pension from a branch of the public sector bank.

Ban on Export of Human Skeletons

1934. SHRI ISHWAR CHAUDHRY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have examined the question of imposing a ban on the export of human skeletons;

(b) whether Government had received complaints from West Bengal and Bihar regions about the desecration of grave-yards and cremations in the rural areas of West Bengal and Bihar;