

which can cater to more than two and a quarter thousand of passenger with all basic and modern facilities.

SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY: Sir, by introducing air taxis in Andhra Pradesh, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has completely ruined the air traffic there. For example, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams have given Rs. 7 crore for improvement of the airport and air terminal.

12.00 hrs.

After assuming offices, the hon. Speaker has visited Tirupati. I do not know what he has promised to Lord Venkateshwara. Those who neglected Tirupati have not survived so far. Alliance Airlines are flying only two days a week. Will the hon. Minister look into the matter to improve traffic, irrespective of the losses? Lord Venkateshwara is there to take care of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. I want a specific answer from the hon. Minister?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister may send a written reply.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Production Cost of Steel

*223. **SHRI VIJAY SINGH SOY:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Alloy Steel Plants of Steel Authority of India are fighting a survival battle owing to high production-cost;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK) (a) and (b): Performance of Alloy/Special Steel Plants of SAIL is affected mainly due to lower sales realisation emerging out of competition, slow-down in demand and continuous increase in input prices.

(c) SAIL is taking steps on a continuous basis, to improve the performance of these plants, which include reduction in cost by improving the techno-economic parameters, demands oriented production, improving quality of products and increasing sales through aggressive and customer oriented marketing etc.

Increase in Domestic Air Fare

*226. **SHRI HARIN PATHAK:** Will the MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering to increase domestic air fare;

(b) if so, the main reasons therefor and the criteria being followed in this regard;

(c) the accumulated loss of the Indian Airlines till date; and

(d) the steps that are being taken by the Government to make up the losses?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b): Domestic air fares are not being regulated by the Government.

(c) the accumulated loss of Indian Airlines since the year 1989-90 to 1996-97 is Rs. 1045.60 crores.

(d) Indian airlines has taken/proposes to take the following steps to make up the losses:—

(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) Turn-around strategies suggested by the Kelkar Committee.

[Translation]

Inadequate Facilities Provided by Air India

*227. **SHRI SATNAM SINGH KAINTH:** Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that air India has been running at loss continuously during the last three years;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Air India does not provide the facilities which are provided in International flights by other Airlines;

(d) whether it has resulted in under-utilisations of the capacity;

(e) if so, the facts thereof; and