

*[English]***Aircraft strength of India and Pakistan**

385. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the press report appeared in the 'Tribune' of January 20, 1998 detailing a comparison between front line aircraft strength of India and Pakistan; and

(b) If so, the facts thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, but it is not clear which 223 IAF aircraft the Pakistan Air Force Chief has compared with 32 F 16 aircraft of the Pakistan Air Force. It is not considered desirable to disclose any further details in this regard.

*[Translation]***Closure of Copper Mines**

386. SHRI PAMDAS ATHAWALE : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to close down the unproductive and unprofitable copper mines in the country.

(b) If so, the details thereof;

(c) the estimated loss to the Hindustan Copper Limited therefrom during the last three years; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to cope up with the situation arising out of closure of mines ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) the sole producer of primary copper from mined ore in the country has so far closed down some of its unproductive and unprofitable mines located in the states of Bihar and Rajasthan.

(b) to (d) (i) Lapsa Kyanite Mines of HCL located in Bihar employing about 700 employees had been closed w.e.f. 30.11.90 and the employees had been given voluntary retirement benefits which were three times higher than the closure compensation benefits as envisaged under the Industrial Disputes Act.

(ii) Darba Copper Project in the District of Alwar, Rajasthan had been closed w.e.f. 18.7.94 due to total exhaustion of mineable reserves. Out of the total 250 workmen engaged in Darba Copper Project, while 50% of the workmen had opted for voluntary retirement scheme, the rest 50% of the workmen were absorbed in Khetri Copper Complex in Rajasthan.

(iii) As the mining operations at Mosaboni mines located in Ghatshila district of Bihar had become highly

uneconomical and as Hindustan Copper Limited had been incurring heavy losses in operating these mines, the Board of Directors of Hindustan Copper Limited approved the proposal for closure of Mosaboni mines and the Company sought permission from the Government for closure under section 25 (O) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. Mosaboni (including Badia) mines under Indian Copper Complex of HCL were approved for closure by Ministry of Labour w.e.f. 1.12.97. The company has already chalked out a plan to rehabilitate/redeploy the affected workmen of Mosaboni Mines.

There has not been any loss to HCL due to the closure of these mines. The company has, however incurred loss during the last two years mainly on account of crash in LME price of copper coupled with reduction in custom duty on copper. The profit/(loss) for the last three years is as under :-

(Rs. in Crores)	
1995-96	75.84
1996-97	(130.62)
1997-98	(168.99) (Prov.)

**Steps to Check Expenditure by IA and AI**

387. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Indian Airlines is increasing its expenditure on personnel by upgrading large number of its higher grade employees to the post of General Managers/Deputy General Managers, Deputy Directors Generals and Advisors/Officers on Special Duty;

(b) If so, the number of posts of General Manager and higher posts that have been created in Indian Airlines during the 1994-96, 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(c) whether Indian Airlines/Air India are taking some effective steps to check their extravagant expenditure; and

(d) If so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) and (d) During the period 1994-95 to 1996-97, 6 posts of General Manager were upgraded to the level of Director and 12 posts of General Manager and above were created. Financial implication involved in the upgradation/creation of these posts is negligible, as equal number of posts of lower grade were abolished.

(c) and (d) The following steps have been taken by AI/IA to control expenditure and increase productivity :-

**Air India**

(i) Marketing efforts have been stepped up to generate additional revenue.

(ii) Network rationalisation and consolidation emphasis is placed on route profitability.