

'work force bulge' can be the basis for more investment, greater labour productivity and rapid work development. It is also stated that in many developing countries the next 10 years will be the critical period as fertility falls in South Asia, the youngest age groups will become smaller. Population of 65 years or older will increase, but at a slower rate. Therefore, the challenge is to generate productive employment for today's big groups of 15-24 year olds. The Government has noted the contents of the Report and the suggestions would be kept in mind while formulating major employment and anti-poverty programmes as well as programmes for skill development, upgradation, retraining and re-deployment of the older age group.

(c) and (d) The Report of the United Nations Population Fund is not re-examined by the national Government.

Aircraft

1456. SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the average age of aircraft of Air India and total strength of operative fleet as on January 1, 1999;

(b) the average age of other international competitor airlines along with safety standards; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to mobilise adequate funds for Air India to acquire new aircraft in its fleet and enable it to compete with other airlines successfully?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Air India has a fleet of 26 aircraft and the average age of the fleet as on 30th January, 1999 is as under:—

Type of aircraft	No. of Aircraft	Average Age
B 747-200	7	22 years
B 747-300	2	10.2 years
B 747-400	6	4.2 years
A300B4	3	16.4 years
A310-300	8	11.6 years

(b) The operations and maintenance of aircraft are regulated by respective regulatory authorities with regard to safety standards. All the airlines are required to adhere to ICAO standards which are translated into rules and requirements by the respective regulatory authorities. The international airlines are also required to follow manufacturers' requirements stipulated by manufacturers' documents such as Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) with regard to Operations and Maintenance Manual and other documents necessary for maintenance of aircraft.

(c) The case of Air India has been examined by the Disinvestment Commission which recommended restructuring/disinvestment of Air India. It has recommended additional equity of Rs. 1000 crores as part of financial restructuring. It has also recommended induction of a strategic partner in Air India on the basis of global competitive bids. The recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission are under consideration of the Government.

Acquisition of Air Capable Heavy Cruiser for Navy from Russia

1457. SHRI JAYARAMA I.M. SHETTY:

SHRI U.V. KRISHNAMRAJU:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Russia have recently entered into a MoU on the acquisition of the air capable heavy cruiser for the Indian Navy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the tests of the air capable heavy cruiser have been undertaken and if so, the outcome thereof; and

(d) the steps taken to bring transparency in the defence deals?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) An offer was received from Russia for the sale of aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov in 1994. The Ship was evaluated by professional teams from the Indian Navy twice, once in August 1995 and the second time in January 1998. Later when a delegation led by the former CNS visited Russia in July 1998, a revised commercial offer was made by the Russian side. Naval Headquarters have been regularly pursuing the acquisition of aircraft carrier Gorshkov, primarily for replacement of INS Vikrant, pending the construction of an indigenous air defence ship, proposal for which has been approved by the Ministry of Defence and Ministry

of Finance and is now being processed for further appropriate clearances. Pursuant to these, a Memorandum was signed in December 1998 between India and Russia for the acquisition of the aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov. As per the Memorandum, India has accepted in principle the offer of the Russian Federation to gift Admiral Gorshkov. Necessary repairs and modifications will however, be carried out at a cost to be borne by India. This is subject to a positive decision to be taken by the Government of India and the Indian Navy after taking into consideration all the aspects including the cost of repairs and modifications required to be undertaken.

(d) Defence procurements are carried out according to well defined procedures to ensure timely acquisitions and purchases from technically acceptable and reliable sources, which are recommended by a Price Negotiation Committee with due consideration to the tender evaluation parameters. These procedures are reviewed and revised from time to time to bring in efficiency, vigilance and transparency in defence procurements.

[Translation]

Development of Civil Aviation in Gujarat

1458. SHRI JAYSINHJI CHAUHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the Civil Aviation development projects approved for Gujarat to be undertaken during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) the projects where the work has already begun and where the work is in progress as per the schedule; and

(c) if not, the steps being taken/proposed to be taken to complete the projects in time?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (c) The work is in progress on the following projects undertaken during Ninth Five Year Plan in Gujarat:—

- Extension/strengthening of runway from 9000' to 11500 ft. and associated works at Ahmedabad airport at a cost of Rs. 48.50 crores. These works are likely to be completed by December, 2000.
- Extension of Domestic Terminal building at Ahmedabad airport at a cost of Rs. 60 lakhs. This work is expected to be completed by March, 1999.
- Airport Speech Recorder is likely to be installed at Bhavnagar, Rajkot and Porbandar airports by June, 1999.
- Ultra High Frequency link is also likely to be installed by June, 1999 at Ahmedabad airport.
- Resurfacing of runway at Rajkot airport is to be completed by October, 1999.

Certain Schemes are at planning/award stage. These include airconditioning of domestic terminal building, Cargo Complex and four lane approach road to airport at Ahmedabad airport; construction of new technical block cum control tower and Fire Station at Vadodra airport and a new Fire station at Bhavnagar airport; construction of new civil air terminal complex at Bhuj airport and a new terminal building complex at Porbandar airport.

[English]

Casualties in Siachin

1459. SHRI ANANT KUMAR HEGDE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of casualties in the Siachin Glacier recorded on both Indian and Pakistani sides during each of the last three years; and

(b) the details of expenditure incurred on Siachin Glacier by the Defence forces during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) During the last three years the casualties suffered by Pakistan and India are as follows:—