

Darga and in Thiruvavur, we have a Hindu Temple. Thus, we have got a lot of passenger potential. My question to the hon. Minister is this. What is the necessity to shelve this project without any reason ?

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Baalu, please understand that there is a lot of frustration among the junior Members since they are not getting any chance. I am appealing to the senior Members also to please understand this.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Sir, I do not find any question in his question !

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Sir, he has frozen this project; and he has not replied to it.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : That is different thing.

SHRI T.R. BAALU : How is it different ? He was frozen this project.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Shri Baalu, you can come to me and get the details or you may wait till the last week of this session. I will give you each and every detail regarding each and every project. So, please wait till the last week of this Session.

Development of Software

*424 SHRI NRIPEN GOSWAMI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the software for networking arrangements exist at all locations where computerised reservation facilities have been made available and whether such arrangements have been developed further;

(b) If so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which all the State capitals are likely to be brought under networking arrangements ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR):
(a) to (c) A project has been undertaken for networking of the five systems of Calcutta, Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi and Secunderabad. The software for networking has already been developed. The first phase of the project has been successfully completed by linking Delhi and Secunderabad systems. It is expected that the whole networking project would be completed by December, 1999. This will bring all Passenger Reservation System (PRS) locations under the network.

SHRI NRIPEN GOSWAMI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the North-East being in the farthest corner of the country, may I know from the hon. Railway Minister whether he would be giving priority to bring the North-East under this software networking arrangement ? I would like to say that the North-East should be given priority and particularly,

Guwahati, so that it is brought under this networking system. May I know whether there is any proposal with the Ministry regarding this ?

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : The computerised public reservation system and passengers reservation system exist at all the places and it exist also at many places in North-East. Where earlier there was facility of computerised reservation on 300, this time after giving relaxation it has been provided on 200. In North-East, where, there is no rail head, this facility is available. The out station facilities is already available there. Even then if you feel that required there is something any where in North-East, you give in writing, I will certainly consider it.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Nripen Goswami, please put our second supplementary.

SHRI NRIPEN GOSWAMI : Thank you very much, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : What about your second supplementary ?

SHRI NRIPEN GOSWAMI : I have already put my supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER : Okay. Shri Govindan.

SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Sir, first of all, I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity. My supplementary question is regarding the backwardness of my constituency with regard to railway projects. I would request the hon. Minister not to be little or to avoid this. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Railway Minister towards the agitation launched by the passengers' association of my constituency in front of the Palghat Regional Railway Office.

Among other demands, one of the most important demands was to provide a computerised railway reservation system at my constituency, Kasargod. There was a proposal to provide it there, but unfortunately, it was delayed; and no reason was assigned for this. I would ask the hon. Minister as to when the computerised reservation system in the headquarters of my constituency, Kasargod will be established.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : It will be done in this financial year itself.

SHRI C.P. RADHAKRISHNAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to raise a question. The Konkan Railway has already been opened for traffic. The Railway Minister has already diverted the Kurla Express through that line and there is also a proposal to divert even the

Mangla Express through that line. So, the entire textile belt, Coimbatore-Palaghat-Coimbatore. . . .

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Radhakrishnan, please understand that this is a question relating to the development of software and not diversion of trains.

SHRI C.P. RADHAKRISHNAN : Sir, I am coming to my question. What steps are taken by the Ministry of Railways to introduce a new line to connect the entire textile belt with Delhi ?

There are no reservation facilities available in Coimbatore. The EQs are getting released from a place called Olavokod. Even though there is a computer system, I am not able to get reservation from Coimbatore itself. Everytime, I have to send a fax to Olavokod. I am spending Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 on fax to get it confirmed. Moreover, I am getting confirmed seats only at the last minute. The same is the case with the people of my constituency and EQs.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : This supplementary does not arise out of the original question. This is a personal problem.

SHRI C.P. RADHAKRISHNAN : It is not my own problem. It is the problem of my constituency.

MR. SPEAKER : You can write a letter to him and he will reply to it.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMPAL UPADHYAY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw his attention through you that the Ajmer division in Rajasthan has become separate and the adjoining districts of Bhilwara and Chittor come under the Ratlam division, which is far away. I would like to ask the Honourable Minister whether he would be pleased to include the districts of Bhilwara and Chittor in the Ajmer Division ?

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : The question asked by the honourable Member is not related to this question. This is a question pertaining to passenger reservation whereas the Honourable Member is asking a question about the Division. He can ask a separate question about this.

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI (Darbhanga) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, right from the beginning of the computerised system of ticketing in India, people are not able to get confirmed tickets. As soon as the ticket counters are opened, tickets go into the waiting list. Will the Honourable Minister look into this matter. In addition, the former Minister of Railways had promised in this House that if all the Universities in India make a request for arrangements of computerised reservation with in their

campus, the facilities will certainly be provided to them. However, this facility has not been extended to them so far.

I would like to know from the Honourable Minister whether he will provide reservation facility in each University if the Vice-Chancellor and the students of that University so desire ? The Laheria Sarai station comes under my constituency and an announcement for its computerisation has already been made. However, the computer could not be installed there so far while as many as 600 tickets and not 200 tickets are purchased there everyday. The Honourable Minister may kindly tell about it also.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Sir, as far as the assurance given in this House by the then Minister is concerned, if the assurance has been given by him, then that is the assurance of the Government which will certainly be fulfilled. Whatever assurance is there, you may take initiative about that accordingly. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : When the assurance is for Bihar, then it is alright but it about U.P. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Shri Mulayam Singhji, he has given assurance with regard to all the Universities of the country. He has stated that the Honourable Minister has given assurance on the requests made by all the Universities of the country. The assurance given by the Honourable Minister is the assurance of the Government which will certainly be fulfilled provided there is such an assurance and if you are telling the truth in the House.

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI : I am telling the truth. Honourable Minister, you please tell whether the assurance exists or not ? This is my question.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : My answer is that it is not a matter of conflict. It is the time for question-answer.

So far as a particular station mentioned by him is concerned the situation relaxed norms exists there that there should be 200 reservations from there, then that will be included in the work plan. It is possible only if that comes under the relaxed norms, then if it is not as per norms and even then he wants it, then he will have to request for the same time and again.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Minister of Railways has realised that the Government is committed to the assurances, given by the former Railway Minister and they are the assurances of the Government. Ferozabad is an industrial and commercial area where a number of traders come. The former Hon'ble Minister of Railways had given assurance in this

very House for providing computerised reservation facility in this area but that assurance has not been fulfilled till now. Sir, my next question connected with the same is that a very big accident had taken place at Ferozabad sometime back for which the entire country had we it. A small bridge has damaged and there may be a major accident any day. Therefore, I want to tell the Honourable Minister of Railways that arrangement should be made to repair the damaged bridge by sending a team there. Honourable Minister Sir, please state about the period by which the computer facility will be provided there and the action is being taken by the Government to repair the small bridge ?

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Sir, I have noted the information given by him.

[English]

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS : Sir, now the Railways are taking reservation charges from the persons who are wait-listed. It is a very serious matter. In my State, when the people are reserving their tickets as passengers in the waiting list at the Calicut Railway Station they are being charged the reservation charges. May I know whether the Minister of Railways is aware of it or not ?

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : That measure was announced during my Budget speech. So, we are fully aware of it. We have done it consciously. If there is any complaint, you can bring that to my notice. I will look into it.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS : I have brought it to your notice.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : What hardships are they facing ? You please bring them to my notice.

[Translation]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL (Karnal) : Sir, First of all I would like to congratulate the Hon'ble Minister that he has not given a single positive answer to any question. He has tried to suppress all the facts. I congratulate him and at the same time I would like to ask him a similar question and he may please give a positive answer to it. He should not try to avoid the same.

Ajmer Sharif is a historical place. Straight from Ajmer Sharif to Gurgaon via Mewat, Nooh, Ferozpur Jhirka is a very important Railway line. The survey of this line has already been carried out ten years ago and the project has been planned. Likewise, Panipat is another historical place where three historical battles have taken place. The Marathas fought the battle at Panipat. Hence, will you please link the railway line from Panipat to Haridwar and Hissar to Ratia, Jakhali in route Fatehabad ?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Prithviraj D. Chavan.

[Translation]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Sir, my question has not been answered.

MR. SPEAKER : The answer will be given later.

[English]

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN : Sir, this is a very specific question on development of software for networking of the reservation system. Now, while allowing a very wide discussion on the entire gamut of reservations, you are not allowing us to get information on this important subject. The whole thing is about what the reservation system is.

My question is specifically about the main question, that is, about development of software by one of the organisations under the Ministry of Railways. I think, CRIS is developing it. The system is called 'CONCERT'. What is happening to development of software for this networking system ? The whole country wants all the reservation system to be networked so that we are able to buy tickets from any place to my place in the country and at any time. This is what we want to know.

Further, what I would like to know specifically is this. When was this project started ? Is CRIS, the agency which is developing the software, competent to develop it ? Recently, we had a problem. During the last week, there was a question about the computerised ticketing machines which are installed at various places for reservation. There was a major fraud. The CBI has launched an inquiry against an employee of the manufacturers, and seven or eight employees of the Railways. What security measures are they taking ?

The second part of my question is this. When will the Internet purchasing of tickets with credit cards be allowed? Is it being done away with ? It is within the competence of the Indian Industry. Why are they not giving it to others who are competent ? When was the project started ? When will it be completed ?

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the answer to the first question has already been given in the answer of the main question. There are five prominent places which are covered in the network. Delhi and Sikanderabad have already been linked. Delhi and Calcutta will be linked towards the end of this month and Mumbai and Chennai will be linked by the end of this year. Thus, the facility to

get reservation for to and fro journey from any corner of the country will become available. This has already been made clear in the answer.

As far as the question of Software is concerned a fraud has been detected and what I replied last week in this connection was not related to the reservation system.

It was in connection with the self printing ticketing machine. The software, which was already there, was without any security device and the fraud which was committed by taking the undue advantage of that has been detected. Now, the input of security device is being attached with that. This facility has been withdrawn from those places where this fraud was detected and tickets are being sold manually there. So far as the reservation system is concerned there is no complaint in this system as such. It's software, which have been manufactured by the CRIS, are in order. So far as the maintenance is concerned that is being done by the CMC, a Government of India undertaking.

Induction of New Technology in Naval Forces

*426. SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Naval Chief has pointed out that India needs timely induction of new technology in the Naval forces;

(b) whether our Naval forces have a major role to play as India is covered with vast high sea areas;

(c) whether our Naval force at present lacks new technology;

(d) whether a time-bound programme of inducting new technology to the Naval forces have been formulated; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) and (b) Proposals regarding induction of new technology in the Indian Navy are continually under processing in line with the role of the Navy to safeguard India's maritime interests.

(c) No Sir.

(d) and (e) Induction of new technology in the Naval forces which is an on-going exercise, is executed either through new technology bought from abroad or through indigenously developed sources. The Government has taken into consideration the desirability of inducting new technologies in the field of weaponry/missile systems,

information technology system etc., suitable to the requirements of Indian Navy while acquiring/indigenously constructing various categories of warships.

[Translation]

SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR : Mr. Speaker Sir, we all are proud of the past performance of the Indian Navy but keeping in view the changes following the nuclear explosion, we have to observe the changed situation closely. As we are aware that we have only 136 ships and out of them only 50% are in working condition. So, such ships are urgently required to be replaced by the modern ships. These ships of Indian Navy are not only utilised during war but also used for the safety of "Exclusive Economic Zone", our natural oil and its pipelines, from the external aggression. This situation has been reviewed recently. The Hon'ble Minister may tell as to what steps have been taken for its modernisation.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the points explained by the Hon'ble Member about our Navy are absolutely right. He has stated that at present only 50 per cent ships are worth working out of 136 ships. In this connection I would like to mention that some ships, as per their life, have a lot of time remaining but some ships have completed their life and therefore they are out of work today. However, we will take, every step to fulfil every need of the Indian Navy. Attempts are constantly being made to supply the ships to Indian Navy by constructing them indigenously or acquiring them from abroad. So far as the powers in the hands of navy to fulfil its present responsibilities are concerned, the navy have those powers today.

12.00 hrs.

SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR : Mr. Speaker Sir, did the Government take a notice over the changed scenario after nuclear explosions ? Under the circumstances, our National Defence College, which is also known as our higher profile think tank, has recently tried to evaluate the naval force and comprehensive plan for action, based on strategic planning was also discussed therein. I would like to ask from the Hon'ble Minister, through you, that in view of the changed situation as well as our traditional enemy too what kind of attention we have given to it. If so, what measures have been taken by us. I have a doubt about it due to the changed scenario today.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Mr. Speaker, Sir, taking into account the situation arose after the declared itself as an atomic weapon state, not only Navy but all the three departments of defence forces have taken necessary steps and the work is in progress in this direction.