

17.51 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

Proposals for New Airports

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House will now take up Half-an-Hour Discussion. Shri V.K. Thummar.

श्री वी.के. ठुम्मर (अमरेली) : सभापति महोदय, 9 दिसम्बर को प्रश्न संख्या 122 के बारे में संसद सदस्यों को पूछने का मौका नहीं मिला, इसलिए मैं उसके ऊपर आधे घंटे चर्चा उठा रहा हूँ। विश्व में कई ऐसे देश प्रगति कर रहे हैं, जिनमें भारत भी शामिल है और यह तरक्की कर रहा है। उस हिसाब से हिन्दुस्तान के एयरपोर्टों में सुविधा नहीं मिल रही है, इसलिए इसके लिए मैं संसद के माध्यम से इसके विस्तार के लिए दरखास्त करना चाहता हूँ। व्यापारी एवं उद्योगपति कम समय में कई जगहों की यात्रा करना चाहते हैं, लेकिन एयरपोर्ट नहीं है। इस संबंध में 9 दिसम्बर के प्रश्न संख्या 122 के बारे में मैं विस्तार से चर्चा करना चाहता हूँ।

महोदय, प्रश्न के भाग "क" में एयरपोर्ट के लिए नगरों की पहचान करने के लिए एवं शहरों में नागर विमान की सेवाओं की आवश्यकता के संबंध में जवाब बतया गया है कि यह सतत प्रक्रिया है। मैं इस बारे में पूछना चाहता हूँ कि नये एयरपोर्ट की स्थापना करने की प्रक्रिया क्या है? इस प्रक्रिया के लिए मंत्री जी को सही जवाब देना चाहिए ताकि संसद और लोगों को पता चले कि वास्तव में यह प्रक्रिया चल रही है। प्रश्न के भाग "ख" में विमानों और पत्तनों की धावन पट्टियों के उन्नयन, उनके विस्तार और आधुनिकीकरण एवं एयरपोर्टों के बारे में क्या कार्यवाही की गई, उसका उत्तर में कोई वर्णन नहीं किया गया है। प्रश्न के भाग "ग" में योजना आयोग द्वारा स्वीकृत योजनाओं के बारे में पूछा था, जिनका कोई जवाब नहीं मिला है। देश में जो एयरपोर्ट्स हैं, वे विश्व स्तर के नहीं हैं, जब कि हम दुनिया के छोटे-छोटे देशों में जब जाते हैं, जैसे दुबई, सिंगापुर, मलेशिया आदि, वहां जो एयरपोर्ट पर सुविधा देखते हैं, यहां के इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट में वे सुविधाएं बहुत कम हैं। आज भारत के एयरपोर्ट में कई उपकरण काम नहीं कर रहे हैं। ऐसे कई उपकरण खराब पड़े हैं, जिनकी वजह से एयरपोर्टों पर ठीक तरीके से काम नहीं हो रहा है। वहां धीमी गति से कार्य हो रहा है। एयरपोर्ट की ढिलाई एवं धीमी गति के संबंध में किसी अधिकारी को उत्तरदायी नहीं ठहराया जाता है। एयरपोर्ट के अधिकारी एवं कर्मचारियों की अक्षमता और एयरपोर्ट में चल रहे कार्यों एवं अधिकारियों की भूमिका की कोई समीक्षा नहीं की जाती है। एयरपोर्ट की कहां जरूरत है, हमारे देश में ऐसी कोई मशीनरी नहीं है, इसलिए पता नहीं चलता कि कौन से एयरपोर्ट को ज्यादा आगे बढ़ाने की जरूरत है।

महोदय, मेरे पास इसके तीन उदाहरण हैं, पहला गुजरात के सूरत का है। सूरत में विश्व स्तर की टैक्सटाइल मार्केट है। सारे देश में डायमंड उद्योग सबसे ज्यादा सूरत में चल रहा है। डायमंड नगरी के नाम से आज सूरत पहचाना जाता है। कई दिनों से सुनने में आ रहा है कि सूरत एयरपोर्ट बना कर बोईंग सेवा शुरू करने का कार्य स्वीकृत हुआ है, लेकिन वह कछुए की गति से चल रहा है। उसमें जल्दी से काम पूरा करना चाहिए। अगर वहां जल्दी काम पूरा हो जाएगा तो मुंबई एयरपोर्ट पर दबाव कम हो जाएगा। यह मैं इसलिए कह रहा हूँ, क्योंकि मंत्री जी भी गुजरात से जुड़े हुए हैं। इसलिए उन्हें इस बारे में सोचना चाहिए। अब मैं अहमदाबाद के बारे में बोलना चाहूंगा। आज वहां सरदार पटेल के नाम से जुड़ा हुआ इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट है, लेकिन वहां कोई सुविधा नहीं है। फॉरेन से लोग आते हैं तो उन्हें वहां दो-दो, तीन-तीन घंटे खड़ा रहना पड़ता है। उनका लगेज़ भी नहीं मिलता है। यह सरदार पटेल के नाम से जुड़ा हुआ एयरपोर्ट है और प्रफुल्ल भाई जिस कम्युनिटी से आते हैं, वह भी गुजरात, मुंबई से संबंधित हैं, तब अहमदाबाद के बारे में ज्यादा सोचना चाहिए, ऐसी में रिव्हेस्ट उनसे करना चाहता हूँ और अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय दर्जा देने मात्र से इण्टरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट नहीं बन सकता है। इसे इण्टरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट बनाने के लिए मैं प्रफुल्ल भाई से कहूंगा कि वे मलेशिया और सिंगापुर बहुत बार गये होंगे, कम से कम उसका थोड़ा सा हिस्सा तो अहमदाबाद को दें।

मैं राजकोट के बारे में आपके जरिये जानना चाहता हूँ कि राजकोट में कोई सुविधा ही नहीं है। स्टेट गवर्नमेंट ने एयरपोर्ट एथारिटी के साथ एम.ओ.यू. साइन किया है, लेकिन एथारिटी ने अभी तक कोई काम वहां चालू नहीं किया है। एम.ओ.यू. साइन करने के बाद इतने सालों से राजकोट एयरपोर्ट, जैसा पहले बनाया था, वैसा ही है, आगे कुछ काम नहीं चल रहा है। इसका कुछ काम आगे बढ़ाने के लिए मैं मंत्री महोदय से अपनी रिव्हेस्ट कर रहा हूँ।

आदरणीय उड्डयन मंत्री जी से अनुरोध है कि इन बिन्दुओं की जांच करें एवं कार्य करने में लापरवाह पाये गये अधिकारियों के खिलाफ सख्त रवैया अपनायें। मेरे संसदीय क्षेत्र अमरेली, जहां से मुझे इतनी बड़ी पार्लियामेंट में नेतृत्व करने का मौका मिला है, वहां हवाई अड्डा है, लेकिन कुछ काम नहीं आ रहा है। इतने दिनों से मैं अखबारों में पढ़ता हूँ कि हवाई अड्डा आ रहा है, हवाई जहाज आ रहा है, मैं वहां वेट कर रहा हूँ, लेकिन वहां हवाई अड्डा जाने की बात ही नहीं हो रही है, सिर्फ अखबार में ही हम पढ़ते हैं। अमरेली एयरपोर्ट के लिए भी प्रनल्ल भाई कुछ करें, ऐसा मैं उनसे कहना चाहता हूँ। माननीय उड्डयन मंत्री जी से अनुरोध है कि वे सख्त रवैया अपनायें और जिस कार्य की हमने उम्मीद रखी है, वह कार्य समय से पूरा किया जाये। सांसदों के अन्दर जो इस प्रश्न के सम्बन्ध में संशय एवं संदेह है, उसे स्पष्टीकरण देकर दूर करें, जिससे आधे घंटे की इस चर्चा का उद्देश्य पूरा हो जाये।

मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह भी कहना चाहता हूँ कि फॉग की वजह से आजकल कई जहाज उड़ नहीं पाते हैं, उतर नहीं पाते हैं। अगर फॉरेन कंट्रीज़ ने इस सम्बन्ध में कोई टेक्नोलोजी अख्तियार की गई है तो वह टेक्नोलोजी आप हिन्दुस्तान में लायें। फॉग की वजह से लोग जा नहीं सकते हैं, आ नहीं सकते हैं, दिन भर उनको बैठना पड़ता है, इसलिए उस टेक्नोलोजी को इंडिया में लायें, ऐसी मैं मंत्री जी को रिव्हेस्ट करता हूँ।

इस आधे घण्टे की चर्चा में भाग लेने का मुझे मौका मिला है, इसलिए मैं बहुत आनन्द के साथ यह प्रस्ताव देता हूँ।

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN (TRICHUR): Sir, when we were discussing that question, I had asked about the situation of Kannur Airport in Kerala. The hon. Minister said that certain developments are taking place and he would inform later on.

I just want to impress upon the hon. Minister and the House that Kannur is a very important place where the Naval Academy is going to be commissioned soon. It is also a special tourism area and it is just near that.

The handloom industry is going to get a new boom in the context of the new Export-Import Policy. In that context, all the required conditions are there so that a good international airport could be there in Kannur. I understand that the hon. Minister had stated that there is a very good proposal for a joint venture. As far as I understood, the initiative came from the hotel magnate people. In any case, since the hon. Minister is saying that he will explain it, I will be very happy to know from the hon. Minister as to what exactly is transpiring in relation to Kannur Airport. When is it

going to be started or what is the proposal regarding its completion? I would be happy to know about that.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Before calling another Member, I would like to say that, if the House agrees, I can extend the time of the House till this Half-an-Hour discussion is over.

SHRI VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH (BHILWARA): Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So, the time of the House is extended till the completion of the Half-an-Hour discussion.

18.00 hrs.

Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan to speak now.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Sir, please allow Shri Abdullakutty to speak on my behalf.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, your name has come in the ballot.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : I surrender it. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Only those names that are there in the ballot, they are entitled to speak.

SHRI ABDULLAKUTTY (CANNANORE): Sir, my name is also there.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan, if you are not speaking, then I will allow Shri Shailendra Kumar to speak now.

श्री शैलेन्द्र कुमार (चायल) : सभापति महोदय, नागर विमानपत्तनों के प्रस्ताव के आधे घंटे की चर्चा में आपने मुझे बोलने का मौका दिया, मैं इसके लिए आपको धन्यवाद करता हूँ। मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी का ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहूंगा कि इलाहाबाद में एयरफोर्स का बमरोली एयरपोर्ट है। वहां सिविल एवीएशन ट्रेनिंग सेंटर भी है। हम बराबर जहाजों का आवागमन देखते रहते हैं लेकिन कभी ऐसी विशेष जहाज की सुविधा वहां के स्थानीय लोगों को नहीं मिल पाती जबकि इलाहाबाद अपने आप में बहुत ही ऐतिहासिक शहर है। वहां हाई कोर्ट है, तमाम पर्यटन की सुविधाएं भी हैं। वहां संगम तीर्थ स्थल है जहां तमाम तीर्थ यात्रियों का आवागमन रहता है, खासकर कभी-कभी जब वहां से प्राइवेट फ्लाइट शुरू होती है, एयरफोर्स का एयरपोर्ट होने के नाते वहां तमाम यात्रियों को बड़ी असुविधा होती है, क्योंकि मिलिट्री एयरफोर्स के अपने अलग रूल्स एंड रेगुलेशन्स होते हैं। वहां सिविल एवीएशन का जो काम रहता है, वह बहुत कठिनाई का होता है, खासकर यात्रियों को बड़ी असुविधा होती है। मैं मंत्री जी से निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि वहां हाफा-माऊ में जब बहुत पहले लड़ाई हुई थी, वहां एक एयरपोर्ट स्थापित है, उसका नवीनीकरण नहीं हुआ है। इस प्रकार बमरोली एयरपोर्ट के बगल में भी थोड़ा सा हिस्सा बाकी है। मैं चाहूंगा कि वहां एक नया एयरपोर्ट बने जिससे सिविलियन यात्री, प्राइवेट फ्लाइट के यात्री और फॉरेनर्स आदि का आवागमन वहां से हो सके। उनको विशेष सुविधा हो सके। वह पर्यटन स्थल इसलिए है क्योंकि वहां संगम है, तमाम ऐतिहासिक चीजें जैसे अकबर का किला है, कौशाम्बी ऐतिहासिक स्थल है। वहां इंडोनेशिया, चीन और जापान से भी बुद्धिस्ट और जैन लोग आते हैं। इसलिए यात्रियों के टूटिकोण से, फॉरेन सैलानियों के टूटिकोण से वह एयरपोर्ट बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है। वहां एक नया सिविलियन एयरपोर्ट बनाकर इस तरह की सुविधा दें जिससे इंडियन एयरलाइंस या एयर इंडिया को विशेष सुविधा मिल सके, मुनाफा हो सके। उधर संगम में एक महीने का माघ मेला लगता है जिसमें तमाम फॉरेन यात्रियों का आवागमन रहता है। मैं चाहूंगा कि वहां प्राइवेट एयरपोर्ट स्थापित करके इंडियन एयरलाइंस या एयर इंडिया के विमान चालू किये जायें ताकि एयर इंडिया या इंडियन एयरलाइंस जो घाटे में है, उसे मुनाफा हो सके।

DR. CHINTA MOHAN (TIRUPATI): Sir, Tirupati is a very important pilgrim centre. People from all over the world come to Tirupati. While coming to Tirupati, they take airports of Chennai, Hyderabad and Bangalore. I would request the hon. Minister to introduce one direct flight from Delhi to Tirupati. It will go a long way to help the pilgrims who are going there.

I would also request the hon. Minister that Tirupati airport may be declared as an international airport. Pilgrims from all over the world are coming to Tirupati and from the neighbouring places, people are going to Kuwait and other places. So, I would request the Tirupati Airport may be declared as an international airport.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan will speak. If you want to speak, you speak. He cannot speak.

SHRI ABDULLAKUTTY : Sir, I have already given notice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am sorry. Your name has not come on the priority list. So, you can speak later on, but not now. You can ask only questions.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : When we are talking on the issue of new airports, I would like to urge upon the hon. Minister to construct an airport at Kannur in north Kerala. It is a long-standing demand of the people of that locality. My friend, Shri Abdullakutty, want to speak about this. I am speaking for him. For the purpose of constructing an airport there, Kerala Government has already acquired 400 acres of land and they are prepared to acquire more, upto 1,000 acres of land, if required. It is a long-standing demand of the people of north Kerala, especially Kasargod and Kannur districts. There, we have the largest number of persons employed in the Middle East and the largest number of passport holders. So, it will be a boon to them if you sanction a new airport.

At Nedumbassery, there is an international airport, which was constructed by the people's co-operation and not by

the Government. The entire amount was contributed by the NRIs. So, if you sanction an airport at Kannur, the NRIs will come forward and they will form some society or something like that. People, who are now working in the Middle East, will contribute their might. We can raise substantial amount for the construction of the airport. The only thing is that the approval from the Government of India is required. If the Government is prepared to give approval, I am sure that the local people and the NRI would come forward and the long-standing desire of the people of north Kerala can be fulfilled.

I, therefore, strongly recommend and demand that the Minister should consider the question of sanctioning a new airport at Kannur in north Malabar, which is in Kerala.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, now the hon. Minister is to reply. If you agree, you can ask questions after his reply.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Moreover, hon. Minister also has another important business somewhere. So, he is also short of time.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): If the hon. Members can ask one question each in five minutes, I will reply comprehensively. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Now, Shri Alemao Churchill will speak. But it should not be taken as a precedent. Since so many Members are interested, I am allowing you to ask questions.

SHRI ALEMAO CHURCHILL (MARMUGAO): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to tell the history of Dabhol airport. I came to know in this House that at Mopa, construction of another airport is going to be taken up. I would submit that Mopa airport is at the border of Maharashtra. It is of no benefit to the Goans. I wanted to tell the whole history of Dabhol airport. This airport is a civil airport. I wanted to put all the papers with the Minister so that he could go through them. I want that this Dabhol airport should be made an international airport because there are more than 400 hotels and more than six lakh to seven lakh people are taking food therein. If this airport goes, then tourism industry will go. The tourism industry earns the highest revenue to the State Government and also the Central Government. So, I wanted that this Dabhol airport should be continued and it should be upgraded as an international airport.

SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH (JHALAWAR): Sir, I thank the Chair for allowing me to speak.

I have two questions. One is that airport in Gwalior is named after a former member of this House late Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia. I want to ask the hon. Minister whether he will consider opening up that airport as a civil airport because currently there is an Air Force base at this airport.

Rajasthan is a very promising tourism State. As a tourism State, we have 32 fair weather strips. I want to ask whether you will assist us and give us tourism potential in places like Kota, Hadoti Circuit and other parts of Rajasthan in order to promote tourism.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (SABARKANTHA): Sir, I would like to put two questions. Firstly, I have written a letter to the hon. Minister for the construction of a new airport at Palampur in the north of Gujarat. That constituency is also a part of the south Rajasthan. I will be very happy if the hon. Minister can think over it. I have got his reply, but I am not very sure as to what exactly he wants to do.

Secondly, is the Government thinking to have a small aircraft with a small airport? There is privatisation, and the city is also developing. I would request the city to be connected with a small aircraft having 20 or 30 or 40 seats. It needs a small runway either in the form of a helipad or some such kind of a thing. Is the Government thinking on those lines?

Thirdly, I would like to talk about the facilities provided at these airports. Our airports talk about cleanliness, passenger amenities, etc., but the basic attitude of the people who are working over there, as well as, on the part of the Ministry should be to introduce a drive to put these facilities at par with the standards of other small developing countries. I think, a number of countries are trying it. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to do it. I think, we have a right to ask for it as a Gujarati. Please, do something for the Gujaratis. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next, Shri Abdullakutty, but you can just ask a question.

SHRI ABDULLAKUTTY : Sir, two very distinguished hon. Members, Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan and Shri C. K. Chandrappan, spoke before me about the Kannur airport project. This is a long-standing demand of the people of North Kerala. This proposal is very viable. The Department of Civil Aviation has already made a study about the

feasibility of this project, and it is found to be economically viable.

I would like to say that the Central Government need not have any financial commitment for it. The NRI people have come forward to contribute towards the construction of an airport like the Nedumbacherry airport model. This is a very important project, and I would request the hon. Minister to give the green signal for it while replying to the debate.

There is a scope of development of tourism in Bakel and Coorg also. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to give a green signal for the construction of a new airport at Kannur. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Now, Shri Chandrakant Khaire. Kindly do not make any speech. You can only ask one question from the hon. Minister.

श्री चंद्रकांत खैरे (औरंगाबाद, महाराष्ट्र) : सभापति जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि जो हमारे अजन्ता एलौरा प्रोजेक्ट में जेबीआईसी, जापान सरकार से हमारे चिकलथाना एयरपोर्ट को 60 करोड़ रुपये की सहायता मिल रही है, और 13 करोड़ रुपये एयरपोर्ट ऑथोरिटी ने दिए हैं। इस तरह से यह 73 करोड़ रुपये का प्रोजेक्ट है। लेकिन अभी तक इसमें कुछ शुरुआत नहीं हुई है। माननीय अनंत कुमार जी और जगमोहन जी ने इसमें बहुत मेहनत की है। हम लोगों ने भी इसके लिए बहुत परसूशन किया था। इसलिए मेरा विनम्र निवेदन है कि यह कार्य जल्दी से जल्दी आरम्भ हो जाए, यह हमारी पुरानी मांग है। दूसरे, दिल्ली-जयपुर-उदयपुर-सम्भाजीनगर-औरंगाबाद और मुम्बई इंडियन एयरलाइन्स की फ्लाइट चलती थी। आप किसी भी एयरलाइन्स को डायरेक्शन दे दीजिए, वह चालू कर देंगे क्योंकि ट्यूरिज्म की दृष्टि से भी यह बहुत अच्छा रहेगा। (व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

श्री चंद्रकांत खैरे : पिछले मंत्री महोदय को पिछले समय में हमने चिकलथाना एयरपोर्ट का नाम बदलने के लिए प्रस्ताव दिया था कि इसका नाम बदलकर राजे सम्भाजी भोंसले कर दिया जाए, यह प्रस्ताव आपके मंत्रालय में पड़ा है। आप इसका क्रेडिट ले लीजिए। तीसरे, जहां एयरपोर्ट है, जिस सांसद के एरिया में एयरपोर्ट है, उसकी एडवाइजरी कमेटी होती है, वहां का सांसद उस कमेटी का अध्यक्ष होता है। इसलिए हमारा आपसे निवेदन है कि जल्दी से जल्दी उस कमेटी का फॉर्मेशन किया जाए।

SHRI VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH : Sir, I have three specific questions from the hon. Minister. Firstly, is it a fact that the hon. Minister is interested in throwing open this field to the private sector, but it is facing constraints from the UPA partners?

Secondly, is it not a fact that the Indian Airlines aircraft today are over 20 years old and in any other country internationally they have really lived their life, and you need to change them?

Thirdly, is it not a fact that tourism is directly related to the air links and Rajasthan is having such a big potential that we can really exploit it given a chance? Are you ready to open this sector to the small private entrepreneurs so that we can have better air linkage?

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): I would like to ask the hon. Minister only two questions. Coimbatore city is known as the Manchester of South India. It is a textile city. For the past one year, there has been no landing of flights in the evening time at Coimbatore. When is the work going to be completed?

Secondly, Chennai is one of the famous cities in South India. There is a demand for extension of the area. When is the work going to be completed?

श्री हरिभाऊ राठौड़ (यवतमाल) : सभापति जी, मुम्बई का जो एयरपोर्ट है यह झुग्गी-झोंपड़ियों से पूरी तरह से घिरा हुआ है। क्या इन लोगों को रिहैबिलिटेड करने का कोई प्रस्ताव है? मुम्बई में और इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट बनाने का प्रस्ताव है। जो नागपुर में कार्गो हब का काम चालू है, इसमें क्या कोई बाधा आ रही है और यह कब तक पूरा हो जाएगा?

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (CHANDIGARH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, while I congratulate and compliment the Minister for his initiatives to rejuvenate the aviation sector and modernise our airports, I would like to draw his attention to the importance of Chandigarh also which is fast emerging as an important tourism, cultural, commercial, financial and industrial centre with the areas around. But we do feel the need of a modern, good airport as also better services. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is also included in his schedule of upgradation of the airports.

SHRI MANJUNATH KUNNUR (DHARWAD SOUTH): Hon. Chairman, Sir, through you I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the Hubli airport. Hubli airport is situated in Karnataka State. Deccan Airlines is already coming there. But there is a longstanding demand for Indian Airlines flights to go there. I would request the modernisation and also expansion of runway and other basic infrastructure to be improved there. Regarding the Bangalore International Airport, what action have you taken for development of the international airport?

SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI (MADRAS NORTH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he will consider allowing a call taxi and auto-rickshaw bay at Chennai airport. Because of the monopoly of taxis there, passengers are coerced and taxed very much. I would request the Minister to consider this.

MD. SALIM (CALCUTTA – NORTH EAST): From the questions itself it has been proved that there is a necessity for air linkage to the small towns. Private or public, airlines are vying for metro cities. But there is a necessity to run air services to small towns also. An airport does not mean big Taj Mahal like buildings we have that is the terminals. Some sort of technical facilities can be provided there so that small aircraft or small airlines can operate there and bring people to the metros. It can be private or public, I do not mind that. The question is, whether you are going to facilitate that. Already we have existing airports and airfields under the International Airports Authority of India like Malda, Balurghat, and Coochbehar. Throughout the country there are about 100 airfields like that. You have staff also in some places. But will you make them operational?

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SHRI P. MOHAN (MADURAI): Sir, is there any proposal to announce Madurai as an international airport? Is there any proposal to introduce new flight service from Madurai to Singapore and from Madurai to Colombo?

SHRI DHANUSKODI R. ATHITHAN (TIRUNELVELI): Sir, Tuticorin, in my constituency, is in the southern part of India. Ten years back, an airport was set up in Tuticorin but after two years, the same was closed. I wanted to ask the hon. Minister, through, you, Sir, whether Tuticorin airport would be revived? It is a very important aspect of Tuticorin because Tuticorin has a Harbour. Very soon, the *Sethu Samudram* Canal Scheme is going to be implemented. Reviving the Tuticorin airport is a very urgent matter. I would like to have a clarification from the Minister.

श्री जीवाभाई अम्बालाल पटेल (मेहसाना) : माननीय स्थापति महोदय, मैं माननीय नागर विमानन मंत्री जी से कहना चाहता हूँ कि मेरे निर्वाचन क्षेत्र मेहसाना में 22 साल से लैंड एक्वायर की है लेकिन वहाँ न आज तक हवाई पट्टी बनी है, न उसका कोई उपयोग हुआ है और न ही एरोड्रोम बना है। मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या वहाँ एक एरोड्रोम और हवाई पट्टी बनाने वाले हैं या नहीं?

SHRI P. RAJENDRAN (QUILON): Thank you, Sir, for giving me an opportunity. I would like to know the status of the development of Trivandrum Airport. Government has spent money on this airport. Everything has been done by the State Government. What steps have been taken by the Ministry to expand and develop the Trivandrum airport?

SHRI SANTASRI CHATTERJEE (SERAMPORE): Sir, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose airport in Kolkata needs no further mention. I think, the Minister is aware of it. I want to know from the Minister as to whether the Indian Airlines is rapidly losing its market. What steps the Minister is contemplating to see that Indian Airlines do not lose the market?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, I am very thankful to all the Members for having shown such a keen interest in the civil aviation sector of our country.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Will the Minister, in his reply, give details regarding the development of Trivandrum International Airport?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: It is heartening that all our Members are now very much interested in air connectivity to their areas, States and constituencies. This is heartening feature. I have also been a Member of this House since 1991. Of course as much as we demand more trains and more connectivity, now air connectivity is increasingly becoming a great source of enthusiasm for appealing as well as giving connectivity, giving development because I firmly believe that tourism, commerce, trade and overall development including employment can be generated with higher number of people travelling. Tourism, of course, is a great drive of all this.

Sir, there are various issues which have been put by the Members. I will just first broadly put in perspective. The Airports Authority of India operates roughly 80 airports in the country and another 40 to 45 airports are called non-operational airports, something which Shri Md. Salim had referred about. With this in mind, the major airports are in major metro cities plus a few major cities in India. Out of 80 operational airports, only about 11 airports make profit and the rest of the airports are basically run on the cross-subsidy from the profit-making airports. Of course, air connectivity in India has not reached the level which should have been there all these years. That much, we must frankly admit. If you compare air connection in India with the rest of the world, I think, a great lot needs to be done. Especially, we have major cities and cities with a population of 20 or 30 lakhs, yet there is no air connectivity today. This is an area of great concern. I think, we all share the sentiments and the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airports Authority of India are seized about these concerns.

Coming to various airports – I do not know how to start because of the number of airports which have been put forth – since the discussion was initiated by Shri Thummar about the Surat Airport, I would like to say that for Surat, an amount of Rs.35 crore has already been sanctioned. The work is already in progress. Runway work is on, the operation site, the terminal building, the control tower, the navigational aids, etc., all these works are almost in progress to the tune of Rs.35 crore. Within the constraints of the airport, as it stands today, Air Deccan has already

started its operations to Surat. I am sure, once the work is completed tentatively by August 2005, there will be increasingly more connectivity to Surat. I am sure, Surat is a very important city in Gujarat and in our overall national context, in terms of trade and commerce, Surat will definitely deserve the due attention it requires.

Another airport which has been very strongly mentioned is about Cannanore. About Cannanore, I can tell you that it is an airport which is in the North Kerala. It is a very important airport which should come up. I have some details about it. Hon. Members mentioned that it should be made on the lines of Cochin Airport, the Nedumbacheri Airport. As desired by the State Government, the site near Mookhapatanam which is 20 kilometres from Cannanore was inspected and considered suitable for reasonably big size of aircraft. The Government of India has given in principle its approval for preparation of a detailed project report to the State Government and also to identify joint venture partner for getting the formal approval for setting up the airport. So, basically, the point you are making is that it should be made on the lines of Nedumbacheri Airport. It can be done and we are moving in this direction. We will move to Cabinet in due course of time and once all the procedures are completed, I can assure you that the Government of India would be very keen to have an airport in Cannanore on the lines of Nedumbacheri Airport. I think, this answers the question which you have raised.

Various Members have raised various questions. I can tell you that Shri Dushyant Singh and Shri V.P. Singh have brought in the issue of Rajasthan and Gwalior. Rajasthan is one of the most important States in terms of tourism. There is no denying this fact and it should get due attention it deserves. I can tell you that Jaipur and Udaipur both will be getting the top quality airports comparable to the best in India. With this, I do not want to go too much on each airport. Gwalior has an air field for Air Force but it has a civilian enclave. Unfortunately, it does not have flights operational at the moment. But in a very short course of time from now, there are going to be flights operational in Gwalior. In fact, one of the principal thrusts of our Ministry is now to see that the smaller airports which are not yet connected, should have connectivity in the near future.

In terms of Hubli, it is also in the same kind of situation. Aurangabad deserves a new terminal because it has a very important business and tourism centre and also it is in my State. I am also equally concerned with this as much as you are concerned. You should be happy that this year, Haj operations have already started from Aurangabad. You may not be very happy with that. We have taken that. Aurangabad is one of the airports in our priority list. There is no question about it.

Now, I will come to Tirupati. I am also a devotee of Lord Balaji. ...(*Interruptions*)

Sir, in terms of Tirupati, I am also a devotee of Lord Balaji. Therefore, I need not be told the importance of going to Tirupati. In terms of the number of people who go there, it definitely deserves better connectivity. For the information of the hon. Members -- they wanted a Delhi-Tirupati flight --there is already a Delhi-Hyderabad-Tirupati flight, which connects them to Hyderabad and takes them to Tirupati. It is just one and half hour stop. It is not badly connected. But it needs better connectivity. I can assure the hon. Members that we would have better connectivity.

In terms of Goa, my friend Slemao Churchill had said that Mopa site is not very suitable. I can only tell him that as of now, Mopa has been selected, but no final decision has been taken. But Dabolim Airport is an international airport. So, there is no issue of Goa not being an international airport. It is an international airport. But it is not up to the standards which we expect because it has a naval airfield, and we only have a civilian enclave in that. There is a limitation to what kind of investment we could have made. Always, it has been discussed that Goa should have a new airfield. Therefore, we have been caught in the situation whether we should invest in the old field or in the upcoming new field. So, that is an issue...(*Interruptions*) Yes, we are also from the same fraternity.

Sir, I think, in the last week, I had mentioned in the House that Ahmedabad is one of the most important cities of our country. It is in the process of getting a world class airport. In fact, it is one of the best airports that we are now planning. There is a new lot of airports. In Srinagar, the work has started. The second airport probably in the queue is Ahmedabad airport. In fact, construction of a new departure domestic block is in progress with facilities, with aero-bridges, escalators, etc. It is expected to be completed by June 2005. A new arrival domestic terminal block is also planned. A new international terminal which they are talking of, has been planned and designed by an international architectural company, which had designed Singapore's Changi Airport. They are talking about airports of that quality. I can assure them that the Ahmedabad Airport will be like that. They are all most welcome to come to us, we will show them also as to what kind of design we are preparing for Ahmedabad and for many other airports in the country. It is receiving the due attention.

Sir, Rajkot is getting an extension of the runway to operate a bigger airport than what they are doing presently.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : What about development at Trivandrum?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: I am coming to cover Trivandrum also....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : No interruptions, please.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Rajkot is being expanded.

Allahabad is already having an airport. Of course, the hon. Member is not very happy because it is an airforce field. But, to operate out of an airforce, field also is no problem. There is a civilian enclave. We want to upgrade the terminal also. Of course, there are some constraints. But I think, there is already one private airline, Air Sahara, which is operating. We will try to put Indian Airlines, and other airlines and would also review whether they can also operate flights to that area.

There are so many airfields. Amreli basically is the airfield which would come under the State Government's purview. It is impossible for the Ministry of Civil Aviation to take a decision for every airport in the country. After all, there is a limitation. But within the constraints, the Airport Authority is willing to give its support and help to the State Governments to set up more fields and with the objectivity to give more flights, to enable smaller aircraft to be able to go to these places. I think, the State Governments also will have to look at their responsibility more positively.

Sir, I am happy to state that at least in Maharashtra, I know, our State Government has taken an initiative in this regard. Kolhapur, which is a regular airfield right now, is owned by the State Government. There are other fields also in other States where the State Governments have taken the initiative. I think, we should work with this objectivity, otherwise if you look at the countries, as big as India, I do not think that every town, village can be connected only with the assistance of the Central Government. The State Governments will also have to be very proactive .

Trivandrum Airport is definitely, like I mentioned about Ahmedabad, our priority. In 2005, our focus is also on Trivandrum.

I can assure you that in 2005, work on the new international terminal at Trivandrum will start. Chandigarh is also a very important city. It will get due attention which it deserves. Madurai is also a very important city. I can tell you that out of the 30 airports which we have planned, at least, in a year or two starting 2005, many important cities are going to be taken up. As regards Tuticorin, it does not have a field.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN : It should be made an international airport. Tourists come here from all over the world.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Just to make any airport an international airport is not a big thing. If we just take it to the Cabinet and make it an international airport, that would not solve your purpose. The real purpose is to get the airport of international standard. I think that is more important than only declaring an airport as international airport with no flights. It has no meaning.

There are many proposals. We are taking airport infrastructure very seriously. My request to all the hon. Members is that to build up civil aviation in India, the real bottleneck is not of acquiring aircraft. More aircraft will come as days go by. But the real challenge for us in our Ministry and the Airport Authority especially is to build up world class infrastructure.

Today all of you are aware when you land in Delhi Airport, it takes half-an-hour to 45 minutes to take off or to land. Today, Delhi and Mumbai Airports have already reached the saturation point. Many other airports in the country do not have the facilities which are of world standards. We do not have Instrument Landing System in most of the airports. We do not have CAT-I and CAT-II systems. It is a big exercise. We have to work with the entire process. We have to take Indian airports infrastructure to a new generation. If we do that, then only we will be able to connect India the way all of you desire and the way the country's progress and the development is required.

With this in mind, I can assure you that the airports infrastructure in India is receiving the highest attention. In the years to come, we are coming up with more liberal policies in aviation so that there would be more private sector participation both in terms of airport development as also infrastructure development. One hon. Member has mentioned Nedumbacherry which is in private sector. If you encourage such projects, there will be better airports in the country with better facilities for the passengers...(Interruptions)

We are not doing anything at the cost of Indian Airlines. Indian Airlines and Air India also have their place of pride in India. I think it has to be both public and private sector participation. We have seen private sector participation in aviation in domestic sector and the whole sector has grown. It is not at the cost of Indian Airlines or Air India. We will see that smaller aircraft also are inducted not only in the fleet of national carriers but also in the fleet of other carriers so that you have better connectivity. Today, Mehsana or other airports are also in the same framework that the State Government should give us additional support. I assure you that the sentiments of the Members are very much on our mind and we will respect their wishes and try to do whatever is possible...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing will go on record.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: As regards Advisory Committees, presently they are not constituted. But I will definitely keep your concerns in mind and we will respect the sentiments of the Members.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow, the 22nd December, 2004 at 11.00 a.m.

*Not Recorded.

18.40 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock
on Wednesday, December 22, 2004/Pausa 1, 1926 (Saka).
