

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, December 10, 1998/Agrahayana 19,
1920 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

REFERENCE TO FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : On this day, fifty years ago, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. India, as a Member State of the United Nations made significant contributions to the establishment of the International Bill on human rights. This Bill consists of the Declaration and the two International Covenants, one on economic, social and cultural rights and the other on civil and political rights and their optional protocols.

True to our role in the United Nations and our tradition of respecting the rights of the individual since Vedic and Epic periods, we have provided for protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in our Constitution. Further we have diligently tried to bring our practices in conformity with our commitments in this regard with the International community and in the Constitution. In the process we have enacted appropriate laws, created institutional mechanisms and taken affirmative actions.

Considering that we have a pluralistic society of diverse religions, communities and vast masses of vulnerable people living below poverty line, we shall continue, with eternal vigilance, our efforts at respecting and actually protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. In particular, we shall give special attention to protecting these rights and freedoms of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Communities, minorities, women, children and persons with disabilities through democratic, constitutional, legal developmental and educational processes, involving the legislative, executive and judicial arms of governance at the National and State levels as well as the civil society.

11.03 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Air Crashes

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*161. DR. SUSHIL INDORA :
DR. CHINTA MOHAN :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn towards the news-item appearing in 'Economic Times' dated August 3, 1998 under caption "Human-error behind 62% of air crashes : D.G.C.A.";

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the percentage of accidents occurred due to human-errors, mechanical disorder and other reasons separately; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check recurrence of such crashes in future?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) About 62% of the accidents to civil registered aircraft in India during the period from 1985 to 1998 (till date) have been attributed to human errors. Human errors related accidents are mainly due to skill errors, inadvertent errors and deliberate errors of the crew.

(c) In addition to human errors, other factors resulting in accidents are 19% due to aircraft and maintenance factors, 7% due to weather conditions and 12% due to miscellaneous factors.

(d) Steps are continuously taken to enhance the level of air safety such as implementation of recommendations emanating from investigation of aircraft accidents and hazardous incidents, monitoring of Flight Data Recorders, introducing additional safety guidelines & regulations, dissemination of safety information through safety seminars & workshops, surveillance by Flight Inspectors, carrying out periodic inspection of aerodromes, Safety Audit of Operators, conducting of Cockpit Resource

Management (CRM) course for the flight crew, making mandatory installation of Airborne Collision Avoidance System (ACAS) and Ground Proximity Warning System in the aircraft.

[English]

DR. SUSHIL INDORA : Sir, has the attention of the Government been drawn towards the news-item appearing in *The Economic Times* dated August 3, 1998 under caption "Human-error behind 62 per cent of air crashes : D.G.C.A."? If so, the details thereof. I also want to know the percentage of accidents occurred due to human-errors, mechanical disorder and other reasons separately and the steps taken by the Government to check recurrence of such crashes in future.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, the air accidents happen to the extent of 62 per cent because of the human error. That statement is a factual statement. In that, skill-errors are 46 per cent, inadvertent errors are 30 per cent and deliberate errors are about 24 per cent of these accidents. We have taken various steps to check them.

SHRI AJIT JOGI : What is deliberate error?

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : That can be asked as another supplementary for which I will be answering because now I am answering to his supplementary.

SHRI AJIT JOGI : Please explain what do you mean by that?

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Skill errors are those errors that occur basically because of lack of operating skill. Sometimes the skill level will not be up to the mark. Actually, one example of that can be given of A-320 accident which happened nine years back. That was because of the skill error.

Inadvertent errors are because of various things like mismatch in the pastime relations, improper communications etc., like it happened in Charki-Dadri.

And the third category is of deliberate errors. Deliberate errors are caused when the pilot commits a mistake in decision-making at the time of inclement weather or he wants to take a misadventurous decision. We have been taking various measures to correct these things. One is, continuous inspection from the Director-General of Civil Aviation, review of safety measures and conducting various air safety seminars and symposia. I am happy to inform the House that over the last six years, incidents have been reduced to 36 per cent to the 1994 base.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Sir, about the 'Deliberate Errors', I would like to say that nobody does it deliberately.

It can be only a suicidal tendency where you can have things like that and not otherwise . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI K. VIJAYABHASKARA REDDY : Do you mean to say that you appoint people only to kill somebody? . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : It is like casting aspersion on the staff. Such derogatory expressions should never be used . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : I accept the suggestion of the Hon. Senior Members . . . (Interruptions)

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : He was speaking in RSS English.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : It is not a question of any other English. It is a technical term. We will change the nomenclature of that term.

[Translation]

DR. SUSHIL INDORA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has told that 62 per cent accidents take place due to human incompetency or skill error. I would like to know as to what are the reasons behind these skill errors? Whether the concerned staff lack adequate training or they are over burdened with work which are causing these skill errors resulting in accidents?

Sir, with this, I would also like to know the loss of life and property suffered so far due to these accidents? Further, I have also come to know that instruments purchased by his ministry or the concerned departments for the aircrafts and their maintenance are also of sub standards quality and are causing accidents whereas the hon'ble Minister is hiding this fact by saying that 64 per cent air accidents are taking place due to human incompetence or skill errors. Whether it is right on his part?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, at last, I want to know from the hon'ble Minister about the safety measures likely to be taken by him in near future to avoid such accidents? . . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Now, please conclude. Don't ask so much supplementaries at one time.

DR. SUSHIL INDORA : O.K. Sir, but I would like to know from the Minister about the safety measures being contemplated by him to ensure the safe air journey of passengers?

[English]

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Out of the number of accidents, 62 per cent of accidents relate to human error.

And as I have already explained, this is because of the problems in skill and other factors. The number of accidents occurring due to maintenance problem of the aircraft is 19 per cent, and seven per cent of the accidents happen due to weather conditions . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Alcoholic condition is also one of the factors.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : That comes under 62 per cent the human factor.

When there is a pre-medical check up before the pilot and crew members get into the aircraft, no such incident is ever reported.

Regarding the problems related to maintenance of aircraft, the figure of 19 per cent is very minimal. This year, only four accidents have occurred. The last accident cannot be termed as an air mishap because one photographer went into a helicopter when the rotaries were on and he got himself killed. Fortunately, compared to world figures and commensurate with the world standards, accidents are so low in India. Our insurance premium speak a lot about this point. Actually, there is a reduction of insurance premium compared to 1994 to the extent of 75 per cent. We used to pay an insurance premium of more than Rs. 36 crore in Indian Airlines. Now, we are paying an insurance premium of only 11 per cent. I think that itself speaks amply about air safety . . . (Interruptions)

DR. CHINTA MOHAN : Yesterday, the Director-General of Civil Aviation, Shri Kohla, said in Bangalore that accidents occur since they are not following some procedure. What are the procedures which they are not following?

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, the hon. Member's question pertains to human errors. There are set procedures to take off, to navigate and to land. Even if one of these procedures is not followed, accidents may occur. We cannot pinpoint it. There are so many aspects to be followed under each set of procedure. Even if one of them is not followed, there is a possibility, to that extent, of an air mishap. Therefore, we have taken very strict measures about it and we are continuously and vigorously monitoring the whole thing.

[Translation]

SHRI KALPNATH RAI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, No double plane crashes do take place because of technical faults but why don't the Government allow the entry of several reputed airlines like Tata Airlines who are committed for better service. Their entrance will increase competition and in return that will yield good result in the form of better air service. Even during the tenure of former Prime Minister Shri Devegowda, these air services were not made available . . . (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The main question is with regard to air crash.

[Translation]

SHRI KALPNATH RAI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the entry of these airlines were not allowed during the tenure of Shri Gujral ji. Now, you have become the Minister and you are also not providing the facility of these air services. Whether such air crashed do take place because of non-availability of standard air services ?

[English]

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, the main question is regarding air crashes and air safety. So, his supplementary does not pertain to the main question.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Most of the Indian Airlines aircraft fleet consists of Airbus-300 and Boeing-737. We are seeing that these aircraft are worn out and are more than 15 years old. Major airlines of the world discard the aircraft when they are 17 or 20 years old. The Indian Airlines Pilots Association has complained on this point several times. What steps the Government is going to take to renew and bring new aircraft to replace the old ones?

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : To be lie the wrong perception of some sections of this House, I am very happy to inform that our fleet is very old. The average age of Indian Airlines fleet, that is, of A-320 is seven years and six months and the total average age of the whole fleet is eleven years and nine months.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : I asked about A-300 and Boeing-737.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : I am coming to that point.

SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : What about Boeing-737?

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : A-300 aircraft is not more than 25 years old. It is 18 years old. And Boeing-737 is 17.3 years old. The point is the age of the aircraft is of no consequence. The safety of the aircraft and the viability of the aircraft depend on the maintenance of the aircraft. Therefore, it is a wrong perception that because of the age of the aircraft, the fleet will become unviable. The only point which I want to say is that fleet augmentation is an on-going process and we need not only to replace but also add new aircraft to our fleet of Boeings and others. We are vigorously looking into it.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble Minister has told in his reply that 26 per cent accidents take place due to inadvertent errors and 34 per cent

accidents take place due to deliberate errors, therefore, I would like to know from him as to what action the Government have taken in the matter of accidents took place due to deliberate errors?

[English]

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : It is a suicide mentality!

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : I do not call it a suicide mentality. I call it a misadventure mentality.

Regarding all this and especially regarding the human errors, I will be placing a statement before the House.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know that my question may not be strictly within the purview of the main question . . . (Interruptions) I am afraid that of the corrective measures he has taken, it appears that suspension of the route itself is one such measure. Suppose some air crash takes place in a particular route. They will withdraw the operation in that very route. Why I am telling is that for the last six months, after the crash of the aircraft, I personally have this experience. That is why, Sir, with your permission, I am asking him what is the reason for this. Mr. Minister, have you got the Inquiry Report about the crash that had taken place in Cochin? When are you going to resume the operation? I want to know about this. Please commit it on the floor of the House.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : I understand the feelings and concerns of my senior Member Shri P.M. Sayeed. The thing is that there was a Dornier flight between Cochin and Lakshadweep. There was a bad crash about four months back. A Commission of Inquiry was set up. It has given a report. Corrective measures have been taken. The Action Taken Report has also been accepted by the Government of India. I also understand and appreciate that we need a service to that island place. We are vigorously considering it. As soon as the Dorniers are available to us, we will consider it because they are operating in the North-East. We have to connect the inaccessible regions by the Dorniers. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI P.M. SAYEED : This is not an inaccessible region. When are you going to do it? . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : It is. I am accepting the need of it. Therefore, I vigorously consider the suggestion made by the hon. Member.

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : The hon. Minister in his answer has said that steps are being taken for introducing additional safety guidelines etc. etc. I would like to know whether it has been brought to his attention that in the Delhi Airport, the control tower which was built sometime ago is still not being commissioned and the pilots are complaining that they are having a great deal of difficulty in making the landings and take-off. If one were

to talk about human error, if the technology minimising that human error is not being put into operation, then why should one blame the pilot? So, I would like to know whether he is aware that the control tower that has been built at the Delhi Airport and instruments that have been put in place are still not operational.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : The hon. Member is speaking about modernisation of air traffic systems between Mumbai and Delhi, MAX-BD. Regarding secondary surveillance radars also, already we have got eight secondary surveillance radars in the country which are giving very good service and the ninth one will be commissioned shortly within the next three months in Nagpur, the major air traffic intersection.

Regarding Delhi, I am happy to inform the House that we will be commissioning the MAX-BD, the modernisation of air traffic system which includes SSRs and ILS by first or second week of January.

Expenditure on Publicity

*163. SHRI NRIPEN GOSWAMI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Railways have been incurring huge expenditure on publicity;
- (b) if so, the details thereof for each of the last three years and current financial year, zone-wise;
- (c) whether the Government propose to bring down this expenditure in future; and
- (d) if so, the steps taken by the government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) : (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

- (a) No, Sir.
- (b) Details are given in the enclosed Annexure.
- (c) and (d) Release of Railway advertisements are being normally restricted to only publications having DAVP rates which are much lower than the commercial rates of advertisements. Moreover, apart from the statutory tender advertisements, Railway advertisements are restricted to only occasions requiring determination of rail user related information on new projects, services, facilities and generating public awareness towards safety measures etc. in rail travel. To contain expenditure on publicity, actions have been taken to restrict release of full-page advertisements to only occasions of major events having national relevance and in such cases also restrict the number of newspapers.