

### Noise Emitting from Labs of HAL

783. SHRI H.G. RAMULU : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the heavy noise being released from the testing labs of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) during landing and take off; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to shift all jet testing centres away or stop testing and emitting high decible noise?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) HAL Factory and airfield set up at Bangalore 50 years ago, were far away from the city limits. The Town Development Authorities could have avoided the expansion of the city near to the factory and Jet testing airfield. It is not possible for HAL to shift the factory and airfield from the present location. However, steps such as providing Baffle etc. have been taken for containment of noise, to the extent possible.

### Measures to Liberalise Civil Aviation Sector

784. SHRI MAGANTI VENKATESHWARA RAO : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to allow automatic approval to FDI to the extent of 76 per cent for the development of airports under the New Civil Aviation Policy; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) and (b) In terms of the 'Policy on Airport Infrastructure' approved by the Government of India in December, 1997, foreign equity participation in airport infrastructure will be permitted upto 74% with automatic approvals and upto 100% with special permission.

### Air Flight from Ahmedabad to Johannesburg

785. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received some requests/proposals from public as well as VIPs to start a new Air flight from Ahmedabad to Johannesburg via Nairobi; and

(b) if so, the decision taken or to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A direct flight from Ahmedabad to Johannesburg via Nairobi is not considered feasible to present because insufficient traffic potential and capacity constraints of Air India. Moreover, Ahmedabad is at present not available as a point of call to foreign airlines.

### Revision of Powers to the Panchayats

786. SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Finance Commission for Union Territories have suggested revision of powers to the Panchayats; and

(b) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL) : (a) and (b) The final report of the Finance Commission for Union Territories has been referred by the Ministry of Home Affairs to the Union Territory Administrations concerned for their comments. The comments when received from the Union Territory Administrations will be examined by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Action Taken Report on the Report of the Finance Commission for Union Territories will be laid on the Table of both Houses of Parliament.

### Increase in Activities of ISI

787. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether ISI has stepped up its activities in the Southern States as reported to have been said by the Chief of Staff of Southern Army Command;

(b) if so, the remedial steps taken to counter these activities; and

(c) the measures taken to strengthen the coastal surveillance?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (c) Government is aware of the increased activities of the ISI in the Southern States. Appropriate remedial measures to counter these activities and the necessary steps to strengthen the coastal surveillance are being taken.