

*[Translation]***Facilities to Rail Passengers**

3280. DR. PRABHA THAKUR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways have chalked out any plan to provide extra facilities to the pilgrims coming from various parts of the country to visit Ajmer City of Rajasthan this year to pay their obeisances on the occasion of 786th Special Urs of 'Garib Nawaj Khawaja Muinuddin Chisti; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) and (b) Every year a meeting of Members of Urs Committee and Nodal Officers of Railway Department is held to finalise the arrangements to be made during Urs Mela. This year also arrangements will be made to cater to pilgrims in coordination with Urs Committee.

Privatisation of Air India

3281. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether any proposal for converting of Air India into a Public Limited Company is under consideration of the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) Consequent upon the repeal of the Air Corporations Act, 1953, Air India has been converted into a Public Limited Company with effect from 1.3.94. It is fully owned by the Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

*[English]***Aircrafts and Employees Ratio in Indian Airlines**

3282. DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) the aircraft and employees ratio in the Indian Airlines vis-a-vis four leading Airlines of the world; and

(b) the steps being taken to run the Indian Airlines on the lines of the four leading Airlines of the World ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) The aircraft employee ratio of Indian Airlines vis - a - vis some of the leading airlines of the world is as under :-

	Name of the Airline	Employee Aircraft Ratio
1.	British Airways	215
2.	Air France	277
3.	K.L.M.	240
4.	Thai Airways	303
5.	Indian Airlines	400

Most of the foreign airlines outsource (contract out) several activities such as engineering and maintenance facilities, passenger/cargo/ground handling and the like.

(b) Indian Airlines has taken/proposes to take the following measures to improve its services as well as financial position : (i) Restructuring of routes; (ii) Creation of profit centres; (iii) Increase in international operations; (iv) Change in training pattern of pilots; (v) Creation of Alliance Air; (vi) Improvement in customer services (vii) Improvement in corporate image by disseminating information about Company's strengths; (viii) Aggressive marketing strategies to improve market share; (ix) strict control on recruitment and on capital expenditure; (x) Turnaround strategies suggested by the Kelkar Committee.

Damage to Defence Establishment due to Cyclone in Jamnagar

3283. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the cyclone that hit Jamnagar and Kandla in June 1998, has severely damaged Air Force, Navy and Army bases in the areas; and

(b) if so, the extent of loss caused thereby ?

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

(b) The estimated amount of loss pertaining to Army, Navy and Air Force is Rs. 13.21 crores.

Construction of Port at Dhamra River in Orissa

3284. SHRI KHARBELA SWAIN : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether he is aware that a major port is proposed to be constructed at the mouth of the Dhamra river in Orissa near the newly constructed missile testing base at Wheelsi Island;

(b) whether the Ministry of Defence have enquired about its impacts on the sensitive missile testing base; and