

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Scientific Research Programme

4293. SHRI RAVI SITARAM NAIK : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have set up an Empowered Committee to approve Scientific Research Programmes; and

(b) if so, the details with objectives thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An Empowered Committee has been set up under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Steel with members from Department of Science & Technology, Planning Commission, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Main Producers of Steel, IIT Kharagpur, National Metallurgical Laboratory, Jamshedpur, Development Commissioner for Iron & Steel, and others with a view to providing overall direction to the total research effort on Iron & Steel in the country and approve specific research projects placed before it.

The Empowered Committee will *inter alia* examine all aspects of Science & Technology in the Iron & Steel sector; Co-ordinate and monitor the on-going research programmes in the iron & steel sector; review the progress of Science & Technology programmes of national importance in the Iron & Steel industry periodically and advise Ministry of Steel on policies and programmes in developing domestic capabilities for Research & Development in the Iron & Steel sector.

Flight for Delhi-Rajkot Sector

4294. SHRI GORDHANBHAI JAVIA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any Plan to operate Indian Airlines flight between Delhi and Rajkot;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. The traffic potential on the sector Delhi-Rajkot is not adequate for operation of jet aircraft available in Indian Airlines/Alliance Air's fleet. Private

operators with suitable aircraft are being encouraged to add new stations including Rajkot in their network, subject to commercial viability.

Appointment of Chairman of AAI

4295. DR. Y.S. RAJA SEKARA REDDY : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Airports Authority of India is without a Chairman for the last two years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps that are being taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. The post of Whole-time Chairman in the Airports Authority of India (AAI) became vacant on 14.10.1996 and the Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation had been holding additional charge of the post till the appointment of the new Chairman. On the basis of the recommendations of the Public Enterprises Selection Board and with the approval of the competent authority Shri D.V. Gupta has been appointed as Chairman, AAI with effect from 06.07.1998.

Merger of HSCL and VISL with SAIL

4296. DR. JAYANTA RONGPI :
SHRI MANJUNATH AYANUR :
SHRI SUNIL KHAN :

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to merge Hindustan Steelworks Construction Limited (HSCL) and Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Limited (VISL) with Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL);

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any Committee was formed by the Government in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the Committee has submitted its report; and

(f) if so, the reaction of the Government alongwith the action taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) and (b) Government have decided to merge Visvesvaraya Iron & Steel Limited (VISL) with Steel Authority of India Limited