

(c) whether the recommendations made by the Fifth Pay Commission to improve their pay scales and service conditions have been implemented;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) The cadre structure of Censorship Organisation in the Directorate General of Military Intelligence of the Army Headquarter was examined by the 5th Central Pay Commission which *inter alia* recommended restructuring of the cadre of Examiners.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The recommendations of the 5th Central Pay Commission for restructuring the cadre have been implemented with the issuance of Government letter on 28th October, 1997. In the restructured cadre-9 posts of Supervisory Examiner have been re-designated as Examiner-I in the pay scale of Rs. 6500-200-10500, 20 posts of Examiner-II have been created in the pay scale of Rs. 5500-175-9000; and 12 posts of Assistant Examiner have been upgraded and merged with Examiner in the pay scale of Rs. 5000-150-8000 and re-designated as Examiner-III.

(e) Does not arise.

Chinese Arms to Pak

3481. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRI M. BAGA REDDY :
SHRI TARIQ ANWAR :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Pakistan set to buy more weapons from China" appearing in the 'Hindustan Times' dated February 17, 1999;

(b) if so, whether China has increased the sale of its arms to the neighbouring countries of India;

(c) if so, whether this has posed a great threat to the Indian security; and

(d) if so, the steps, the Government propose to take to meet the situation?

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

(b) China is known to be supplying arms to India's neighbouring countries including Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. However, there are no confirmed reports to suggest any major recent increase in this activity.

(c) and (d) All developments having a bearing on India's national security are constantly monitored and all necessary steps are taken from time to time to maintain appropriate defence preparedness to thwart any attempt of misadventure on the part of our adversaries.

Flights between Mauritius and India

3482. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air Mauritius has tied up fresh marketing arrangement with Air India following an increase in passenger traffic between Mauritius and India;

(b) if so, the main details of the pact signed between Air Mauritius and Air India; and

(c) the extent to which there has been an increase of passenger traffic between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) Air India and Air Mauritius have signed a Joint Venture Agreement for operation of flights on Mauritius-India-Mauritius route for the year 1999-2000.

(b) The Agreement envisages operation of three flights per week during the period from 1.4.1999 to 4.2.2000 and two flights from 5.2.2000 to 31.3.2000 on Mauritius-Mumbai-Mauritius route and one flight per week during the period from 1.4.1999 to 31.3.2000 on Mauritius-Delhi-Mauritius route, by Air Mauritius in Joint Venture with Air India on profit sharing basis.

(c) The air traffic between India and Mauritius has increased from 51996 in 1996-97 to 58195 in 1997-98.

Pilgrim Rest Houses

3483. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the pilgrim rest-houses sanctioned by the Union Government during the last three years, State/location-wise; and

(b) the time by which the construction work of sanctioned rest-houses are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) : (a) and (b) The Ministry of Tourism sanctions projects to State Governments on receipt of detailed project proposals as per Guidelines. During the last three years the Accommodation Projects sanctioned at identified Pilgrim Centres are 1) Tourist Accommodation-Katra, 2) Tourist Bungalow-Ajmer, 3) Tourist accommodation—at Patna Sahib. The State Governments are required to complete the projects in 30 months.

Bilateral Agreement on Air Services

3484. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any bilateral agreement on air services was signed in the recent past between the Government of India and UK:

(b) if so, the details thereof and the date on which the agreement was signed;

(c) whether this agreement has been implemented by India; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor, and the time by which it is going to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) No such agreement was signed in the recent past.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Recruitment of Commissioned Officers

3485. SHRI AMAN KUMAR NAGRA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to abolish the direct recruitment of Commissioned officers in Armed forces and select them from other ranks according to the merits after a five years compulsory service;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reason for not introducing such an efficiency oriented scheme?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The existing avenues for the selection of candidates from among the personnel below officer rank are considered adequate.

Grounding of Helicopters at Bombay High

3486. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Minister Ignores P.M. Order" appearing in the 'Asian Age' dated October 2, 1998;

(b) if so, the facts of the case reported therein; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure smooth functioning at Bombay High?

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

(b) On the recommendation of the Ministry of Petroleum, on 15th December, 1997 permission was granted to Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) to hire three Bell-412 helicopters from M/s Azal for providing helicopter services for carriage of men and material related to the Bombay High off-shore operations under foreign registration initially for a period of 3 months with the condition that the helicopters would be got registered in India and operated in conformity with the domestic air transport policy. On the request of ONGC, permission was extended from time to time till 1st September, 1998.

In the meantime, M/s Azal India Pvt. Ltd. (an-Indian company) was granted NOC on 6th November, 1998 to operate non-scheduled air services. Import permission for three Bell-412 HP (2 + 13 seater) helicopters was issued on 1st December, 1998.

(c) In order to meet its operational requirements for off-shore activities, ONGC hires helicopter services from various vendors like Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd. (PHHL),