

(a) whether the Railways have decided to delegate powers to Zonal General Managers to charge flexible rates for carrying freight;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways are considering to reduce classification of various commodities and to convenient rate norms; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Under Section-30 and 31 of the Railways Act, 1989, the Central Government have been delegated powers to fix rates for freight traffic. Under Section 32 of this Act, the Railway Administrations (Zonal Railways) have been given powers to quote station to station rate and lump sum rate. The Ministry of Railways have prescribed norms to be followed by the General Managers of the Zonal Railways while quoting station to station rate, lump sum rate etc. so as to ensure uniformity, and cohesion in exercise of these powers. Powers being exercised by the General Managers are given below:—

- (i) Quotation of reduced Station to Station rates on commercial considerations subject to fulfilment of the stipulated conditions except for certain specified commodities.
- (ii) Grant of freight concession of upto 10% on non-programmed imported coal traffic originating on Southern and Western Railways subject to fulfilment of the stipulated conditions.
- (iii) Grant of 10% discount on incremental Traffic under the Volume Discount Scheme for the second half of the year 1998-99 in respect of Cement, Iron & Steel, Iron Ore, Sponge Iron and Clinker subject to fulfilment of the stipulated conditions.

(c) No. Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Cancellation of Flights by Indian Airlines and Air India

*137. DR. SAROJA V.: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of incidents in which Indian Airlines and Air India have cancelled its scheduled flights during July, 1998 to 15th February, 1999;

(b) the total loss suffered on this account, Airline-wise and sector-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to avoid such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) The total number of flights cancelled by Air India and Indian Airlines during the period July, 1998 to 15.2.99 and the estimated loss suffered are as under:—

	No. of flights cancelled	Estimated Loss (Rs. in lakhs)
Indian Airlines	1404	2089.40
Air India	79	237.00

(c) Technical delays and cancellations are investigated, analysed and appropriate remedial action taken. Special attention is paid to identify and rectify repetitive snags. Effective coordination is ensured amongst various departments so that delays do not result in cancellations. There is continuous follow-up with vendors and aircraft manufacturers for upgradation of technical know-how and for improvement in the reliability of components.

Action Plan for Growing Air Traffic

*138. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Airports Authority of India has chalked out an Action Plan for total overhaul of the international airport network in the country to cater to the needs of the growing traffic;

(b) if so, the main points of expansion are likely to be taken up;

(c) whether the Airports Authority of India has taken a decision to invest about Rs. 20,000/- crores for this purpose; and

(d) if so, the source from where the funds are proposed to be raised?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b)