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Title: Made a statement regarding crash of an Indian Air Force Aircraft near Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi on 7 March, 1999.

14.55 hrs.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): Sir, on 7 March, 1999, an AN-32 aircraft of the Indian Air Force crashed while approaching to land at the Indira Gandhi International Airport at New Delhi. The aircraft was on a routine flight having initially taken off from Agra, made a staging halt at Gwalior and then was on its way to Delhi. The aircraft took off for Delhi at 0730 hours. The sortie was uneventful till the aircraft was on final approach for landing on runway 10 at Delhi. The aircraft has crashed about 2 nautical miles short of the runway. There were no survivors.

The reported Runway Visual Range was 1100 metres. This was within the pilot's capability. From the immediately available evidence, the pilot was making an ILS (Instrument Landing System) approach for landing on Runway 10. The aircraft has crashed short of the runway at a point where normally it should have been about 600 ft above ground. An IAF Court of Inquiry, constituting specialists on the aircraft, has been instituted to investigate the cause of the accident. The aircraft Flight Data Recorder and the Cockpit Voice Recorder have been retrieved from the accident site in an undamaged condition. These are expected to provide vital evidence for establishing the cause of the accident.

As per last information, a total of 22 bodies have been recovered from the crash site. Eighteen Service personnel comprising of four air crew, and 14 passengers were on board the ill-fated aircraft, three persons were civilians who were at the place of crash and one person is yet to be fully identified. The next of kin of the service personnel killed have been informed.

The AN-32 is a twin-engined medium transport aircraft of the IAF. It has been in service in the IAF for the last 15 years and has a good safety record. It is a reliable and technically robust aircraft which has flown extensively in the IAF.

The air crew were fully qualified to undertake the mission.

THE MINISTER OF POWER, MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): Sir, with your permission, I want to make a submission.

Sir, the Hungarian Delegation which is here is supposed to meet me at 4 o'clock. May I therefore request that Item Nos. 9 and 10 be taken up now and then Matters under Rule 377 be done? It is because they are our guests and I have to meet them.

श्री राजो सिंह : सभापति जी, संसद सदस्य वेतन, भत्ता और पेंशन (संशोधन) विधेयक, १९९९ जरूर ले लीजिए।

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right. The House shall now take up Item Nos. 9 and 10 together.