

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3810
ANSWERED ON:04.09.2012
AIR TRAVEL FACILITY TO FREEDOM FIGHTERS
Shekhar Shri Neeraj;Singh Shri Yashvir

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to provide air travel facility to freedom fighters under the Swatantrata Sainik Samman Scheme, 1980 in view of their old age and inconvenience while travelling in trains;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has received representations from freedom fighters in this regard during the current year;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon;
- (e) whether the Government is likely to amend the above scheme to provide air travel facility to aged freedom fighters; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI JITENDRA SINGH)

(a) to (f): Apart from Samman pension, various facilities have been provided to the freedom fighters which include free railway pass (AC-II tier in Rajdhani, Chair Car in Shatabdi/Jan Shatabdi trains and 1st class/1nd AC sleeper in all other trains) for the freedom fighters and their widows along with a companion, free medical facilities in all Central Government hospitals and hospitals run by public sector undertakings under the control of the Bureau of Public Enterprises, facilities under Central Government Health Scheme to the freedom fighters and their dependents and telephone connection without installation charges and on payment of half the rental. In addition to these facilities, the freedom fighters who had suffered imprisonment for a minimum period of five years in the Cellular Jail, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and their widows along with a companion are eligible for free air travel to visit Andaman & Nicobar Islands once a year. No representation has been received from freedom fighters in the current year for providing free air travel facilities to them. The Punjab & Haryana High Court while disposing off the Public Interest Litigation petition seeking intervention of the Court to provide free air travel facilities to the surviving freedom fighters and their spouses directed vide their order dated 25.02.2011 to consider the matter. For providing free air travel facilities to the freedom fighters, the Government would have to incur huge expenditure. Therefore, the request made in the petition has not been agreed to.