

sion as to the determination of who is wilful defaulter because corruption is very much a reality in the administration still, and thereby eligible people being deprived. In reality, some State Governments are even going on with forcible realisation of debts even from these categories.

I, therefore, request the hon. Finance Minister to create necessary conditions for actual implementation of the pledge without delay by taking total central financial responsibility for fulfilling the pledge (including that of loan from cooperatives.)

vacated the Chair whether this discussion under Rule 193 is to be taken up now or later. The Speaker has already instructed me to rule that this Calling Attention, which has been converted into discussion under Rule 193, will be taken up now. So, I call upto Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav to initiate the discussion.

12.56 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Irregularities in A-320 Air Bus Deal

[*Translation*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Calling Attention has already been converted into Discussion under Rule 193.

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Wardha): You will recall there is already one Discussion under 193 on 'Prices' still going on. Normally when one 193 Discussion is going on, we do not interfere with 193 that is over. The best thing would be let that be completed because we would also like to participate and we would like to hear the suggestions of the Government also, and then we take up this. If that is all right, even if it is tomorrow I do not mind. This 193 can go to tomorrow but, after 193 Discussion on Prices is over. That is also one important matter.

[*Translation*]

SHRI YUVRAJ (Katihar): The discussion on price rise should be completed first.

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not to apply my mind on this. Earlier on the Calling Attention listed for today, there were some objections raised by some hon. Members as to why this Calling Attention had been listed at all. Therefore, there was a request made that this Calling Attention be converted into a wider discussion under Rule 193. As my name was there in the Calling Attention, I sought the hon. Speaker's ruling before he

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhanjharpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of this august House and the Government under rule 193 to a matter which is not only of urgent public importance but also of national interest.

During the regime of Rajiv Gandhi's Government many corruption cases came to light and corruption had reached its peak. Many scandals, particularly of receiving commissions, were exposed whether it was Bofors gun deal or the Submarine deal. But there was one case which has not been exposed before the public till date and that is the case of bungling in the A-320 Air Bus deal. I am drawing your attention to it because the contract with the Bofors company was for Rs. 1600 crores only whereas the contract for A-320 Airbus was for staggering figure of Rs. 2197 crores. There are three main aspects of this matter, irregular agreement, ignoring the technical aspects and ignoring the national interests. All the rules have been violated while finalising an agreement with the Airbus Industries of France. Even a formal Committee was not constituted to examine the various aspects of the Airbus and to give its advice on technical aspects. An expert committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of Air Marshal Dilbagh Singh which too had submitted its report and recommended the purchase of Boeing aircrafts. The letter of intent had also

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been issued and an advance of US \$ 9 lakh was also sent. But in spite of that Rajiv Gandhi's Government decided to purchase the aircraft from Airbus Industries without paying any heed to the reports of all the committees. This contract was finalised in a hurry and everything was done in such a haste that neither there was any technical difficulty nor any departmental objections. The way Airbus A-320 was purchased it appears there was some bungling. That is why I will like to refer to the meeting held between the Prime Minister of India and the Prime Minister of France. The conclusions of that meeting were —

[English]

"The PM said that the original offer of Boeing-757 was cheaper than the French offer for air Bus-320."

[Translation]

It was argued,

[English]

"Therefore, we had issued a letter of intent to the Boeing Company. But subsequently two things happened. Firstly, the 757 was found to be too narrow for the comfort of passengers and secondly, the French company brought down its prices and come up with a much better package "

13.00 hrs.

This in turn upset the Americans. We can get more and more convinced that Hermit's 320 is a better aircraft but the Americans are coming up with a matching offer. If the French can help a little bit, we can clinch the deal

[Translation]

Mr Chairman, Sir, through you I would like to draw the attention of this august

House to three aspects of this matter. Why was the contract with Boeing cancelled in haste and a new contract signed with Air Bus? On what basis was this decision taken? Secondly why the evaluation of other planes had not been done during the years 1986 to 1988 when there was time gap in placing first and second orders? Why had the Government ignored the accident of A-310 at an air show in France? Thirdly, why the planes were not purchased from companies who were ready to give it on easy terms and conditions rather than going in for A-320 with an inferior quality V-2500 engines. The investigations of these three aspects will reveal the secret. This is the case of fraud and bungling and nothing else. If A-320 had not met with an accident in Bangalore and CBI had not registered an FIR in the court, such a large scale bungling would not have come to light

An expert committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of Air Marshal Dilbagh Singh in August, 1983. This Committee evaluated seven planes in 14 months and submitted its report in May, 1984. The report recommended purchase of 208 seater Boeing 757 for Indian Airlines fleet to be acquired by the middle of 1985. The Airlines accepted the report of the Committee and a letter of intent to purchase 12 planes was issued to Boeing Company on 24th July, 1984 and the amount of US \$ 9 lakh were deposited as advance. At that time the Airbus Industries was not ready. I would like to raise two or three points in this regard. Whether it is not a fact that instructions were issued to the Board on 14th November, 1984 for conducting evaluation whereas the Board had already completed its evaluation work on 26th August, 1984? They were asked to submit the report within three days but when they submitted the report on 26th August, 1984, the decision to purchase the planes was taken on 30th August. On the other hand Shri Sindhu, the then Additional Secretary has clearly written in a note that the decision to purchase the planes had been taken in the Prime Minister's office on 2nd August, 1984. It is a dubious case because the decision to purchase the planes had

been taken on 2nd August, 1984 whereas instructions for evaluation were issued on 14th November, 1984. On 26th August, 1984 the Board said that it had completed the evaluation work and orders should be placed for planes. The Office of the Prime Minister had issued orders in regard to purchase of planes on 2nd August. It is a controversial case. It is a case of fraud in collusion because the office of the Prime Minister issued orders for purchase before the Board recommended the plane. All of a sudden in August, 1985 the Board of Directors of Indian Airlines accepted this decision to purchase A-320 from the Airbus Industries. It recommended the purchase of A-320 Airbus with V-2500 engine even though its airworthiness was doubtful. Consequently the contract to purchase Boeing 757 was cancelled and the amount of the advance was returned in September, 1985.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government of Shri Rajiv Gandhi had placed orders for 19 A-320 airbuses in March, 1986. It was argued that Rs. 203 crores would be saved within 12 years by A-320. I said earlier this became a shady deal for two reasons. Firstly, Shri V.K. Bhasin, the Managing Director had presented the facts of Dilbagh Singh Committee in a distorted manner. Secondly, the calculation that Rs. 203 crores could be saved was far from true. In fact, we spent Rs. 500 crores more in the purchasing Airbus as compared to Boeing 757. In addition a Boeing 737 was taken on loan basis from Airbus Industries to meet the needs of Indian Airlines during the years 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, 31 A-320 Airbuses were purchased in two installments. The first installment was of 19 Airbuses for which contract had been finalised in March, 1986. The cost of these Airbuses was Rs. 1238 crores or 952 million dollars. The decision to purchase 12 more more Airbuses in the second installment was taken in July, 1988. This decision was taken after 5 days of the air show in Paris in which Airbus A-320 met with an accident. The contract was for Rs. 959 crores or 633 million dollars. The con-

tract was for Rs. 2197.15 crores or US \$ 1585 million.

An air show was held in Paris in June, 1985. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to draw the attention of the House to this point. The then Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi had himself inspected the cockpit of A-320 Airbus and he had all praise for it. In turn what did the company do? The directors of the company said that the Prime Minister was a very intelligent man. They gave the title of an intelligent man to Shri Rajiv Gandhi and in turn Shri Gandhi praised their Airbus. At that time the news leaked that a contract for A-320 had already been finalised but no announcement in this regard was made.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, to make changes in the report of Dilbagh Singh Committee, ignoring the objections raised by the senior officers of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Civil Aviation, to show haste in finalising the contract for A-320, to ignore the easy terms and conditions of a Russian company and ignoring the offer made by Macdonald Douglas is indeed strange. What is more strange is that the important files related to A-320 Airbus deal are missing. Therefore, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that the files relating to A-320 Airbus deal are not traceable? The important files and documents relating to the purchase of A-320 are missing because there are many irregularities in the deal. It is not in the interest of the nation. Therefore, I would like to ask what was the justification in finalising the contract of purchase of A-320 on such a large scale.

I am submitting this because on the one hand money is being wasted to provide air services for the affluent in a country where the number of villages is about 5-7 lakhs, whereas on the other hand the Government expresses its inability to provide facilities in the village for paucity of funds. This policy is against the villages, poor people and the nation? What to talk of good roads even kuchha roads are not there in the villages. Whereas on the other hand air services are being provided. This smacks of kickbacks. I

[Sh. Devendra Prasad Yadav]

am saying this because the previous Government had developed a taste for taking commissions. I have tried to highlight the taking of commissions and the technical aspects. In the end I would like to submit that it is a case of fraud, kickback and bunglings and therefore while replying to the debate the hon. Minister should seriously consider these aspects as it is a very sensitive issue and of national interest also. I understand that the expansion of air fleet has been termed as development of the Airlines. The people of India have been exploited and a lot of foreign currency has been spent on this deal.

Therefore I would like to draw the attention of the House that a high level Commission should be set up to examine this Rs. 2197 crore deal in which commissions have been paid so that the position can become clear and technical flaws come to light and corruption prevailing in the country is rooted out.

I would like to request the hon. Minister of Civil Aviation to pay special attention to these points which have been raised and bear them in mind while taking a decision in this regard. With these words I conclude

[English]

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Wardha): Hon. Chairman, Sir, I am not surprised that this matter has been raised again in another form because I that a Government earlier had come to power in 1977 on the basis of rumours, rumours about *nasbandis* which were never established when the Government came in power actually. But the wave had taken its toll. Now, the Government, feels that it has come to power on the basis of corruption of charges, like Bofors—and now we are discovering more and more. Somewhere there is a feeling in the Government that they can be sustained in power also if they keep on this type of enquiries and

the so-called corruption charges. That previous Government, if you recall, had also appointed so many commissions beginning with Shah Commission, then Reddy Commission and all that. No a single charge was ever proved. That Government wanted to divert the attention of the nation constantly. I still remember because I was occupying this very place for those two years and some months. I still remember, everyone who got up from the ruling party's side to speak would first make an opening remark 'those 19 months that we were in emergency, the tortures that we had suffered in jail...' Although everyone who came out of the jail came with an increased weight, that is a different matter.

[Translation]

SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI (Dormaganj) : Shri Sathe, should you be sent to jail (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I have gone to jail quite since 1942. Don't try to show off. I have seen lot of jail.

SHRI SHOPAT SINGH MAKKASAR (Bikaner): You have been duly compensated for that.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: You too have been compensated. You put on weight there (*Interruptions*).

[English]

Therefore, see the psychology. What I am seeing is that people who come to power on the wave of a particular rumours, a particular campaign, feel that to be in power also, they must sustain, and that is what is going on.

I hope sincerely that the present Government at least will not fall a prey to that sort of temptation. Today, what is happening? As far as this case of concerned, you will recall, the Government had said during the elections that within fifteen days of our coming in power, we will disclose the names of those

who have taken commission in Bofors.

[Translation]

[Translation]

They said that within 15 days they will disclose the names of those who had taken commission but they have not disclosed the names so far. For the last 5-6 months every day we hear the Government saying that names will be disclosed today or tomorrow but in vain.

[English]

What is the intention? You are not bothered about Vasant Sathe or anybody—Tom, Dick, and Harry—on this side, you are concerned with one. You want somehow to malign the name of the ex-Prime Minister saying that he was guilty of corruption. You want it to be said so repeatedly that it should stick. You did it in a Goebbelesian technique during the election campaign. Now also, what are you doing? You have taken up submarine deal and the latest is the Airbus. As far as accident is concerned, an inquiry is going on about the causes of the accident. The report has not yet come. In fact, I would be very much happy if we get a full report of the causes. One does not hold a brief for this airlines or that airline. So, if this airline or plane is really bad, in national interest, no one would ever say that you should have this plane for our airlines. We still do not know whether the accident which had taken place was due to an error by the pilot or whether there was some defect in the engine or in the aeroplane. What was the accident due to? Unless that is known, can we just be casual about this accident and say that this airline is not proper, is not good and it is not safe enough and therefore, the entire deal should be cancelled and so on? This is my point. Inquiry regarding this matter is going on and I am sure that the hon. Minister, when he gives his reply, will share with us that report about the technical quality of safety parts and air-worthiness of this aeroplane. But till then, let us not jump to conclusions. What happened in the meantime? In the meantime, a discovery was made by someone that there must be some corruption.

it should be investigated.

[English]

And with this, I want to warn this Government that as long as they attack—you can take it that we are politicians—the ex-Prime Minister or any Minister concerned, one can understand. But if you start vilifying the entire civil service, technical people and bureaucracy who were there at that time, then it will be dangerous... (Interruptions)... I hold nobody responsible. I also do not know those people. Everybody is not known. But you relying on some of the civil servants who have been of a high calibre. Your Cabinet Secretary is also a civil servant. Your astrologer is also a civil servant. You are relying on all these people. But do not malign a person—I do not want to name him—which is occupying an important international position today in the UN. He was considered as one of the very good senior experts and experienced officer of Indian Civil Service. I am referring to Shri Sidhu whose name has been mentioned here. Now, what do you want to do? Is it OK that you are going on maligning. I do not mind that. But till it is proved, just a campaign of maligning of calumniating does not do justice to anybody. We cannot misuse the privilege that we have as Parliamentarians to utter calumnious languages against officers without having proof on allegations. Now, you have filed an FIR. In the FIR, open allegations are made. ... (Interruptions)... Sir, in the FIR, they begin with Mr. Sidhu, the then Secretary of Civil Aviation.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura):
Are you quoting from the FIR?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Yes,

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : From where have you got it?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (Siraganga):
It is got all over. You have given it to the papers also.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Do you mean to say that if an FIR is filed against a particular party, that cannot be made available to the accused and we cannot get it? It is not a secret document. (Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : It was available during the Press Conference also. (Interruptions)

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY (Hoshiarpur): The hon. Minister had mentioned on the 26th March that it is known all over and he would place it on the Table of the House.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: In his reply, the hon. Minister himself has quoted the contents of what has been alleged. The FIR first begins with an allegation against the Secretary. It says:

"Shri Sidhu, the then Secretary of Civil Aviation, in the pursuance of the said criminal conspiracy, committed the following dishonest acts."

I do not want to quote the entire document. I will just quote an example.

"He, dishonestly and fraudently, with a view to showing undue favour to Messers Airbus Industries, entertained an unsolicited offer to M/s Airbus Industries for A-320 even after the letter of intent of Boeing has been placed and ignoring the recommendations of the Dilbagh Committee etc."

What I would like to know is that when you make such a charge, what is the unsolicited offer? Is it not common knowledge that in any Department whenever you are having a project like this, you are considering offers from all over the world, people are constantly coming to you with their offers saying that they have a better offer and what do you do? What does the Minister do? He passes it on to the Secretary or to the expert to evaluate it. Is it something illegal? The Airbus Industries made an offer and the Minister felt that this needed to be looked into and that was passed on. Is it illegal? How

does merely passing on or mere evaluation of an offer become a dishonest, corrupt or fraudulent act? Such words are used and this goes on in the same theme throughout in respect of various charges. Is this how you prosecute your senior officers who have served you all their lives?

Then, what are the three major issues that are being made? My learned friend who opened the debate made three points. Was it a good aircraft? Was it purchased for a right price. Is it airworthy? Has there been any deal or kickback? That is what you want to suggest ultimately. Let us examine all these three points. You are not interested whether the aircraft is good or bad.

[Translation]

You are only interested in tracing down middlemen and if somehow Shri Rajiv Gandhi gets caught in the process, it will be great fun for you. Is this not what you want (Interruptions). But you will notice that just his name was dragged into the alleged commission case, you too will meet the same fate. You have been in power for only a few days. You are shaky. You have lost your balance. In any case this is a minority Government, there are internal conflicts. Just wait and see. Set your house in order. Talk of building the nation. If you don't do this, remember that you will also meet the same fate as the previous Government. Do not let it go to your head... (Interruptions)... you are supported by 2 crutches. Even if one crutch gives a jolt, you will fall flat on your face and lose your teeth in process. (Interruptions)

[English]

As I said, there are three major points. First is: Is this a good aircraft. This aircraft is known as one of the best aircrafts in the world today. It is an aircraft which has a futuristic quality, fly by wire, computerised and it can help us for a longer time. Today, twenty-seven major countries of the world have purchased or are purchasing this aircraft including Canada, France, Australia, USA, UK, Jordan etc. I need not name all of

them. Today, twenty-seven countries have placed order for a total number of 520 aircrafts. You mean to say that all these countries do not know their interest, do not know which aircraft to buy. Secondly, there is an international body called FAA, Federal Aviation Authority, which goes into the question of airworthiness, operational competence of aircrafts etc. This body is in the United States of America and it consists of representatives in their Board from countries like America, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Jordan and Australia. All these people have recommended that this A320 aircraft is not only airworthy, but is fit for operations. So can we say—when the international authority has approved—that this aeroplane is not a proper plane, airworthy and good, for our conditions or for our airlines?

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU (Balasore): How has this accident taken place?

SHRIVASANT SATHE: Look, how many Boeing accidents have taken place all over the world up till now or even in India? Therefore, just because one accident has taken place does not mean that whole aircraft becomes unworthy.

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU : How has this accident taken place (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: It is already being inquired into as to why the accident had taken place. Let the Report come and we would like to see the Report. Have you seen it? (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please don't interrupt

(*Interruptions*)

SHRIVASANT SATHE: The main question is regarding its quality I said in the beginning that still it is being examined as to whether there is any fault in the aircraft or whether it was the error of the pilot or some other extraneous circumstances before we whole-sale condemn an aeroplane. I have

just now given the figures only to show that it has certain status universally. I am not condemning Boeing or I am not condemning the Russian T.U, etc. I am not comparing also. I am just saying that here was an aircraft which had stood the test universally—world-wide—of certain standards. Therefore, when we bought it, we had all these factors in mind. Yet fair enough, you are examining it. Let the Report come. If the Report is placed before the House, before the country and if it says that there is an inherent defect in the aircraft or in its engine, by all means, take any decision you want in the interest of the nation and we will not say a word against it. So, as I said in the beginning, do not jump to conclusions before you get the report. This is number one.

Secondly, do not start whispering. I am against this rumour-mongering that has started even before the Reports are received of all inquiries. Further maligning has been started about the price, the propriety and so on.

The hon. Minister himself was kind enough when he said in reply to a question not only about this matter but he had also stated other things which I am quoting now, he can correct me if he is wrongly quoted.

"The points made in favour of A-320 powered by V-2500 engine were that it would consume 19.6 per cent less fuel than the Boeing 757 aircraft fitted with Rolls Royce engine over a stage length of 600 km. which was the average sector length to be operated by the new aircraft. A-320 offered 7 per cent fuel saving. Further, V-2500 engine powered in A-320 would have a fund generator potential of Rs. 203.61 crores more than the Rolls Royce engine powered in Boeing 757 over a period of 12 years which represents the economic life of the aircraft. Mr. Khan stated this in Parliament." What I would like to say is—after all any Minister, whether he is my good friend Mr. Arif or Mr. Kundu or whosoever he is—that we go by the facts supplied to us by the

[Sh. Vasant Sathe]

office, by our civil servants and by our administration. We don't have personal knowledge. On the basis of that, we give replies to the House. If, tomorrow, some other information comes which contradicts or which shows that there was something else, I don't mind the Government taking action or basing its conclusion on those facts also. But as it stands today, the Technical Committee—which the hon. Minister last time was pleased to say—had evaluated it.

It was also satisfied that this was a good aircraft and was economical. If a higher price is given, then immediately an idea comes to the mind that there must be some share in it for somebody. But if you purchase a thing, which is more economical, then obviously the idea of getting some share out of it by somebody does not come to the mind of anybody. So, as far as the price is concerned, it has not been established so far that A320 was being purchased at uneconomic price. Then the proper procedure was not followed. Therefore, somebody must have done some mischief. (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI SHOPAT SINGH MAKASAR : Are you an advocate of the company?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I don't even know this company. Are you the advocate of the other company. Why are you pleading the case of the second company?

SHRI SHOPAT SINGH MAKASAR : Yes, we are doing it.

SHRIVASANT SATHE: You accept that you are an agent of the Boeing Company, but I am not an agent of any company. (*Interruptions*)

(English)

As per the information available until now, you were pleased to tell us that it was

examined by the Technical Committee; it had gone into it. I do not want to quote all those things. Last time you were pleased to deny that the IA Board had refused to entertain the alternative offer for Boing 737. On page 2 of this report, it reads as follows:

The study was carried out with the help of officers of the Planning, Finance, Engineering, Operations, Commercial and Training Departments. The proposal of Indian Airlines was thereafter considered by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in consultation with all concerned appraisal agencies before according Government approval."

This had gone to CIA also. This had been stated earlier by the hon. Minister for Civil Aviation obviously on the information supplied to him. After that, an FIR had been filed. He has also stated about the allegations which are there according to various sections. FIR also makes a reference about bribe, kickbacks having been received by certain public servants from private parties as a consideration for showing favours to them. The cases have been registered for offences of cheating, bribery under IPC and Corrupt Practices Act. The sections cited are from 165 to 420 (IPC) etc. What is the normal courtesy or procedure when a matter is *sub judice*? When the matter is *sub judice*, in the interest of any party, that matter is not discussed publicly because it will prejudic the process. According to our jurisprudence, even/about a man alleged to have committed a murder, you do not say anything against him... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AMAL DATTA (DIAMOND HARBOUR): It is an inquiry. The police has started an inquiry. When the chalan is filed, then only it is *sub judice* ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: You are wanting a chalan to be framed.. (*Interruptions*) Your investigation is going on. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AMAL DATTA: The investigation is going on. It is *sub judice*. Do not try to

confuse this House.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: It is kay, fine. Is it the contention of the Government that having filed an FIR on such serious charges, they would not want to have a judicial process to take its course, but would want to disclose certain things to the public through this Parliament? Is that so, I would like the hon. Minister to say so. I do not mind. But then, tomorrow all the sanctity of the judicial process will go. It begins from FIR, then chalan and all that. If you do not want to stand by that, let this Government say so and set a new precedent I do not mind. But I do not think the hon. Minister-in-charge would say this... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AMAL DATTA: The Government cannot be responsible for your own confusion as to what is the legal process and what is the judicial process .. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: If they have friends like Amal Datta then they do not need any enemy. I can assure him of that.

I would suggest that as far as this thing is concerned, if they have an additional information, two things should be done by them. Let the additional information be placed before the court or the investigating machinery. That would be in keeping with dignity and in keeping with the procedure. If you want to place the additional information here, then atleast place all the papers and facts so that we would be able to know. If something out of context is disclosed, then we have no access to other related papers. So, it can only create more confusion and probably malign some people. And that will become *mala fide*. I do not think that this will be the intention of the Government.

Sir, this discussion has highlighted atleast one thing. Let us not jump to conclusions before getting the reports. Here not only our nation is concerned, but international organisations like Boeing, Airbus are concerned. Let this Government not jeopardise itself also. Ultimately in its own interest and that of its Airlines, they should not try

to malign or condemn any aircraft without proof, without full conclusive evidence. That is what I am requesting this Government to do.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

SHRI BHABANI SHANKAR HOTA (Sambalpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would not take much of your time. I would like to raise three or four pointed questions to the hon. Minister so that the truth will come out

My earlier speaker honourable Satheji, while speaking about the purchase of Air-bus-320, tried to deflect the main issue by bringing in the political issue. A decision was taken by the Government, so to say, by the Indian Airlines to go in for Boeing 757 in mid 1984 on the recommendation of the high-level committee headed by Air Marshal Dil Bagh Singh and a letter of intent was issued. But in the meantime something happened. On 31st of October, 1984 unfortunately Mrs. Gandhi died and new Prime Minister took over the reins of Government. It may be a mere co-incidence or there is something into it, but as soon as Mr. Rajiv Gandhi took over as the Prime Minister, the wheels of procuring the aircraft started changing. Then suddenly after three or four months, an offer came from the Airbus Industri. Then the entire Indian Airlines Administration started moving in a different direction, as has been pointed out by Mr. Yadav while initiating the debate. I can only strengthen some of the points. The offer may be solicited or unsolicited, came from the Airbus Industrie and the whole process started. There are two differences. While signing the letter of intent in the case of Boeing, a technical sub-committee or a sub-committee of the Board was appointed, which was headed by Air Marshal Dilbagh Singh. In the present case, no such committee was appointed and a man—he may be a competent man, at least I am competent to comment on him—Capt. Bhasin, a single man, was entrusted with the job of evaluating the proposal to purchase the airbus A-320. He was supposed to be the trainer of Mr. Gandhi as a pilot. There may be

[Sh. Bhabani Shankar Hota]

many more other trainers but he is supposed to be one of the trainers. This man evaluated and gave some report. Now if you watch the sequence of events how the things proceeded, you will find that on 16th May, 1985 there was a proposal. And as has been reported in various newspapers or in various circles, in the first week of August a decision had been taken. Now on this point I would request the hon. Minister to clarify whether a final decision was taken in the first week of August to purchase this. Airbus A 320 while the committee was yet to evaluate about the utility of purchasing Airbus A-320 because the Civil Aviation Ministry in mid November, 1984 was asked to process the proposal and was given only three days time. Now if any one does not have technical knowledge—at least I do not have the technical knowledge—to evaluate an aircraft and you allow him only 72 hours for that, that means something is not clean. If I want to purchase a TV, I will evaluate three or four colour TVs if my money is hard one and I do not just throw it away:

[SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE *in the Chair*]

13.49 hrs.

People in the villages take two or three days time to decide which bicycle is to be purchased. And here is a question of purchasing aircraft worth more than Rs. 2000 crores and the man was asked to evaluate it within three days. Is it not a joke? Earlier, it took the whole 10 months for the Committee, headed by air Marshal Dil Bagh Singh. Here they were asked to evaluate within three days. But the committee did not act according to the advice given by the Government. It took more time. What happened then? The evaluation was completed in the month of August, 1985. But, in the meantime, the Board took the decision. The evaluation was done on 26 August as per the Press Report. They have given it correctly. I want the hon. Minister to clarify the position whether it is true that in the last week of August, the hon.

Minister had received the proposal and whether it was cleared on 30 August, 1985. But, as it has been earlier pointed out by my friend, a decision was taken in the first week of August, i.e. before the evaluation was made. It was decided at the highest level to purchase Air-Bus A-320 I entirely agree with Shri Satheji when he says there are three major aspects of the purchase whether technically, air-worthy-wise, it was right to purchase Air-bus A-320. I am not going into the merit of the case. My point is that before it was evaluated, a decision was taken by the Government at the highest level to procure Air-Bus A-320 and I want to request the hon. Minister to clarify whether this is true or as it has been alleged by hon. Satheji that there are certain groups of people, those who form the Government, indulge in rumour-mongering. He has particularly referred that this Government has come to power only to spread rumour like adopting Geoblesian tactics. Ordinarily a rickshaw puller in the Bargarh town in Sambalpur district, from where I have come, charged one rupee extra from professor, the professor was not prepared to pay one rupee extra for the rickshaw fare. The rickshaw puller was not trained by any political party, Janata Dal or BJP Party. The rickshaw puller replied

[Translation]

"When Prime Minister of the country could pocket funds, what objections can sure be if I charge one rupee extra?"

[English]

This was the reply of the rickshaw puller. No political party was responsible for it. It is your conduct inside and the outside Parliament House, changing your version, telling something today and disowning tomorrow. This is how this rumour has spread through length and breadth of the country. There is no point in accusing Janata Dal. It is like this. So, who has taken the money—ultimately the people will decide or those who are competent they will decide. We are not spreading any rumour.

AN HON. MEMBER: Have they decided or will they decide?

SHRI BHABANI SHANKAR HOTA: If it is true that order was placed and a decision was taken at the highest level 25 or 27 days before the Evaluation Report was received, then why it was done like this? What for? What was the consideration? The real process started when the former Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi visited Paris to attend the Festival of India and a talk took place between the French Prime Minister and the Indian Prime Minister. What was this talk? We do not know exactly as to what happened? But, there are certain reports and a hint in some of the newspapers that the deal was clinched at that meeting.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: This is what is called the rumour

SHRI BHABANI SHANKAR HOTA: I am not worrying about the affair.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: You must be having all the papers. Whatever the talk had taken place must be on record.

SHRI BHABANI SHANKAR HOTA: I am not worried as to what FIR the Government has filed, but my view is that whatever has happened, the responsibility of the civil servants is secondary. That is my point of view at least. The primary responsibility rests with the political leaders, with those who take the decision or those who are the fountain head of taking the decision. That is why all these aspects have to be inquired into.

Shri Vasant Satheji has pointed out that twenty-seven countries have opted for purchasing Air-Bus A-320. As I have already said, I am not an expert. I do not know anything about this whole business. But there is a certain report which has appeared in the Press, which says that lots of doubts were raised about the airworthiness, and looking at the peculiar climate that exists in India, whether this aircraft will be suitable for operating in India or not. Five or six incidents have been quoted along with the dates of

their occurrences. Even that accident which took place in Paris while demonstrating it was noted. I believe that several countries have withdrawn operating Air-Bus A-320. With your permission, Madam, I quote: "That, really, is the key question: was it wise of IA to go in for a combination of an untried aircraft and an untried engine—the first such instance in the domestic carrier's history? The first new A-320s to enter commercial service were fitted with General Electric's CEM 56-5 engine, and IA was only the third airline in the world—I repeat, IA was only the third airline in the world—" (after the relatively little known Adria Airways of Yugoslavia and Cyprus Airways) to order the newer V-2500 engine developed by International Aero Engines, a five-nation consortium of aircraft engine manufacturers." So, India was only the third nation to use this V-2500 engine. Therefore, it is not that almost the whole world has opted for the Air-Bus A-320 with this engine which is known as V-2500. But an inquiry has been ordered and we must await the report of the inquiry about the cause of the accident. But we are not discussing the cause of the accident. What we are discussing is why all the paraphernalia which was observed while placing order for Boeing was short-circuited in case of placing order for Air-Bus A-320, and what was the consideration, whether it is true or not that the Prime Minister of India, while discussing with the French Prime Minister, just tried to impress that if he helped a little bit, we can clinch the issue. The nation wants to know what is that little bit. I think our friends sitting here also must be wanting to know what has happened really.

There is no point in defending something fishy that somebody may not be involved, somebody may be involved. What is this? Why should they hide things from the people? There is a discussion. They should come forward and the Government will reply.

As far as the FIR that has been filed is concerned, my point is that certain officers against whom the FIR has been filed, must make clear everything. My submission to the

[Sh. Bhabani Shankar Hota]

Government is that they must try to prosecute the politicians who are involved in the whole case, who have been helped by the bureaucrats. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Now you are involving the French President also.

SHRI BHABANI SHANKAR HOTA: No, I am not involving him.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: You are free to do that.

SHRI BHABANI SHANKAR HOTA: I am not involving him, I am simply putting a question. Sir, the Government has changed and we have promised to the people that our Government will be an open Government.

14.00 hrs.

Finally, I would urge upon the hon. Minister not to hide anything because hiding things were the things of the past which has been practised for the last 40 years and come out open to the extent possible and make threadbare everything before the House so that not only the hon. Members present here but the whole nation may know what has happened in the deal and whether money has changed hands, whether corruption was there, whether kickback was there and whether action will be taken so that these malpractices will not be repeated in future. Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI M.S. PAL (Nainital): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to get some replies from the hon. Minister through you. Did our then Prime Minister meet the French Prime Minister in France on June 7, 1985? After attending the air show in which this plane was also displayed, he said:

[English]

"If the French can help a little bit, we can

clinch the deal."

[Translation]

Is this a fact? It may be brought before the House.

Secondly, I would like to know whether any irregularities have been committed in the Air bus deal and whether rules and regulations have been violated.

My third question is do the files contain a note by the Cabinet Secretary to the effect that the Prime Minister had ordered the purchase of these aircraft before evaluation?

I will put forward my arguments and my views on these 3 questions.

Madam Chairman, our Government is an open Government. We believe in openness as a matter of principle. On the basis of this principle, I would like to inform the hon. Minister that he may make a clear statement on this matter. This principle is not that of the Government alone. It is the duty and right of the every citizen to be informed of the happenings in the country and it is the responsibility of the Government to place everything before the House and the public in an open manner. Whether it is the Bofors issue or that of submarines or Wastelana helicopters or any other such transaction which may be brought to the notice of the House directly or through the newspapers. It is the duty of the Government to inform the House about those matters.

14.04 hrs.

[SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE in the Chair]

I would like to state before the House that our former Prime Minister went to Paris on June 7, 1985 and looked at the air buses. Mr. Chairman, Sir, you are a socialist. The concept of good, better, best is a communist line of thinking. You recognise it. In olden days kings would make irregular land grants in shape of reward. Similarly, in such deals

irregularities have been committed. My first question is based on this very point that the two Prime Ministers had met on June 7, 1985 in connection with this deal. Secondly, was Dilbagh Singh Committee set up in connection with these irregularities? Was such a committee set up under the chairmanship of Air Marshal Dilbagh Singh which had submitted its report regarding the purchase of Boeing 757, after due examination and evaluation and Air India had made necessary arrangements for its purchase? Inspite of that had the Indian Government taken a decision about buying the air bus before this? Secondly, a committee or a one man cell was set up in this connection under the Chairmanship of Captain Bhasin. Special directions were issued on November 14, 1984 to submit the report within 3 days. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to this direction in particular that the orders for the purchase of the air bus were issued before the submission of the said report. I would like to know whether this fact is there on record or not? Secondly, I would like to know through you whether the orders were issued for the purchase before the receipt of the report of the Bhasin Committee.

Sir, our Government is an open Government. Irregularities have been committed and F.I.R.s have been filed against bureaucrats who merely obey orders and as Shri Sathe has suggested that they should not be harassed. In reality in all deals whether the Bofors or others made by the Government, the bureaucrats are held responsible. The people in power whether the Prime Minister or the Minister take decisions and issue orders and it is the Government servants who are harassed. It has been done time and again. Maximum number of cases are filed against them only. It is the officers who are suspended and action is taken against them only. Along with these points I would like to point out that all such matters should be brought in the House openly. Secondly, even if an F.I.R. is filed, the matter can be discussed in the House as it is not sub-judice. If there are valid grounds for criminal case against them, the concerned officers would

be chargesheeted. Timings are still at the investigation stage and we can discuss it openly and the reply to the debate should also be open.

I would like to request the hon. Minister once again that he should provide the House with a detailed account of the position. Every individual in the country has the right to know and it is the duty of the Government to state the action being taken.

With these words, I would like to express my gratitude for giving me opportunity to make my submission.

[English]

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Jodhpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to make it very clear from the beginning—and in that I am entirely in agreement with what my esteemed colleague Shri Vasant Sathe has said—that what we are engaged in today, in discussing this entire Airbus episode, is not a technical discussion. Indeed, I do not think that the Parliament is a technical body or competent to evaluate technically one aircraft or is another even if there be Members of Parliament who were former members of Indian Airlines or who have experience of flying aircrafts but they cannot translate that experience of having flown aircrafts to become technical evaluators of aircrafts. I am entirely in agreement with Shri Vasant Sathe; this is not a technical discussion on the relative merits or demerits of one aircraft against another aircraft. And this, is a common illusion that people who have experience in such fields earlier suffer from that merely because of that experience they can override the technical opinion of bodies which are competent and entrusted with technical evaluation. As hon. Shri Vasant Sathe has said again quite rightly, what we are engaged in examining is, whether this aircraft is bad. But in that you are going counter to what you yourself said, because this Parliament is not a body in which we can establish whether this aircraft is good or bad. We do not have the competence to say that. I mention it only because the hon. Member has referred to it.

[Sh. Jaswant Singh]

In the continuing controversy of Bofors, there was an element brought in about the technical quality of the weapon system and then my face was put across on the box on numerous occasions, repeatedly. It is not that the then Government so loved my face, or liked my face, but they put my face repeatedly on the box only for the reason that I had said, "My view is that this is a very good weapons system." But I am not competent to say that. Even though I have had the distinction and the great privilege of having worn uniform and served the Armed Forces. I do not consider myself qualified to comment on a complex weapons system. Similarly, I leave it to you to reflect upon that even if a Member of Parliament has been a commercial airlines pilot, he is not competent to comment or say that this is the authoritative aspect of the technical competence of one aircraft against another. I do not want to go into the various things which hon. Shri Vasant Sathe has said. He is at liberty to say them because there was a certain amount of meandering into innuendos, but that is not our concern. My concern is about the method of selection.

Parliament is after all a body which is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that the Executive conducts itself impeccably and to see whether the Executive has erred in its decision-making processes. For this, we have a system of debates here: we have committees and various other things. All the legislative efforts are directed at providing that check on the Executive. Hence, this phrase "checks and balances" which is a Constitutional arrangement. Therefore, the first requirement of this debate is, Was the method of selection of this particular aircraft impeccably fair; were there any shortcoming in the method of selection? Are there worries in some aspects of the method of selection, apparently, as they appear to us now? Hon. Shri Vasant Sathe does not have access to all the information. I do not have access to all the information. Despite whatever averments he might make that there is some kind of collusion between the Executive and I, and therefore, this constant reiteration of this

particular worry—I may say, No, Sir. My worry is limited. Was the method of selection laid down by the Government itself—by successive Governments—was it followed without any external, undue influence? Were there any short-cuts taken? Then, Sir, what is our other worry. That worry really emerges from the chronology of events that started with the establishment of a committee in August, 1983 to go into the total aspect of the fleet requirements of Indian Airlines, its development, in the immediate 1984-85 period, and subsequently in the 1990-91 period. This committee to my mind, my colleague hon. Shri Kamal Chaudhry, hon. Member from Ferozpur may perhaps agree with me, was headed by very eminent serviceman, and the credentials of Air Marshal Dilbagh Singh would be difficult to question. He was indeed assisted by three other technical experts. That committee went into all aspects of this acquisition of aircraft. It studies information about various aircrafts and after having deliberated upon all aspects, it came to a certain conclusion that A-320 Air-Bus is not a suitable aircraft for India. It also held that the other aircraft, that this Boeing Aircraft-757 was an attractive proposition for bridging the gap between the existing fleet and the Air-Bus 300 aircraft. The report of Dilbagh Singh Committee was presented in May, 1984. It was then considered by the Board of Directors of Indian Airlines in May, 1984 itself. Quite rightly, again a negotiating committee comprising of the Managing Directors of Indian Airlines and Air India, the financial adviser to the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation and the Economic Adviser to the Managing Director of Indian Airlines was constituted by the Board to negotiate further with Boeing Company, which had been short-listed. Thereafter, it gave its recommendation in June, 1984 on the relevant aspects including technical, economic etc., and the Board accepted the recommendation for the induction of Boeing 757-200 as the most suitable aircraft for the network of Indian Airlines. Please mark the method carefully that in 1984, we had taken a decision through a process which we had ourselves established. This decision having been taken in October, 1984, through the Minis-

ter's statement, I have now come to learn, that an unsolicited offer was received from this company which manufactures A-320 aircraft. I do not think, that the hon. Shri Vasant Sathe ought to have laboured for so long to say that there is nothing wrong in unsolicited offers. He is perfectly right. I find nothing wrong in an unsolicited offer coming from any quarter. It is how that unsolicited offer is then considered by a committee which we have ourselves established or by the Government, that causes me some worry: If the unsolicited advice, was coming, and this company which manufactures A-320 were to come forward and say, "Look here, you as Indian Airlines are going to benefit greatly: The country is going to save hundreds of crores of rupees; your passengers are going to fly in such safety, comfort and case that they do not even know they are flying." Even in the monsoon season when you are flying by aeroplane it will be like sleeping in your bed. I would perfectly accept that unsolicited or solicited offer. How did the Government then agree to examine that unsolicited offer? That is what causes me worry. What is the other aspect of the worry? The other aspect in this entire chronology that I am referring to is that when the unsolicited offer came in October, 1984 it was forwarded to the Indian Airlines for evaluation. There is nothing wrong with that either. The hon. Minister has informed us that the Board of Indian Airlines considered the proposal for purchase in its meeting held on 30th August, 1985, I would like the hon. Minister to inform us, what were you doing with this unsolicited offer? The unsolicited offer had come in 1984 from 1984 to 1985. How were you examining it? Did you refer it to the Dilbhag Singh Committee or if you had disbanded the Dilbhag Singh Committee, did you set up a new Committee, as Dilbhag Singh Committee is not more there and Marshal Dilbhag Singh is not here. But we cannot as a Government and, I am sure, my esteemed friend and colleague Shri Arif Mohammad Khan would say "I am not competent to judge whether A300 is a good aircraft or a Boeing is a better aircraft. Let it go back to the Committee which will examine this unsolicited offer." I am attracted by this

suggestion. Let the Committee examine it. I do not think anything of that kind was done. From 1984 till 30th August, 1985 this unsolicited advice was floating somewhere. I would like the Government to inform us. We have a right to know where it was floating. What was happening to this unsolicited advice and what progression of events took place between the receipt of this unsolicited offer and the decision which appears to have been taken on 30th August, 1985 by the Board of Indian Airlines?

Therefore, the next question which arises, to my mind, is that if you are not informed as to what happened between 1984 and 30th August, 1985 how did the Board of Indian Airlines arrive at a decision that it did? On what basis? What was the input that was provided to the Board of Indian Airlines on the basis of which it could take this decision on 30th August, 1985? There is one more important aspect. Following upon the Dilbhag Singh Committee's recommendation, the Government had already placed a letter of intent with the Boeing Company, had placed certain sums of money to which I am coming in a minute as some kind of a declaration of seriousness of intent and the figure is close to one million dollars.

One million dollars had been placed with Boeing Company from 1984 to 1985. Would the Government clarify that? From 1984 to 1985. Would the Government clarify that? From 1984 to 1985 a million dollars are lying with Boeing Company as earnest of our intent to buy that aircraft. Suddenly you changed your mind. Why?

We have a right to know. Now Shri Vasant Sathe has as much right to know as I have. Why did you change your mind? What happened to the million dollars?

Then this business of 30th August worries me very greatly. I am only on the methodology that the Government has adopted. I have here with me a relevant noting in addition to all the other information that I have : Firstly, take the month of August itself. I have here a noting which is from the Secretary,

[Sh. Jaswant Singh]

Department of Civil Aviation which says that "it has been agreed in the meeting held in the Prime Minister's Room in Parliament House today that the Indian Airlines Corporation should go in for Airbus 320 aircraft, with V 2,500 engine, Cabinet Secretary, etc etc. were also present." It is signed by Shri S. S. Siddu. It is dated 2nd August, 1985.

Now I cannot understand this. I have a right to know about it.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: How have you come to know about this?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: I am not obliged to divulge to the hon. Member Shri Vasant Sathe the sources of my information because I have many sources of information just as he has. I am under no obligation whatsoever to divulge to the hon. Member Shri Vasant Sathe as to what my sources of information are.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: The CBI is already inquiring into it. Have you got it from the CBI? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Investigation by the CBI does not inhibit me from functioning in discharging my responsibility to this House and to the Parliament and the discharge of all my other responsibilities. I want the Government to tell me about this. The hon. Minister has come and told me that the decision was taken on 30th August. I want to know from the hon. Minister as to how such a statement has been made that the decision by the Indian Airlines Board was taken on the 30th August when I have just now quoted and referred to a noting from the Prime Minister's secretariat which is of 2nd August, which says : "It has been agreed today that IAC should go in for..." Where is the decision making left then? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, I am on point of order. When the hon. Member says that he is quoting from the document, I would request him, with your permission, to place

the document on the Table of the House because then in that connection we would also like to have some other documents connected with that. If he says 'quoted', he has to place it on the Table of the House.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Yes, I entirely go along with what hon. Shri Sathe has said. Before I proceed, not only will I place it on the Table of the House—of course with your consent—but also I call upon the hon. Minister to tell us now that all the documents relating to the Airbus A-320 will be placed on the Table of the House. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Before I proceed further, I am delighted by the suggestion made by my hon. colleague and I agree with him. We are not indiscreet on it. I am taking it up because I share the hon. Member's concern. I am taking it up from where hon. Shri Sathe has said and in fact he lent support to me. We are all here lending support to this. I am sure my colleagues from the National Front Government would equally support what I am saying. I call upon the hon. Minister that before I proceed further let him say that he will lay all the documents on the Table of the House. Let him please say this because it will help me. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, do you want to react immediately.

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND
MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF
MOHAMMAD KHAN): Sir, do you want me to react?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can react, if you want.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (Sivaganga): I want to make a statement. I have no doubt in my mind, going by my past experience and going by the privileged sources of hon. Member Shri Jaswant Singh's information I am sure that hon. Shri Jaswant Singh and his colleagues in the National Front have already come to an arrangement in this

matter. Therefore, all that we want is to disclose the arrangement and place all the papers which they have already passed on to Mr. Jaswant Singh.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right. You are the next speaker. Shall I deduct the time from that?

(Interruptions)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: The arrangement that we have with the National Front Government is an open arrangement. It does not require the hon. Member from Sivaganga to insinuate that there are other aspects of this arrangement. I would really like to remind my friend Arif Bhai that we have many arrangements between us. But I don't have any arrangement of the kind, that the hon. Member from Sivaganga is referring to. (Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, he has yielded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a minute. He doesn't know that you are the next speaker. I have allotted time to you.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I want to help the debate. If the hon. Minister will—as I expect him to—oblige the hon. Member Shri Jaswant Singh and place the papers, it is only fair that we adjourn this debate so that we can have an opportunity to read all those papers.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: That is why, I thought it a challenge. I will proceed further. This business of the 30th August worries me very greatly. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are not indicating that so long the discussion was meaningless. Let him continue.

(Interruptions)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Not only this. But we can now do away with this CBI enquiry. Let all the papers be here. We

ourselves will investigate into it. I accept Shri Jaswant Singh as the Chairman of that Committee.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: I do not now have to react to everything. I am obliged to my hon. friend Shri Vasant Sathe. But I do not thing what we are concerned with, engaged in and whatever our concern and efforts are do not in any sense clash with the efforts being made by other agencies. No, Sir. I dispute that point. Further, this 30th August, 1985 worries me vary greatly and the hon. Minister must clarify this because if we are informed that decision is taken formally on the 30th of August then what about this decision which we know was taken in the then Prime Minister's office on the 2nd of August? Secondly, what about this letter of 26th of August which was written by Shri Chadha to the then Secretary for Civil Aviation in which he is, in fact, asserting. On 26th August he is already asserting that Airbus 320 will be a matter of great economy. Unless, therefore, these aspects are clarified, this entire business of Airbus 320 worries us very greatly.

The second aspect, which has a reference here, relates to safety. And I think hon. Shri Vasant Sathe quite rightly asked that in the selection of the aircraft, was enough attention paid to the factor of safety. And I think, this business of safety is poignantly underlined by the recent crash that took place in Bangalore. It is no one's assertion, no one's point that the clash was of deliberate design. It could well be a pilot's error; it could equally well be a major snag in the aircraft; it could equally well be that this aircraft was introduced into the country so rapidly that we did not have sufficient infrastructural support facilities on the ground, training of our personnel, both ground and pilots. I am not suggesting that this Government or the previous Government would conceivably, in the widest of dreams made a choice to deliberately jeopardise the lives of its citizen. Such is not my suggestion. But in the methods that you adopt, did you exercise, did that Committee, did whoever was entrusted with that responsibility exercise

[Sh. Jaswant Singh]

sufficient care and caution about this safety factor? What are the other worrisome aspects? These worrisome aspects, of course, are firstly and this point has been made by some others also that this V2500 engine was up-till then an untested engine. It had not yet been manufactured. The second worrisome aspect is that the A-320 was yet on the production line. No one either from that expert committee or from the then Government had a chance to even see the aircraft, leave alone actually fly it and test it, test it in conditions which obtain with us in India both in the air and on the ground. That was not done because the aircraft was a non-existent aircraft. The engine was a non-existent engine. How, thereafter, did you evaluate the factor of safety. How did you? Because I am very much concerned and the factor of safety is underlined by the recent accident in Bangalore.

There are two or three other worrying aspects of the safety factor. I think an airline with as impeccable record of service, impeccable record of air safety and ground maintenance as Lufthansa—I am given to understand—had declined to purchase this aircraft. It worries me. They can decline; they are free to make their evaluation. And the Government of India also is free; our experts are no less than any other experts. That is why it disturbed me and worried me somewhat that my hon. eminent senior colleague Shri Vasant Sathe quoted some US journals to say that they themselves have said that this is a very fine aircraft, it is air-worthy, etc. I am sure what he said was right. But our own Experts Committee headed by Air Marshal Dilbagh Singh and three other experts had gone into all these aspects and said A-320 is not for us. That is why with due deference to Shri Sathe I would say that when such an occasion arises, I would rather go by what our Committee says than what US Committee or whichever other experts committee might say.

One other aspect of air safety worries me. After the placement of this order, for the

first time this aircraft is shown in the Paris Air Show of 1988—I might be mistaken in the exact year—and there is a crash during the Paris Air Show of this very A-320 aircraft. Then the aircraft was on a demonstration flight with a demonstration passenger list, with a crew which was their most expert crew and their top test pilot. The aircraft is unable to gain sufficient height and it brushes against the trees bordering on the air-field and it crashed.

After the crash, purely from the aspect of safety, what did the then Government of India do to examine the implications of that crash? This was in 1988 and you confirmed the orders in 1989. It is a matter of very serious concern to me. It relates only to safety. Untested engine, untested aircraft, indeed unmanufactured aircraft takes a crash and what did our Government do?

There is one other aspect that worries me. Repeatedly a number of civil servants and others who are worried about the aspect of safety—and these have been listed and that document of FIR is with the hon. member Shri Vasant Sathe, also I am sure the Minister is aware of it and I don't have to quote from that—disagree with the decision being taken by the Board of Indian Airlines. A number of these public spirited civil servants go on record to say that this is an untested aircraft, we are not convinced that the safety factor has been taken into account, we must ask for more time from this Air-Bus Industry—or whatever the name of this company is—even after the decision had been taken, so that the Indian Airlines is at least able to fly the wretched aeroplane and see it in the Indian conditions, whether it is worthy for us because we are introducing it.

We are committing ourselves not to one or two aircrafts, but 31 aircrafts. We have committed ourselves to some kind of an astronomical sum of money. Leave the money aside, leave the commitment of 31 aircrafts aside; take only the safety aspect because we are only on the safety aspect. If these public spirited civil servants are on

record as having said that take at least two months delay from the execution of the letter of intent from the Air-Bus Industry, so that in these two months we are at least able to test these aircrafts, do you know what the then Government of India did? It makes a casual reference to Air-Bus Industry and the Air-Bus Industry almost contemptuously grants us barely fifteen days. Am I correct Mr. Minister?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : How can you be incorrect?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: I am so flattered, how can I be incorrect!

SHRI VASANT SATHE: On your own statement, you are their partner.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: We are partners. We are also partners in responsibility. Some public spirited civil servants then had the courage some civil servants were bold enough to disagree and were bold enough to make this bold statement. If they then disagreed. In that bleak period of 1985 to 1990, really then they would have to be civil servants of worth. So this civil servant put its down and says please ask for two months. But Airbus Industrie almost contemptuously says 15 days, and pussilaminously on Government agrees putting aside the factors of safety. The then Government says, all right, 15 days. What did you do in those 15 days? Did you fly even a single of those aircrafts? I am sorry, I do apologise Shri Arif Mohammad Khan; I do not mean it individually to you; but I am so much worked up on this whole matter. (Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (Sivaganga): He was a part of the Government, then. (Interruptions)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: I shall quote only one thing. (Interruptions)

SHRI P.J. KURIEN (Mavelikara): At that time, he was part of the Government.

AN HON. MEMBER: It was in 1988. He

was not in the Government, then.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, you have been most indulgent to me. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please allow him to speak.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, I will come to the cost factor and then I will conclude. I am worried on the cost factor also. I am in fact very bad at figures. I will start by admitting that I have neither any ability with figures nor in fact, ability an to conceptualise this kind of money that has been spoken of, like Rs. 1800 crores or Rs. 2400 crores. My conceptualising of money goes to about three lakhs. I can conceptualise what an amount of Rs. 3 lakhs. I can conceptualise what an amount of Rs. 3 lakhs looks like. But I cannot imagine what an amount of Rs. 3 crores looks like and when it is Rs. 2400 crores, I quite often wonder how many boxes does it take to fill that money. (Interruptions)

[Translation]

AN HON. MEMBER: They have gobbled up the public money. (Interruptions)

SHRIDHARAMPAL SHARMA (Udhampur): First, let the Vishwa Hindu Parishad give an account of the 800 crore rupees, it had collected from the people for construction of the Ram Janambhoomi temple.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, you have been most kind and most indulgent to me, I am grateful to you. I will put across my worry about costs succinctly. You will forgive me, Sir, if I skip over the figures because I am not very good at them. The project cost of 19 A-320s, I am informed was actually higher than the Boeing offer by almost Rs. 400 cores, as compared to 15 Boeing 757s with equal number of seating capacity because it is a complex job to evaluate the cost comparison between one aircraft and another. I will not

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go into the technical evaluation of how cost comparisons are made. But I am informed that after investigations, it was found that the project cost was actually higher by Rs. 400 crores. The Indian Airlines, in the process was going to have to spend altogether about Rs. 700 crores more, by induction of Airbus 320, in preference to Boeing 757, if the net present value of 1986, interest thereon, project cost, generations on funds etc., are taken into account. These are also other aspects of project cost, which were referred to by yet another civil servant, on a note, when the delay was taking place in the ordering of the Boeing. he had gone on record by saying even if you have got a million dollar on deposit with Boeing, even if you do not take into account the loss on interest from that money, cost is escalating and so take a decision. I cannot really go into the analysis of the cost evaluations. If my information is correct, for the cost of the acquisition of this Airbus fleet, in preference to the Boeing fleet, actually, it ended up by costing the country—not just the lives that have been lost in Bangalore—something like Rs. 1100 crores more than what we ought to have paid. If my figure be wrong, I would be very happy to be corrected. I do want to know: What is your analysis of it? What is your present analysis. What has been the expert advice given to you?

Just a few more sentences and then I would conclude. I am worried about all this. The previous speakers had referred to a meeting between the then Prime Minister—the hon. Member from Amethi—and the French Premier in Paris in which references have been made to our then Prime Minister talking of "with a little bit of help, perhaps we could swing the deal" and also referring to the then Prime Minister talking to the French Premier and saying, "we must do away with this multiplicity of agents." I think, this piecemeal information that some hon. Members of Parliament have shared with the House is tantalising. It is insufficient. It does not do justice to our concern about Indian passengers. Certainly I am confident that the over-

riding concern that you have, and the responsibility that you hold as Minister of Civil Aviation, your over-riding concern is passenger safety and the comfort and well-being of those Indians who hand themselves over to the competence of the Indian Airlines. Therefore, this aspect because this is tantamount really to negating of the methods that we ourselves established. If the highest in the land were to shortcut the decision-making process of the country, laid down by ourselves, then I would appeal to Mr. Vasant Sathe that it is not innuendo that I am engaging in. It is not any charge that we are applying. We are merely saying that the highest in the land then engaged in short-cutting the laid down methods of decision-making. Why was that done? It worries us. There is only one answer to this Sir. And in that, I share entirely what my esteemed colleague, Shri Vasant Sathe said, lay all the papers on the Table of the House. Let us know all the facts because unless that is done,—you are quite right—this whispering campaign, this innuendo will be there. You will say something about us. We will say something about you. This discussion under Rule 193 would have served the purpose if the Minister, in addition to replying to all the points that I have made, gives a commitment to the House to place all the papers on the Table of the House.

I cannot tell you how deeply grateful I am to you for the great indulgence that you have shown me. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chidambaram, before you begin, I just want to tell that it is a discussion.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: We cannot restrict to two hours. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us assume three hours. There is only one hour from which Mr. Sathe has already consumed 29 minutes. And there are several other names in the list. Just remember that, Mr. Chidambaram.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: What about JD? Have they consumed their time?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They have spoken. I am not calling them now. I am giving you a chance.

(Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I do not have information from Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan.
(Interruptions)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Now all the papers are going to be withdrawn from the CBI and going to be placed there. (Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (Sivaganga): I am grateful to you for giving me this opportunity to speak on this debate. It is like watching a pantomime show... (Interruptions) I have just started. I have not said anything about Parliament. Why are you getting excited? (Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I object to these kinds of interruptions. On the one side, Government comes before Parliament and says that they are concerned about certain irregularities which are brought to their notice and that they shall register a case and shall investigate the matter. That was the concern which the Minister of Civil Aviation had shown in the Parliament, both in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. It was so in the Lok Sabha on the 29th March, 1990 and on 20th March, 1990 in the Rajya Sabha. The Government assumes a very serious, responsible demeanor and acts very reluctant that has to press the Minister for information, as to Rajya Sabha Members tried to do. Then he says that here is an FIR which is being investigated into very seriously, very responsibly, we expect him say all these things! And today Sir, in answer to the Calling Attention Notice, the Minister has given a statement and with great respect, I may say that there is nothing more than what had already been said. In fact, if one may go by his earlier pronouncements and his statements, one would get the impression that it

is a very serious Government, very responsible Government which is totally committed to observe the principles and procedures of law and find out the guilty persons who are guilty of any irregularity or any financial mismanagement or any corruption. This picture is presented to the world. But somewhere a decision is taken. This decision will not take us very far. We would not find much of a solution by this way. It is not likely that this case will unearth anything." Therefore, a Parliamentary device—I say this with responsibility—or a Parliamentary procedure is being used by the Government to begin a campaign of innuendo disinformation a trial by Press, a trial by debate, a trial by very sophisticated arguments, a trial by raising a question here, a doubt here and draw the curtain and say that they have done the job which they wanted to do, It is unfortunate that Parliament is being used for this kind of an exercise which I think is not certainly consistent with the dignity or purpose of Parliament. We have seen this done before. The hon. Member, Shri Jaswant Singh was speaking, by our past experience, with the help of privileged sources. I am not making a privileged statement. He did have these privileged sources earlier, in other cases when he had access to documents. He was quoting from documents, giving figures and dates. Yes my Lord... (Interruptions) Well, it is because of my profession and I take the leaf from Mr. Chatterjee's.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): But I am not obsessed with the profession as you are. (Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I have no hesitation in giving the same respect to the Chair, as I give to the court while addressing. Even if Mr. Somnath Chatterjee sits on this Chair. I am willing to address him the same way as I address the court. I have no hesitation in that. This is a civilised form of address and I think it adds to the dignity of that institution like as it adds to the dignity of this institution. He has his privileged sources of information. He quotes from them, he gives dates. Why are we going through this kind of exercise which is, what I referred to as a

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pantomime? Why is this kind of Puppetry going on? Obviously, there is someone behind the scene, who has all the information. Why are we looking at shadows? Why do we have to learn from the hon. Member, Shri Jaswant Singh what was noted in a file? The Minister has the file, let him place the facts before the House. Why do we have to know about dates etc. from the hon. Member? Why does he not tell us in answer to the calling attention?

What is the meaning and sanctity of the statement if it does not contain a fraction of the information which is in the profession of hon. Member, Shri Jaswant Singh? That is why I say why we are enacting this drama here. Whom are we trying to fool by this kind of drama? Every fifteen days, every month, Government feeds information to certain privileged Members and a debate is started. Why can't that information be placed on the Table of the House? Now that new precedents are being set by Government, we would also take advantage of this new precedent. First let me take a few minutes to speak about the air crash in Bangalore. It was a very sad air crash where a lot of people lost their lives. Let me ask the hon. Minister if it is true that the Inspector of Accidents has submitted a report. Is it not true that in his report, he has stated and I quote:

"There was no apparent indication of any abnormality of the flying controls.

The DFDR data reveals that there was no failure of aircraft electrical system, hydraulic system, yaw amper system and cabin pressurization. All the LAC and SEC units were working normally. There was no inflight fire or smoke warning. The GPWS activated "Sink Rate" warning four seconds prior to the impact.

The CVR and DFDR correlation show that just 235 seconds prior to crash, the aircraft was in proper auto-thrust 'Speed Mode' and was descending in the vertical speed mode. At this stage Altitude Acquisition Mode was

activated indicating that a selection on the FCU panel was close to 'Minimum Descent Altitude' of 3270 feet of VOR DME approach instead of 6000 feet go-around altitude.

The aircraft went into an 'Open descent Mode' after the altitude acquisition mode which indicates that a selection has been made during ALT phase on the FCU panel of an altitude lower than the aircraft altitude.

Improper selection of the altitude on FCU resulted in 'Open Descent Mode' which led to auto-thrust mode changing from speed mode to thrust 'idle' mode.

The aircraft could not sustain the approach and also could not maintain the speed because the engines were in idle thrust.

The aircraft during approach never went to the speed mode which is the proper mode for landing and one of the Flight Directors remained engaged till the time the aircraft crashed. If Capt. Gopujkar would have also disengaged his Flight Director when Capt. Fernandes disengaged his Flight Director 21 seconds prior to the crash, the speed mode would have been activated and engine power would have started building up from that instant to restore the speed and accident could have possibly been averted."

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU
(Balasore): Will you lay it on the Table of the House?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I will gladly lay it on the Table of the House. I am not as privileged as hon. Member Shri Jaswant Singh.

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU: From where did you get this?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I will ask the same question to the hon. Member, Shri Jaswant Singh... (Interruptions)

15.00 hrs.

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU

(Balasore): How has he got this report? What is the source of information? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM: I will answer his questions. I am not yielding. (*Interruptions*) My source of information is the same as the hon. member, Shri Jaswant Singh is having. It is not only that Mr. Jaswant Singh has friends on that side, but I also have friends on that side. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU: So, there is some arrangement between you and ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM: There is an arrangement. There is an unspoken, unwritten arrangement between me and my friends just like my friends and Mr. Jaswant Singh have an unspoken, unwritten arrangement. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Wardha): You need not feel guilty about it. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM: The hon. Minister has, by his silence, promised to place on the Table all the papers. He will also place on the Table the report of the Inspector of Accidents. I believe his name is Mr. Satinder Singh. I would be obliged if the hon. Minister also places that report on the Table of the House so that the world knows about that unfortunate accident.

Now I will give the dates of four air crashes that took place. There are many air crashes in this country. I would request him to tell us what types of aircrafts were involved in those air crashes; I would also request him to tell us whether those aircrafts were also grounded for the same length of time as this Airbus was grounded. On 27th August, 1970, an air crash took place near Silchar. On 31st May, 1973 there was an air crash it was enquired into by Justice Rajender Sachchar; on 17th December, 1978, an air crash took place in Hyderabad. It was enquired into by Justice Raghbir; on 4th August, 1979, an air crash took place near Bombay. It was enquired into by Justice

D.M. Rage. What types of aircrafts were involved in these air crashes? Was a Boeing also involved in any of these air crashes, if so, was it also immediately grounded after the air-crash took place? You kindly give us the entire experience of this counter in regard to air crashes. What action was taken immediately in regard to those air crashes? That will throw a great deal of light on the government that we have today; that will throw a great deal of light on the alternative model of government that they talked about in the President's Address: that will throw a light on the air crash that took place in Bangalore. Let us not forget that what is involved here is perhaps not known to us. We know about the international competition between an American Company and a company which is essentially European. The Airbus, if I remember aright, is a consortium where not only France but some other countries have their interests. But all the interests are non-American interests. Boeing is an American Company. It has a high share of the market; it like any other good company, want to maintain its share of the market; it has intense competition with the Airbus. Another company, which is European, is a consortium, manufactures Airbus. It is trying to keep its share of the market. There is an intense competition. I am not interested in all these things; I am not an expert in aircrafts. Who is behind this massive campaign against Airbus? Do we see the hand of Boeing behind it? Is the Boeing so powerful, so influential that it can reach into the government and convince them about it? A massive campaign is being launched today to discredit the aircraft. Fine. Discredit the whole fleet of Airbus. Tomorrow the boeing crashes — I wish Boeing will not crash. I sincerely pray it will not crash—what are you going to do? Will ground all the boeings? Will you ground the entire fleet in the country? Will you go back and pull out of your mothballs aircraft which was manufactured during the Second World War and which is perhaps kept in an exhibition? This is not the kind of reaction which the Government should have. Here is an unfortunate air crash. Let us go into the matter. From an air crash to an irregularity is not merely a long jumps but it is

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a hop step and jump. From an aircraft to an irregularity is not a mere long jump. You have pole-vaulted over several steps and you have immediately come to the conclusion that there has been an irregularity. I completely endorse what my senior colleague Mr. Sathe has said. If there has been any irregularity, please do not hesitate to take the most severe action against those who were responsible for this irregularity. We hold no brief for anyone who has committed any irregularity. If hon. Member Mr. Jaswant Singh can find someone who has found the place in the world and found the boxes in the world to put away Rs. 2400 crores or whatever portion of it he is most welcome to do that, find that person, find that place, find that money, find those boxes and bring them to account. But do not carry on a campaign against everyone.

Let me raise a few more pertinent questions. Is it not correct that the Ministry of Civil Aviation assured Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan, the hon. Minister, when he intervened in the debate in the Rajya Sabha on the 20th of March 1990 giving him a number of grounds on which the Airbus was found to be economical and for other areas of efficiency, etc. etc. this aircraft was preferred? Is it not correct that officers of his Ministry, of his Department, had repeatedly assured him that the Airbus A-320 aircraft fitted with B 2 500 engine consume 19.06 percent less fuel than Boeing 757 aircraft fitted with Rolls Royce engine over the stage length of 600 kms, which is the average length to be opened by the new aircraft? Is it not correct that they have assured him that the Airbus aircraft would be seven per cent more fuel efficient than any other comparable aircraft? Is it not true that they assured him that the overall fund generation over a period of twelve years by going in for the purchase of Airbus aircraft was of the order of Rs. 203.61 crores?

Now, Sir, in all fairness to the hon. Minister, I must also say that after he made this statement, he also came with his usual

inductive or intuitive capabilities—and I quote him—

"It is not very difficult to come to the conclusion that these arguments do not hold good."

So, Justice Arif Mohammad Khan has already pronounced upon the investigation. But then what are you inquiring into? If these are the arguments given by you, own officers and you had already pronounced that these arguments do not hold good, scrap the aircraft, send them back to France. There are atleast twenty seven countries which have ordered 521 aircrafts till 30th of November 1989 and let airbus send these aircrafts to those countries at least. You have already pronounced you verdict. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI A.N.SINGH DEO (Aska): How did he get this information?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: My source is the same as the hon. Member Mr. Jaswant Singh. It is a very intelligent question for which I give a very stupid answer. My source is the same as hon. Mr. Jaswant Singh's.

SHRI A.N. SINGH DEO: How does he know how many orders are lying with the Airbus Industries?

SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM: When Mr. Sathe gave these figures, he did not wake up and question it. When I give these figures, why should he question me? I am only giving the figures which Mr. Sathe gave.

SHRI A.N. SINGH DEO: Both of them got from the same source.

SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM: We got it from the same privileged source as Mr. Jaswant Singh.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I got it from Boeing.

SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM: What I would like to know is something more important. Who were the officers in the Ministry who

continue to maintain and continue to give this information to Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan? No if, these officers are giving his reasons which he has pronounced as not good reasons, why are they still there in the Ministry? Do they have a share in the Airbus deal that they continue to give these wrong reasons, very bad reasons? They are very bad people; they are giving him bad reasons and he is pronouncing them as bad reasons. What is he hiding? If you can name Mr. Sidhu, if you can name Mr. Chadha and you want by innuendos to name the then Prime Minister, name all those people who are party to this transaction, who went through this whole exercise of examining the technical capabilities of the aircraft, examining the financial package and examining everything, name everyone of them.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You are giving him ideas, it is dangerous.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Tomorrow he will file an FIR against the present officers.

SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM: Is this the alternative model of governance?

I would like to ask a few more questions. Is it correct that after the Indian Airlines Board took a decision on 30th August, 1985, the matter was placed before the Government? And my source here is not very privileged. It is this very worthless piece of paper which has now become a worthless piece of paper because the investigation obviously is now going to be taken out of the hands of the CBI once all the papers come here. That is what I feel. It is an almost worthless piece of paper known as FIR which by education and by training I have been told to assume is a very important document in the course of investigation. Now hon. Mr. Amal Datta has disabused me of all those notions. He says that an FIR is an FIR; it is not worth the paper in which it is written and there are far more privileged information in our possession. There are hon. Members who can investigate faster than the CBI, who can investigate quicker than the CBI, get information far quicker than the CBI. What is the worth of

this FIR and what is the worth of CBI investigating on the basis of FIR? I am grateful to Mr. Amal Datta for giving me a few lessons while telling to Mr. Sathe that that they do not attach too much importance on FIR.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: I only said that just by filing an FIR a matter does not become *sub judice*. That is all.

SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM: Obviously the investigation carried on by Mr. Jaswant Singh and others had gone much beyond this FIR. Therefore, if this FIR is not worthless, at least it is an out-dated document. And I am quoting only from this poor, out-dated document. That after the Indian Airlines Board took a decision on 30th August, 1985, is it not correct that the matter went up before the Government and a decision was taken at the level of the Ministry on 20th September, 1985? After that it went before the Public Investment Board which held two meetings — first on 12th December, 1985 and second on 19th December, 1985. The PIB recommended the purchase of the Airbus aircraft. Is it not correct that the matter went before the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on 7th of February, 1986 and the Cabinet Committee approved the proposal with the condition that there shall be a counter-trade between France and India? Is it not correct that the agreement was entered into on 15.3.86 after going through this procedure? Now this procedure has been questioned by Mr. Jaswant Singh. I share his question. I certainly will not say that his questions are not relevant. His questions are certainly very relevant and pertinent. I would like answers. But I will also like answers as to who were on the IA Board in those days. Do they continue to be on the IA Board? Where are they? Where are those officers who were on the Board of Indian Airlines and who took this decision, and what are the positions they occupy today? Who are the officers in the Ministry who took this decision and what are the positions they occupy today? Who constituted the Public Investment Board which met on 12th December, 1985 and 19th December, 1985? Who are those officers who recommended the Air-Bus purchase

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and what are the positions those officers occupy today? If what Mr. Jaswant Singh says is true that there was a meeting at least the meeting evidenced by a minute recorded by the then Secretary—who were the officers who were present at that meeting and what are the positions occupied by those officers today? Were those officers party to this decision? Were those officers aware of this decision? Do those officers maintain that the decision was taken correctly or do those officers maintain that the decision was not taken correctly? Sir, this game of favourite bureaucrats shifting positions from time to time must stop. If today the buck stops at the table of the political executive, I accept that. But the buck travelled through several officers' desks and it is a collective decision. It is a myth that decisions are not taken by bureaucrats and officers. Decisions are taken by officers and if an officer has put his signature to a decision, has evaluated the financial package, has found the financial package correct, has recommended the deal, he must stand by the decision. He cannot now take refuge behind this mythical doctrine that bureaucracy has no face, it only services the political executive, and it is the political executive which should be always accused of corruption, and this and that...
(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many more minutes you want?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Two minutes, Sir. So, Sir, let the hon. Minister come out with a complete statement of every single person who dealt with this file at every stage in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, in the Department of Expenditure, in the Ministry of Finance, in the Public Investment Board, in any other organ or wing or department of the Government, and let him make a complete catalogue of these names and tell us what views were expressed by each officer and what decisions were taken by each officer. It is not correct to say that officers only expressed views. Decisions are taken. The PIB has taken a decision to recommend the

Air-Bus purchase. Who constituted the PIB? Let us have the names. Let us know where those officers are now and what positions they are occupying today.

Was the financial package examined by the Ministry of Finance, in particular the Department of Expenditure? It is a very crucial question because the hon. Member Mr. Jaswant Singh has said that there was Rs. 1,100 crores excess expenditure. Why I say this is that he is quicker than the CBI. Even the CBI has put the package at only Rs. 500 crores. Mr. Jaswant Singh has now almost doubled the package and put it at Rs. 1,100 crores. He is investigating at double the speed of the CBI and, therefore, he has arrived at Rs. 1,100 crores. If other Members will increase it by three times, he will find it as Rs. 1,500 crores. He will say Rs. 1,500 crores is the package. I would like to know how was the financial package evaluated; who were the people who evaluated the financial package; and what did they say of the financial package involved in the Air-Bus transaction.

Sir, I envy the hon. Minister. He is in a position where having breached his own privileged sources, he cannot contain the flood any more. Here is an FIR which has been registered. I want to raise a question. I am no expert in this matter. I am really very bewildered by the course of events that are unfolding before our eyes. An FIR has been registered. As I understand the law, the investigating agency must file a report before the court under Section 173 (3). Until then the investigating agency cannot share its preliminary conclusions with anyone. What I would like to know is: Have the CBI given an interim report? Have they given more than one interim report? Or have they given a final report? Has the final report reached the court on the basis of which the FIR has been registered and a copy of FIR was sent? Have you got a copy of the interim report? Sir, the hon. Minister, Shri Arif Mohammad Khan told this House and the other House that he has no sources to draw conclusions about the irregularities except that that is entrusted to the Investigation. He is a simple man and

he has no sources except what the CBI is investigating. Now, he is going to answer questions raised by Mr. Jaswant Singh. He must have some information. Otherwise, how can he answer his questions?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): How do you know I am going to answer his questions?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: If you are going to answer these questions, and share information which has been gathered, I would most humbly ask you: is there one interim report or more than one interim report or is there a final report of the CBI? Will you kindly place those reports on the Table of the House so that we will know what the investigating agency has reported?

Sir, I would like to make one more point. Now that you have created a new precedent of discussing on the floor of the House transactions which are under investigation by the CBI I sincerely hope that when you are in the Chair, or when others are in the Chair, you will uphold this new precedent which is being introduced as an alternative model of governance and we shall, during this session or soon after, discuss every single case which is being investigated by the CBI, particularly the case involving Czech pistol deal. Let us discuss that case. Let us discuss the case involving the Czech pistol deal, let us discuss the case involving the murder of the Badminton player, Shri Syed Modi, that is being investigated. Please let us discuss the cases one by one. I would humbly implore the BAC to earmark one or two days every week to discuss only the cases that are being investigated by the CBI so that the Ministers can come to us as weekly exercise and share with us the progress of investigation in some of the most sensational cases like murder of India's top badminton player and the Czech pistol deal which was made. Thank you.

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum): Sir, I want to know whether the documents are placed on the Table of the House. Two

privileged Member—one from this side and the other from that side—have quoted extensively from certain documents. May I know whether these documents have been placed on the Table of the House? I want that the copies of these documents may be supplied to us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They should have quoted from their own information that they have got.

SHRI A. CHARLES: Let the hon. Minister clarify whether these are on record or not. He should clarify this before we proceed further. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You made your point. You please sit down. The hon. Minister has not quoted that. You can verify that. Now, I call upon Mr. Amal Datta to speak.

15.24 hrs.

[SHRI JASWANT SINGH *in the Chair*]

SHRI AMAL DATTA (Diamond Harbour): Sir, this matter had been discussed earlier on 29th March in this House and we had at that time shared with the hon. Members whatever information each one of us had during the debate on that day. One month has approximately gone by since then. Unfortunately we are not much wiser than we were at that time. As a result, the debate today has been more or less a repetition of what had been said then, except that the Opposition party has taken a stance where they want to stifle a debate of this kind. (*Interruptions*) You do not want to go into this debate at all because you did not say anything about what is being said. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): At that time I was one of the initiators, one of the movers of the debate.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: All right, let me have my point of view. (*Interruptions*) That is my impression of the way you are conducting yourselves in the course of this debate. I

[Sh. Amal Datta]

have heard your two speakers from the beginning to the end. Hon'ble Mr. Vasant Sathe and hon'ble Mr. Chidambaram were both against this particular debate and whatever little they said by way of information to the House, that is just to show that they have some information other than what has been given.

SHRI K.S. RAO: You yourself are telling that it is a repetition. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AMAL DATTA: No, no. I am saying that. Let me make progress. Sir, in the mean time two reports have been submitted to the Government, not exactly on the acquisition of these planes, but at least on aspects which are of great concern and interest to all of us and to a very large section of the public of this country, i.e., the two reports which have been submitted. One is the Report of the inspector of Inquiry on such and such a thing, who is an official of the DGCA, and another is the report by Air Marshal Ram Dass regarding the preparedness of the Indian Airlines for receiving these A-320 planes. I saw a short mention of these reports in the newspapers that pursuant to these reports some arrangements for training of pilots and crews are being made by the Indian Airlines. So, we would be very much interested to see what other contents of these reports are. They are nothing which cannot be shared with the Members of the House, they cannot be secret, they are not matters which are *sub judice*, they are matters on which we can and shall, ultimately when we see them, form our own judgment and we are entitled to do so. I do not understand why the Government has not seen it fit to place these reports on the Table of this House before this debate took place. I should have thought that the debate could have been postponed by a day or two and in the mean time when it was decided to convert this particular business from a Calling Attention to a short duration discussion, that step should have been taken. I recommend that for future.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I agree with you that the reports are to be made available along with all these papers and let us postpone discussion. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AMAL DATTA: I agree with you. You want me to agree. (*Interruptions*)

I am in favour of this Government for having taken a stance before the election and after that, that there should be freedom of information, there would be right to information. If we cannot debate a particular subject of such concern to Members in this house and the public at large, after having the information which the Government already had in its possession, admittedly these tow reports—I am on those now—should have been shared with us so that we would have been able to debate the matter much more knowledgeably as to at least the state of the plane or the reasons for accident or the state of preparedness of the Indian Airlines. We would have been wiser and we would have been able to debate all these aspects in a better fashion.

There are many things which I do not know whether the Government can or cannot share with us, but without them, if you go on debating this matter again and again, it becomes somewhat meaningless. We have all seen that there has ben irregularities in the procedure; at least that is what we have assumed because there was a committee and that committe was probably constituted by the Government under the Chairmanship of Air Marshal Dilbagh Singh. It had some experts and it had selected one aircraft. Now, how another offer came? Why it came? How was it evaluated? Why was it not evaluated by a similar committee? These are questions about which we knew nothing when we debated one month back an we know nothing one month later also when we are debating today. We would expect that something would come out from the Government because we are saying that there is some irregularity in the procedure. This is the conclusion which many of the speakers here had arrived at. How do we know the standard procedure for the selection of air-

craft? I am not joining hands with them in this; I am joining issue with the Government because the Government has a duty to come before us and tell us about the standard procedure. I know there may not be any standard procedure for all. I have seen as the Chairman of PAC that in many matters, the Government has no standard procedure at all. If there is none, then it is high time to come out and admit it. Then, they should lay down the procedure and make it known to everybody. If there is a procedure, they should be able to tell us about that procedure. Then only, we will come to know as to what has been followed, what is the discrepancy and how the procedure has been deviated. I think there is a lot of information which should come from the Government at this stage, so that we will be able to debate this matter better. There has been a disclosure that the Prime Minister had taken the decision even before the Indian Airlines Board could take. There are certain other things which I find in the FIR. In the FIR, it is stated that the Indian representative of the French Airbus Industries sent the information on the 23rd of August that the Airbus A-320 had already been accepted whereas the meeting of the Board of Director of Indian Airlines took place only on the 30th of August. So, seven days before, the representative of the Airbus industries gave a definite information that it had been accepted. Mr. Vasant Sathe has lent me his copy of the FIR, which I do not know is the correct copy or not.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHANDEV (Tripura West): If you have doubt, then do not use it.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I cannot disclose my source to you.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: I am not relying very much on this copy. But these are the things which are coming up. There have been some doubts even earlier also because some of the information have come even before the crash of the Airbus, combined with the then prevailing political atmosphere in the country. We have come to know so many things about the allegations of corruption over the last three years from

1987. So many things have been denied on the floor of this House by the then Government from this side. So many of them have been proved conclusively as falsehoods. Therefore, there was such an atmosphere of suspicion that everybody thought that there is something wrong in the Airbus deal and therefore there is something wrong in the Airbus. The two are not logically consistent. In the case of Bofors gun deal, the Parliamentary Committee found out that somebody took the commission. As soon as the question of commission came, the question of the quality of the guns also came. Now, the former Chief of Army Staff had said that the guns are alright, but we have no other way of knowing it until we go to war, which I hope we do not have to. Now, in the case of Airbus also, the same type of psychology prevails. As soon as a suspicion came that there was some commission, everybody asked why there was a commission? It was because of the way in which the selection procedure was followed. In the case of first lot of aircrafts, there was a committee. But when the second unsolicited offer came, there was no committee; it was evaluated by a single man.

In the last debate on the subject, we came to know some additional information which we got from the Minister. He said, "There was single man-cell." before that, I perused in the newspapers that a cell of the Indian Airlines evaluated this but not a committee. The Minister made it clear that it was a single-man-cell, who was an officer, probably Director (Operations) of Indian Airlines, who was given this task. So, one man was given the task. He was an officer and he might have been competent or might not have been competent. He might have been acting at somebody's behest or he might have been used his independent judgement. Why he took such a long time, that is also not known. These are the things which raised suspicion and in this atmosphere of suspicion, there was a loss of the confidence among the travelling public about the plane that there must be something wrong with the aircraft. There was something wrong in the procedure of acquisition of aircraft and, therefore somebody had picked up this aircraft;

[Sh. Amal Datta]

the person responsible for it had not given enough consideration to the safety of the passengers; he was only interested in lining his own pocket. That is the kind of attitude which prevailed at the time of crash which then took place. Even before the crash, we were hearing the information about the snags developed here and there and the plane had to come back and land. After that crash came, again one or two snags came with this type of aircraft and then the Government decided, in its wisdom—I think, it was a very wise decision—to ground the aeroplanes. Whatever Mr. Chidambaram might say about so many crashes had taken place and why those aeroplanes had not been grounded, the answer is, there was no suspicion in those days. The suspicion has come now because of the background in which the deal took place because of what had been happening in the other foreign deals and so on. So, I do not mean only the Minister of Civil Aviation can do it. The Government as a whole must establish a procedure whereby this kind of suspicion which is going to arise again and again in the case of deals with foreign countries, that there must be sufficient guarantee and safeguard, sufficient openness so that we can also, if any Member of Parliament is interested, can go and see what is happening. What is the procedure of selection, whether it has been properly evaluated; whether contract has been properly drawn up? Why all this must be kept as secret? I can understand that in Defence contract, some amount of secrecy is required. But it is too much secrecy. The power of keeping these things away from the public and the representatives of the public has given the bureaucracy and those who guide them—the political superiors—the opportunity to indulge in corruption. That is why, we say the Government must be an open Government. That is why, today I demand that all these paper must now be placed before us. The Government must redeem its pledge of openness, pledge of right to information today. This deal is one of great concerns to the people. What is going to happen? The Government has said they are not going to

fly this plane until it is cleared by the court of inquiry sitting in Bangalore headed by a High Court judge. (*Interruptions*)

I think, the present Government stand in this respect in grounding these planes has been the correct step and there cannot be any quarrel in the way, Mr. Chidambaram tried to present his case against grounding of the planes, which is quite absurd. The Government cannot discharge its responsibility when there is so much loss of confidence in the plane itself. Well, they can even do without these planes. I have suggested that last time but the hon. Minister did not accept my suggestion. I said, so far as the options are concerned, we can cancel the options. We cannot sustain any loss because if the planes are so much in demand, somebody will take them off the Airbus Industry at a price which we are oblige to pay and even more, even at a higher price.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT: This is the real intention of creating this whole trouble.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: I do not know. I say that if this is the position there cannot be any question of loss. They themselves say this. Mr. Chidambaram gave the figure of 572 and odd orders for these planes still pending. In that case it will not be difficult for us to sell off our planes without suffering any loss because of loss of confidence. That confidence can be restored only by Court of inquiry. Unless that is done, the Government must not buy the planes. That is all. I again beseech the Minister because it is his decision to make all the papers available to us, particularly the files regarding the acquisition of the planes, to some extent out of which this FIR has been drafted. This will allow us and will help us to appreciate the circumstances better and to what extent there could have been these irregularities in the selection and in the entering into the contract with the Airbus Industries. This will also help up to ascertain what extent this country's interest has been sacrificed; to what extent imaginary purchases have been made of the plane which was not there, of an engine which was not there. We must have

all those papers. I would again request the Minister and in that request I join hands with Shri Sathe that the papers have to be made available to us now so that there can be a meaningful discussion of all the aspects of this acquisition and then continuation with these planes.

SHRI A.N. SINGH DEO (Aska): Mr. Chairman, Sir, while listening to the hon. Members from the otherside, I am reminded of a story in Oriya, "Deul bheetare kiye, Moon Kadil khai nahi" Probably, Mr. Chairman, you will not understand it, but if the hon. Speaker had been there, he would have understood it. I would explain the story. There was a poojary in a temple. He put some plantains for the Bhog. To answer the nature's call he had to go out and so his assistant was there. The poojary asked his assistant to look after the Bhog. After having come back he saw all the plantains were eaten away. Finding this, he asked him as to who came to the temple. The Assistant said that he had not eaten the plantains. So, the reply was: He had not eaten the plantains. Out hon. Members have started arguing about this deal. We are demanding that an inquiry should be made and the irregularities should be exposed. We should know if any under-hand dealing has taken place. Suddenly, they say: "No, we have not done anything. We have not taken away anything. We have not taken any commission." So, that is the unfortunate attitude of our friends there.

Sir, another hon. Member from the other side is talking that this Government is having collusion with the other Members and exposing files, documents and other things. There is a dictum when we are in the Opposition, we oppose, we expose and we depose. So, we have deposed them. We have opposed them also. So, whether we are in the Government or Opposition, we must expose every single act that has been committed by the then Government. If there are irregularities, they are against the interests of the nation. So, we are trying to expose those irregularities now. I would beseech our hon friends on the other side that they

should not have any objections in this regard. They talk of witch-hunting. We are just going into the irregularities of this deal. But this witch-hunting, this scandal has not been fabricated or created. It is there on record. That is why, we are demanding that that should be properly investigated. I would like to remind them that they tried to create evidence, they tried to falsify the records. They went to some little Island of St. Kitts and tried to create records where Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh and his son alleged to have got the fantastic amount. Who created that record? You are creating records. When we think of that, we cannot imagine that your can stoop to such a low ebb to denigrate your position. Now it is a fact and everything has been rough to the debate in this House. And you say: we are doing witch hunting. It is most unfortunate. The whole thing is that our friends on the other side have made a lot of comments about the technicalities of this whole thing. Since the technical people have given a lot of certificates and they have praised it and they have not said anything against it, we should not say anything against it. But when this Airbus came into being, when it was purchased, when it was brought into line, the Indian Aircraft Engineers' Association warned the Government in November 22 that this was not a proper plane to be purchase and we should not fly that in Indian conditions. This was said on 22nd November.

PROF. N.G. RANGA (Guntur): Of which year?

SHRI A.N. SINGH DEO: Last year, that is 1989. It is a fact that the Indian Aircraft Engineers' Association who are experts in this line have opposed this very introduction of this fleet of airbus. Our friend was referring to the case of getting certificate from the Federal Aviation of America which is supreme in this line which passes the supreme certificate for the whole world, to whichever country they have that plane. You cannot fly the plane otherwise. That authority was initially reluctant to give certificate to this A320. After a lot a pressure, they gave the licence to this airbus to fly.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Pressure from whom and when?

SHRI A.N. SINGH DEO: Not from your Government. From the airbus company. The whole point is that, our friends have said that due to one accident, the whole fleet of airbus have been grounded. There have been so many accidents involving other planes, but nothing has been done. I will give you an illustration. When you are married to someone for years who is your wife, you can tolerate here when she goes out a little or when she makes some mistake, but when you get married to a girl, a young girl and marry her through some underhand transaction without knowing what disease she has, naturally, this creates a lot of suspicion. Naturally, you will have to ground it. Why do you compare the airbus with boeing? We are not talking of old airbus. We are talking about Airbus 320 and not the old ones which have been there for a long time in India. We are not talking of Boeing 737 and 757. We are talking of the Airbus which was purchased under peculiar circumstances. That is what is creating suspicion. The point is that, under what condition was this purchased? Secondly, I would like to make one point. When there was an accident in France during the Air Show, even the Franc Union Syndicate de personnel Navigant Technique Airmen's Trade Union in France has demanded that A 320 should be grounded and should not be made to fly in this country. This is another engineering firm of France which also demanded that this should be grounded. Inspite of the fact that there are so many technical difficulties where the pilots do not know what is the pay-load-whether it is 22 tonnes or 18 tonnes or whether it should take so many passengers and so many tonnes of load-this has been purchased.

A decision was taken already to purchase aircrafts. Suddenly the then Prime Minister goes to France-and I do not know what happens there-comes back and we find that the whole exercise that was going on for four years got changed overnight and a decision taken to purchase A-320 aircrafts. The circumstance under which these air-

crafts were purchased is creating the suspicion. Also there are doubts about the technicalities of this aircraft.

That is why it is the right of the Members to know everything. As Members we have brought it for discussion; the Minister has not brought it for discussion. So, I would request the hon. Minister to apprise not only this House but also the nation as to what are the conditions under which these aircrafts were purchased.

[Translation]

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): Mr. Chairman, Sir, some questions were raised when the Airbus A-320 crashed and we hoped that the hon. Minister would give appropriate answer to them and clear the doubts. We raised those very questions in this session itself. When a discussion on this subject took place. The fundamental question was that whether the aircraft which we had purchased was technically sound and whether the air-worthiness of this aircraft was evaluated as per the procedure laid down for it? At that time also, I wanted to know from the hon. Minister the names of those countries which had given the A-320 aircraft the certificate of air-worthiness. As examples, my friends have mentioned the names of some countries including Canada, United State of America, Great Britain, Germany, Netherlands, Jordan etc., which have issued air-worthiness certificate in its favour.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, while the interest of Airbus is identified with European interest and the interest of Boeing is identified with American interests, and as such there is a business rivalry, yet the supreme technical authority of the United States, Aviation Evaluation Authority has declared A-320 aircraft as safe for operations in that country. We wanted to know whether in our country, a proper evaluation of its airworthiness had been done or not? I would also like to know whether the pilots, whom we expected to fly these aircrafts were adequately trained or not? Were the airports from where these aircraft were to be flown, were technically

well equipped or not? Was the process of making them well-equipped within a specified time initiated or not? There is yet another question which requires elucidation as to whether this aircraft cost us more or less than the Boeing aircraft. Along with this arises the question whether this aircraft that we have purchased is cost effective or not or whether it is a futuristic aircraft or not? But it is a matter of great regret that the hon. Minister has deliberately ignored technical soundness aspect of the aircraft. He has left it out, not out of ignorance, but an effort was made to ignore it deliberately because the hon. Minister has come to know that the Committee that he had constituted has not raised any finger at the technical aspects of this aircraft. Apart from this, even those officials through whom an inquiry was conducted have also recognised it as a technically sound aircraft. On the basis of the information received, it can be said that no fault regarding the technical design of the aircraft has come to light. Therefore, before the hon. Minister and the Government, I too am going to say the same thing, which hon. Shri Amal Datta and his other friends sitting there had mentioned, as to why the Congress party was trying to evade a discussion on it? This is not the truth. In fact, we were the first to demand a discussion on this subject and this can be verified from the records of the House but today our suspicions were confirmed by the manner in which you made an effort to bring that subject in the form of a Calling Attention under Rule 197 and its wording and that suspicion was further confirmed when our hon. friends pursued only one aspect of questioning. It has been confirmed that an attempt is being made to separate the two issues, viz., the technical competence of the aircraft and the purchase of the aircraft, from the various aspects of the whole issue, so that political mileage could be derived by creating a misunderstanding about the purchase of the aircraft. Therefore, in violation of all the rules, an effort has been made to impose a discussion on this subject in the House. On the basis of a sinister alliance, an effort was made to impose this discussion in the House, without paying any heed to the rules under which a

discussion could be held. But, despite all this, we would welcome any amount of discussion on this issue if the Government is not satisfied with today's discussion and it feels that still some more misunderstanding needs to be created, which it failed to do today through its statements and through the oration of its allies, then it is free to initiate another discussion on this issue and we would welcome it. My friends have discussed this issue in detail and I would like to mention two three things more. We would like to say that it is not a question of running away from the discussion as alleged by them. In fact, we wanted a discussion on this subject, but the Government, in a conspiratorial way, wanted to take an initiative by imposing this discussion. The motive behind is to create some misunderstanding. The hon. Minister wants to escape from the responsibility for demoralising the civil aviation industry and for the loss that is being suffered by the Indian Airlines as a result of the hon. Minister's decision to ground the entire Airbus fleet. Therefore, in view of this, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the number of fatal air accidents that have taken place and whether decision was taken to ground all those particular aircraft after conducting inquiries into the cause of accidents, during the period from 1953 till date? Did similar accidents take place in other countries also? Has the International Civil Aviation Organisation issued any guidelines in this regard? Has the decision to ground these aircraft been taken on the basis of those guidelines?

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the second thing I would like to know from the hon. Minister the type of snags that are noticed new aircraft are inducted. Let us also get acquainted with them, please be kind enough to enlighten us regarding the record of those snags. Lastly, you have formed the Ramdas Committee under which you want to partly cover up your decision of grounding these aircraft and partly on the basis of terms and conditions laid down while purchasing the aircraft. I would like to know those terms and conditions. You are making several excuses for not disclosing those terms and conditions. What were those terms and conditions? As emphasised

[Sh. Harish Rawat]

by all of you friends here, what was the technical background of the members of that committee? You please tell us about the technical competence of those people who were assigned such an important work.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the most important factor is that this aircraft was given a certificate of airworthiness by the Director General of Civil Aviation without which it cannot be put into operation. So I would like to know the name of that Director General, who issued the certificate of airworthiness to Airbus A-320 and the engine 2500, because he is the only competent authority to issue a certificate of airworthiness. You took the decision to ground the entire Airbus fleet. This means that you apprehended some shortcomings in the aircraft of the Indian Airlines. So, kindly tell us whether any administrative action against the person who gave airworthiness certificate was taken or was he required by you?

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Arif Mohammad Khan is my friend and I have great regard for his sincerity and sharp intellect. Therefore, I would like to tell him that today the whole country expects one thing, i.e. the hon. Minister should kindly tell us as to the loss being incurred by the Indian Airlines as a result of grounding of the Indian Airlines fleet of Airbus and how is it going to be compensated? Because it seems from the statements made by some of the Members of your party that private parties are ready to buy these aircrafts, if this industry fails. It is our apprehension that some people thought of creating an atmosphere against this aircraft forcing the Government to sell these aircraft so that the private parties may take advantage of it. The decision of grounding the Airbus fleet that you are defending here is neither supported by the Board of Directors of Indian Airlines nor the Union Cabinet because the entire responsibility rests on your shoulders. The onus of proving that the decision to ground the aircraft was correct and that it was a technically sound decision rests on your shoulders. The loss that Indian

Airlines is suffering is attributed to your decision. Sir, we should be cautious enough to see to it that an industry which has been able to stand on its own with great difficulty, an industry which is going to compete with other such industries of the world, an industry which was competing with the advanced airlines of the world with a professional outlook, is not get ruined. During the course of discussion, last week a B.J.P. member suggested handing over of the operations of Indian Airlines and Air India to private parties. It should be allowed to happen that due to a decision by a person like you, who believes in the ideology of Pandit Nehru and Shrimati Indira Gandhi, the Indian Airlines, which is symbol of our socialist commitment is sold to private parties. Indian Airlines should not fall a victim. Therefore, I would like to tell you that if you admit the mistake of taking that decision, we will support you. You please stand up and admit it instead of creating doubts about this purchase and trying to hide the undesirability of your decision.

SHRI SANTOSH BHARTIYA (Farukhabad): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am repeating what I have said in the Press. I am conscious of the fact that I am speaking amidst some very good lawyers. I do not know what would have happened to the Congress (I), had these 4-5 lawyers not been here. The grand old man of the House is present in the House and he is witness to all the crimes and sins. But unfortunately he is in the Opposition and fortunately I am on this side. Sir, we are not here to act as advocates for the Boeing Company or the Airbus Company. Some basic questions have arisen following the death of passengers in the air crash. One who ridicules the matter or does not consider kickbacks from foreign companies a serious matter is committing a crime against the country. Hon. Members are not participating in this discussion to be a party to this crime but to find out who is guilty. An investigation should be conducted even if there is an iota of doubt about such deaths. I am going to ask some questions from the hon. Minister and would like him to

answer in Yes or No.

Is it true that the Boeing Company was given a Letter of Intent after the laying of the Dilbagh Singh Committee Report?

Is it true that the offer of the Airbus company was received after this Letter of Intent was given?

Is it also true that when the offer was received the design was on paper only and it was guaranteed that the product is excellent?

Is it true that the Airbus company gave a guarantee in respect of items which had not yet been manufactured and the erstwhile Cabinet accepted it?

Is it true that no Committee was set up to consider the acceptance of this offer but only a cell was set up and that too a one-man cell?

Is it also true that Captain Bhasin who continued this one-man cell was a close friend of an Avro pilot who later became the Prime Minister of this country?

Will the hon. Minister be pleased to State when did Indian Airlines take a decision to buy the A-310 Airbus? Is it true that this decision was taken much in advance and the inquiry held subsequently was a mere eyewash? I would also like to know if the Janata Dal after coming into power has fixed responsibility for this one-year period delay? Has the Government found out who is responsible?

Is it true that the former Prime Minister told the French Prime Minister that if some flexibility is shown

[English]

a deal can be clinched.

[Translation]

To what extent was flexibility to be shown

and who was to receive the kickbacks? Were other airlines in favour of cancelling deals with Airbus company as they suspected defects in the aircraft's engine?

Is the C.B.I. investigating into the complicity of the former Prime Minister in this affair as the primary stage of this deal was formulated by the Prime Minister's Office?

Will the findings of this investigation be telecast over Doordarshan?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I agree with your demand to lay the relevant papers on the Table of the House. It is a question of grounding the entire fleet. I am sorry to say that the previous Government and its Prime Minister have made this country a testing zone for a foreign company manufacturing aircrafts. Surely there has been some corruption in this deal. The company made India a testing ground and played with the lives of the people to establish a world market for its new aircraft. All the relevant papers should be laid on the Table of the House. What generally happens with poor nations, has happened with us also. I would like to know how this deal was struck.

In the end I would like to thank you but I am sad to see some hon. Members speaking about this air crash and the deaths of passengers in a light-hearted manner. Their attitude is indeed shameful. Their reaction to this accident is most unbecoming of their status and cannot be described in words. With these words I conclude.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wish to let the House know that after the intervention by Shri Kamal Chaudhry, the hon. Minister for Civil Aviation will reply to the debate.

Shri Kamal Chaudhry.

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY (Hoshiarpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you for allowing me to participate in this debate. Most of the points have been covered. I have been a

[Sh. Kamal Chaudhry]

professional myself in the same field and would not repeat the points that have been made by other hon. Members. I would basically try to cover this particular flight and the accident.

16.13 hrs.

[DR. THAMBI DURAI *in the Chair*]

This flight IC 605 was bound for Bangalore and the aircraft Airbus A-320 crashed on 14.2.1990. As is normally required, a court of inquiry was immediately ordered by the Ministries but unfortunately just after five days, the aircraft was grounded on 19.2.1990. And it has been seventy five days that this full fleet has been on the ground and its pilots are not flying these aircrafts. IAC is incurring a heavy loss amounting to crores of rupees per day.

A discussion under Rule 193 did take place on 29.3.1990. It is unfortunate that today's day has been chosen again by the Government, maybe to try some more mud-slinging in order to cover up what wrongs had been done by the Government. It was to come up in the form of a Calling Attention motion, where only one side was to speak. Fortunately, the Chair did give a ruling and allowed the Opposition Members also to participate.

Now, this aircraft is one of the most modern aircrafts of its type, that is, medium range and medium body aircraft. It has a good fuel economy in terms of number of gallons consumed per kilometre per passenger seat of aircraft. It has good passenger comforts, it has all-weather flying capability, it can fly in adverse weather, it has futuristic design, that is, it is capable of lasting for next twenty years or so without becoming obsolete or even obsolescent.

It has a fly by wire transmission system where transmission is done by electrical pulses; it means that transmission can take

place in micro seconds. It has a computer system. It is backed up by two more computer systems. It means if one fails, the second will take over; if the second fails, then the third will take over. So, there are no chances of things going wrong. It has a capacity to go optimum without over-stressing the aircraft. That is the main importance of this modern aircraft.

About this particular aircraft, Capt. C.A. Fernandez was flying the aircraft, and it was his first route check for command endorsement under the supervision of Capt. Gopujkar, check-pilot of A-320 aircraft. It is very relevant to this particular accident; that is why I have mentioned it. The pilot was on a Very High Frequency Omni Range (VOR) Radar Approach at the Bangalore Airport. It was identified 42 kms short of the runway and it was supposed to be a visual landing. Things went on fine, but the pilot did go wrong; he had failed to carry out certain checks. Till about 35 seconds short of the crash, things were fine. But the aircraft was slightly flying high with high speed. Obviously the throttle had come down. But in order to intercept proper guide path, the speed was reduced and it had started coming down; it continued to come down below the guide path and the speed was being reduced. What has happened is this. He (the pilot) did not take proper action till 24 seconds short of the accident. The check-pilot (Capt. Gopujkar) told Capt. C.A. Fernandez about the descent; and 21 seconds short of the accident, he had again mentioned about keeping the 'flight director' off, because his own flight director was not put off. Then 17 second short of this accident, Capt. Gopujkar had mentioned about it although he himself did not do so. Capt. Gopujkar should have put off his own Flight Director at this stage. Then he had also realised that he was still on the auto-pilot; he had also mentioned about it to him (Capt. Fernandez) 12 seconds short of the accident. The pilot was too late. By the time he realised that it was too late, he had opened the throttle. But computer would take its own time. There was a delay of 0.5 seconds which was absolutely correct for the engine.

The Inspector has mentioned in his findings that there was nothing wrong with the aircraft; proper checks were carried out. He has specifically mentioned that this was the fault of the Capt and his No. 2 also, because at that stage Altitude Acquisition Mode was activated indicating that a selection on the FCU panel was close to 'Minimum Descent Altitude' of 3270 feet. For an air field like Bangalore, it should have been selected to 6000 feet.

As far as this accident is concerned, only one thing has been mentioned in the recommendations. That also does not reflect anything on the aircraft. That is, a protection should be available to ensure that the Open Descent Mode is not engaged below 1,000 feet on the Radio Altimeter. Whenever any accident takes place, pilots are liable to go wrong. If they feel that there could be a repetition of this mistake, some restriction is imposed so that this is not repeated by other pilots. The same recommendation was also made by the National Transport Safety Board.

In addition to my normal flying in the Indian Airforce, I had also been a Flight Commander, a Unit Flight Safety Officer, a Station Flight Safety Officer of forward bases in the eastern and the western sectors. I have had the opportunity to induct a new aircraft in the Indian Airforce in 1982, that is Mig 23. And prior to that in 1979-80 we had gone in for conversion of a Flight Squadron from an old aircraft to a new aircraft. We had given training to our pilots. Picking up the best pilots from the Indian Airforce and picking up the best ground crew all over from the Airforce to induct a new aircraft. Be it Mig 21, be it Mig 23, Mig 29 or Mirage 2000. It is unfortunate that it had been mentioned by some hon. Members that these aircrafts are too sophisticated for India to fly. These two Fighter aircrafts which I had mentioned, Mig 29 and Mirage 2000 are the best available in the world. I will say that they are much more sophisticated aircraft than this particular Airbus A-320. Our Indian pilots and ground crew are absolutely capable of flying these aircrafts and maintaining them. People did ask me a question, what could have gone

wrong, on the day of this accident. With my experience, I had said exactly the same thing that was mentioned in the report by the Inspector of Accidents, that there is a likelihood of the pilot going wrong where he was on the radar control approach and he could have been on the auto pilot and he has not taken over manually.

We have had enough of mud-slinging for the last two years, especially in the last four months. But things are going wrong and they will go from bad to worse. I know that the hon. Minister is very capable and I have known him for years. I do respect him and like him... (*Interruptions*) I am sure all the notes which are being exchanged between his Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office would be stopped and he will take his own decision and prevent the loss of crores of rupees per day due to the grounding of this fleet. This fleet has been on the ground for the last seventy five days. I know that the Indian Airlines Corporation is already in a tight spot... (*Interruptions*) I am quite confident that the Minister will finally intervene and tell the Prime Minister's Office that he is going to start operating these aircrafts... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (Sivaganga): Indian Airlines has said that they will not take the decision to resume the flights because the decision to stop the flights was taken by the Minister. It is public knowledge Sir... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: He can give his opinion. When it comes to public, he has no authority... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Indian Airlines has said: "We have not taken the decision to ground the aircrafts. We can not take the decision to resume the flights. Therefore, the Minister must take the decision. They have sent the file to him twice..." (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Is this your viewpoint?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: This is the viewpoint of the public.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: What have you got to do with public point of view on this?

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHARY: The first point I mentioned about loss of crores of rupees per day. The second thing is inconvenience to the passengers who want to go from place A to place B. Thirdly these aircraft are on the ground. I know the difficulties of keeping an aircraft on the ground especially a fine, and serviceable aircraft on the ground. Even the engine has to be inhibited. That is, the full fuel system is to be drained out; the oil is to be inducted into the aircraft system so that it does not corrode, does not rust and does not create problems. Various checks are repeatedly carried out, maybe weekly or fortnightly or monthly. And when the aircraft is going to be finally put on the line, all these checks are repeated again. It costs a lot of money and wastage of lot of manhours. Finally, the pilots will start losing their licences. They have to keep flying regularly. I can well understand the present predicament of the Airlines in trying to keep these pilots active and their licences valid.

I will conclude by once again requesting the Minister not to get carried away by these pressures which are being put on him by maybe the Prime Minister's Office and other friends of his on the left and the right, who are trying to sustain this Ministry, and he will immediately commence operation of this Airbus A-310 fleet.

With this words, I conclude.

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU (Balasore): Not that I participated in the debate earlier on this subject I am rising to speak here. I am really distressed to hear the speeches made by the Opposition benches. I do not know whom they are going to defend. Perhaps, they are going to defend their former Prime Minister, but they miserably failed. And now they are thoroughly exposed publicly. They argued as if they are arguing for a

company. They said that the Airbus A-320 had been sold to so many countries; its engine was in perfect condition, it is futuristic etc. etc.

The two points are involved. I must earnestly request the hon. Members from the Opposition to bear with me that the charges of corruption are above persons and parties. Let these be thoroughly discussed and analysed. If this Parliament and the country cannot do this, then where will it be discussed and analysed? You know that one Prime Minister of Pakistan had to lose his job and perhaps sent to jail because he made a shady deal. I do not draw any nexus from that towards our former Prime Minister, but this is a fact.

I am really sorry to say that Mr. Sathe has said that these fellows go on spreading rumours and want to malign the former Prime Minister. But when the gentlemen himself is getting maligned, who else can do this? If you want to kill yourself by committing suicide, can anybody save you? This is the position.

Let us not mix up two things. One is about hush hush deal and the other is corruption charges.

PROF. MAHADEO SHIWANKAR (Chimur): I am on a point of order. There is no quorum in the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the quorum bell be rung.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, there is quorum. Let Mr. Samarendra Kundu continue.

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU: So, these are the two aspects of the whole question. One is about the corruption charges and another is about hush hush deal. It is true that had the accident not taken place where 90 lives were lost, perhaps these corruption charges or the hush hush deal would not have come open. These are two things, but let us not try to confuse one with the other. Now, about these corruption

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charges, I do not want to repeat. But, Prof. N.G. Ranga says with hands on his chest that it has not created any suspicion in his mind. Between August, 1984 and August, 1985 all that took place after the Cabinet passed. Letter of intent was fair. Then, unsolicited offer comes from the concerned party. Let him say that it has not created any suspicion. If it is correct, then it must be enquired into and even politician and officer both of them should be booked. Shri Vasant Sathe support the officers and Shri Chidambaram support the politicians. So, this House must demand a thorough enquiry into the corruption charges. I am the last person to go in a plane until and unless its air-worthiness is cleared by the highest officers.

In order to advise to the Parliament also here Shri Chidambaram also quoted the report of the Inspector of Accidents. I do not know whether Inspector of Accidents has made certain reports. The inspector said that it is not due to the fault of the pilot. Now, in view of the opinion of the inspector and in view of the Aeronautical Engineers Association, who had said three months ago that it would be dangerous to fly in this plane because it might cause a mishap as it had happened. In view of this, I would like to know whether Government of India is going to operate again this plane. I would like that atleast Government must thoroughly examine and see its air-worthiness. They must be satisfied and only then they should give green signal for the plane to take off. Every week, every month we must be losing tonnes of money. But, in one such hush hush deal that clinched if you are able to point out 175 crores of money which is given as kick back money, then perhaps no officer or politician will have courage to play with the money of the poor people in the country. Therefore, the demand must be forceful. This demand is diluted when I read in between, if I analyse the speech of the main speakers on the other side. I am really sorry. Therefore, I would like the Government should go through the entire case to see whether there is a *prima-*

facie case. FIR is not filed in a court usually. FIR is filed before a police officer in a police station from a *prima facie* case. He does the investigation and if you go on telling everything about the investigation, then nothing will come out.

Everybody—the Air-Bus company, the Boeing company—is trying to gain over certain things and is trying to see that the truth is not disclosed. I am not going into the documents, but here Satheji made quite a fuss about the report of the Federal Aviation Authority. He quoted the Federal Aviation Authority. I just quote here one sentence: "The FAA had serious misgivings about the sophistication of the technology being used in the aircraft. It argued that 'man should control the machines and not vice versa'. But after tremendous persuasion by Airbus Industries"—Mr. Sathe, Mr. Chidambaram, kindly bear—"... after tremendous persuasion by Airbus Industrie, it relented and gave the certificate to the manufacturers." You see, Sir, I want a ticket to get into the plane. In such a disputed report, how do you ask me to get into the plane? Sir, I belong to a trade union organisation, a workers' organisation. I thought it appropriate to quote a few lines: "The Union Syndicate de Personnel Navigant Technique, an airmen's trade union in France, has demanded that all the A-320 in France be grounded until the 'first indications' of the cause of the Bangalore crash are available." Sir, the Bangalore crash has created some sort of a problem all over the world. It has shocked the entire world. It has become a global problem now. It is not a very easy thing that you just go on defending and say that you are defending Boeing or we are defending Air-Bus. We are not defending anybody, we are defending the interests of the people. We are defending the safety of the passengers and if there are some losses, the country will see who are responsible for creating those losses. It has been argued that it is being given to the private sector. You should be thoroughly disillusioned that it is not going to be given to the private sector. If this sector is further strengthened, more and more profit will flow. But the people like the supermost and, at the same time, the corrup-

tion must be unearthed. Whoever is responsible, must be punished.

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): Mr. Chairman, Sir, first I would like to thank the hon. Members Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav, Shri Vasant Sathe Ji, Shri Bhabani Shankar Hota, Mahendra Singh Pal Ji, Shri Jaswant Singh Ji, my dear friend Shri Chidambaram, Shri Amal Data, Shri A.N. Singh Deo, Shri Harish Rawat, Shri Santosh Bhartiya, Shri Kamal Chaudhry and Shri Samarendra Kundu, for having participated in this discussion. Despite few points of differences here and there, I think the Members have expressed themselves for very strict enforcement of safety standards in airlines.

The speech of Shri Chidambaram was of particular interest to me and the only thing I can say about all the points that he made is that it was full of terminological inexactitude. He is a very good lawyer, a capable lawyer and, in fact, when he inadvertently addressed the Chair as 'Me Lord', I think it was not merely out of habit but he himself knows that his arguments were not the arguments of a Parliamentarian; his arguments were the arguments of a lawyer. Exactly, Sir, that was my feeling because that is how he tried to distort the facts. For instance, he said in his speech many things. First of all, we are merely discussing irregularities, reported irregularities in A-320 deal. In this discussion we are not supposed to discuss air-worthiness, the Bangalore crash, etc. etc. All these extraneous issues were brought into discussion like how good the plane is, how 27 countries are using it, how many orders have been placed on the Airbus Company for the purchase of these aircrafts and if any other countries are using it. Then the question is raised, how it is good for those countries and it is bad for India. Sir, I am not going to discuss all these issues because this discussion is confined to the subject of reported irregularities in the deal. We have discussed earlier the unfortunate accident outside Bangalore. About air-worthiness, I don't think I am competent to give opinion on that. Of

course, if there are some certificates, if there are some documents, if the hon. Members want me to lay them on the Table of the House, I would agree to lay them on the Table of the House. In fact, I have never raised any question about the air-worthiness of the plane. I am not the right person to speculate about the causes of accident. (*Interruptions*) Sir, this is not the first time that I am saying so. I have maintained continuously from the day the crash took place outside Bangalore, that it is not proper for me or any anybody else to speculate about the causes of the accident.

SHRI A. CHARLES: What is the reason for grounding the airbus? That is the basic thing.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, my good friend is agitated. I am coming to that point. But my problem is that I can give him facts, I cannot give him understanding. If he refuses to understand, I cannot help it. The point I am making is that continuously I have been saying that about air-worthiness, I am not the right person to talk. For the causes of the accident, the moment it took place, it is a statutory requirement that the Inspector of Inquiry comes into existence for establishing the causes of the accident. Within four hours, after the crash, I along with the Senior Officials of the Civil Aviation Ministry reached Bangalore. We realised the gravity of the situation and the seriousness and then we decided on the spot itself that the Inspector of Inquiry is not enough and we will appoint a Court of Inquiry headed by a High Court Judge. As soon as the Court of Inquiry is appointed, the Inspector of Inquiry legally becomes a part of the Court of Inquiry. Mr. Chidambaram was quoting from the documents. He was quoting the report given by the Inspector of Inquiry. But after we announced the appointment of the Court of Inquiry, that report will not come to the Civil Aviation Ministry. The report will go to the Court of Inquiry. The moment it goes to the Court of Inquiry, it becomes the public document.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Do you mean

to say that you have not got the report?
(Interruptions)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, I am not saying that. I do not know why he is jumping to the conclusions. I am not so capable as he is so to convey full meaning in just one sentence. I need more than one sentence to convey what I mean. Mr. Chidambaram is more capable. He can convey it in just one sentence. I am not that capable. Please give me some time. In fact, I am going

ther, I am not merely saying that I have got the report. The point I am making is that when the Inspector of Inquiry submits the report to the Court of Inquiry, it becomes a public document, it does not remain a privileged document, as he was claiming that this is a privileged information. In fact, Sir, in the absence of Court of Inquiry, the report by the Inspector of Inquiry, about its conclusions it is for the Government to take them into consideration or to reject them or to accept them. But, Sir, after the appointment of the Court of Inquiry, the Report of the Inspector of Inquiry is merely part of the evidence. Like any other evidence which will come before the Court of Inquiry, this evidence will also be examined, this will be cross-examined and then it will be for the Court of Inquiry what kind of importance or what kind of weightage they want to give to the conclusions of the inspector of Inquiry. So, Sir, it is not a privileged document. In fact, after it has been submitted to the Court of Inquiry, anybody can quote, particularly anybody who is the interested party can go before the Court of Inquiry, can ask for a copy of the Report and use it. But Mr. Chidambaram was using it, and he was saying in the same tone, 'Well, I am very happy'.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM (Salem): Was it the same Court?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Now it is for you. If you still cannot understand, then I can't help you.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: Now we have understood.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, on the other point which he greatly emphasised, orders for 542 aircraft have been placed on Airbus industry by 27 countries. I would like to inform the hon. Members, through you, Sir, how grand and how true this claim is, which has been made by Mr. Chidambaram. (Interruptions) Okay. I am not referring to Satheji because he is my senior.

Sir, it is true that orders for the acquisition of 542 aircrafts A-320 have been placed on the Airbus industry. But, Sir, the factual position is that V-2500 engines—when we talk about the Airbus-320, it means Airbus-320 fitted with V-2500 engine and, Sir, again I would like to emphasise that I am not going into the question of technical superiority or inferiority, I am not going into the question of airworthiness I am merely trying to point out that the claim which has been made by Mr. Chidambaram is not true. Sir, A-320 fitted with V-2500 engines, the combination which we have got—in fact, we were rather the 'launch' customers, we launch the product.

SHRIMATI SUBHASHINI ALI (Kanpur): We are the guinea-pig.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Well, if you want to use that phrase, you can use it, because, sir, at the time of this unsolicited offer and the time when we took the decision to place the order on the Airbus industry, it was the first major order on them. I am not saying that it was the first order, but it was the first major order.

Sir, as I stated earlier, orders for the acquisition of 542 planes are there, but about A-320 fitted with V-2500 engines, the total number which has been delivered is one to Adria and 15 to Braniff—that is an Airline which has not operated this aircraft even for a day, though they say that they are not doing so for commercial reasons and the Airlines is almost lying closed. The other airline is the Cyprus Airline which has three aircrafts and we are the only airline who got 15 of them and who were using them also. One of them was destroyed in the crash and

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14 are with us now. Most of them are with CFM engines and are not with V-2500 engines. The other point is why did we ground them?

[Translation]

SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL (Rajgarh): Just now information has been received that there is a fire incident in Shastri Bhavan and the fire brigade has not been able to control it so far. Fire accidents are occurring frequently in Delhi and this is a matter of concern. First it was Vigyan Bhavan where a fire broke out, then almost every day we hear of fire accident in Jhuggi-Jhonparies in one part of the city or the other. May I know the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to protect Government buildings.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister reply now. Please do not interrupt him.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, why are you stopping him? This is a serious matter. The Deputy Prime Minister is here and he can speak for the whole Government. He can find out and inform the House. (Interruptions)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, I am immediately conveying the message to the hon. Home Minister. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will get the information after sometime.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, this matter was raised in Zero Hour also. Just now, the hon. Member has mentioned that still there is fire. If Shastri Bhavan is still burning, then it is a very serious matter. (Interruptions)

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum): Sir, we do not know whether we are safe here. It

is a very serious matter. Even in Zero Hour it was brought to the notice of the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Already the Minister has informed that he will find out and inform you.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, we agree. Let the Minister continue now. But is he assuring us that he will get us the information before he completes his reply. (Interruptions) What is the difficulty? Somebody can telephone and find out.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, as soon as the point was made, I have said that I am conveying the message to the hon. Home Minister. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can get the information after sometime.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, I was talking about as to why the decision was taken to ground the fleet. In Bangalore itself, the day after the crash took place, when the newspaper-men asked me about the report from France where pilots have pointed out some major design defects, I said that I cannot take notice of the press report. I said that I will have to ascertain the facts. I would like to draw the attention of Shri Chidambaram and the hon. Member who has made this point. I am on record of having said that because of one crash, the fleets are not grounded. I am emphasising it again that this decision was not taken because one plane had crashed outside Bangalore. Soon after the crash, four major snags have developed in three days' time, where it went to the extent that the plane was brought back and the snag was rectified. The passengers were informed about it and the passengers refused to board the same plane. What do we do? After all, for an airline, unless we are able to maintain and keep the public confidence, how is it possible to operate the airline? Some hon. Members have said—nobody is ready to take the responsibility for grounding the fleet. I do not know where from they got this idea. I take full responsibility for having taken this decision. I am responsible

for it. The Ministry of Civil Aviation is responsible for it. I do not know who is giving you this idea that nobody is ready to take the responsibility: file is travelling between the PM's office and the Civil Aviation Ministry. Files do go from one Ministry to another Ministry. Mr. Chidambaram is more conversant with that. The Government has already taken the decision.

The other day, the point had been made that this Government seemed to be in a dilemma; they are not able to take a decision. I said, "Yes we are in a dilemma. It is because, on the one hand, it is the question of having invested Rs. 2500 crores. After all, this is nation's hard earned money. On the other hand, it is the question of safety of the travelling public". Rs. 2500 crores of nation's money is involved. We would like it to serve the national interest in the best possible way. On the other hand, just for economic reasons, should we compromise with the safety of the travelling public? That we are not going to do. The upper-most consideration in the mind of the Government is safety of the travelling public and enforcement of safety standards in Indian Airlines. Then comes the comfort of the passengers, facilities for the passengers, and then comes economy. It cannot be the other way round.

I was referring to the first decision, i.e. grounding the fleet. I have clarified that it was not because of the crash. In fact, I have said that earlier. There is no question of giving me all these details that whenever any crash had taken place, what have you done to the fleet. That is not the reason for grounding the entire fleet. The reason was different. Possibly you have not tried to follow it. The reason here is totally different. Now the Government has taken the decision and the decision is this. I was responsible for the decision and I take full responsibility for it. Now, I would say, not merely I have taken the decision, but the Government has taken the decision. I am not saying about air worthiness but I am saying about the safety. Unless we are satisfied ourselves fully about the safety aspects, we are not going to resume operation of these planes.

Ramadass Committee has been mentioned by the hon. Member, Shri Harish Rawat. He was right that they did not point out any technical or design defect. They were not supposed to look into that question. If you want me to read the terms of reference of the Ramadass Committee, I can read them out, for you. The Ministry of Civil Aviation constituted a special technical committee to evaluate the state of preparedness of the Indian Airlines for the safe operation of Air-Bus A-320 aircraft. The members were: Air Marshal Ramdass, Capt. K.M. Madhen, Director of Operations (Retd.) Air India, Captain J.R. Tirulokkar, Deputy Director of Operations (Training) Air India, Shri S.V. Vaishno Pai, Deputy Director of Engineering-Technical, Air India (Retd.), Dr. J.C. Bhattacharjee, Defence Research Development Organisation, Hyderabad.

The terms of reference were: to examine the adequacy of the norms, the training programmes and its efficient implementation for the induction of the flight having due regard to the changed technology required. It is with regard to the changed technology required for safe operation of the A-320 aircraft.

- to examine the system followed by Indian Airlines for a qualitative evaluation of the flight crew in respect of the above and to recommend improvements thereof;
- to examine the adequacy of the training imparted to the aircraft's maintenance personnel for efficiently maintaining and servicing the new technology A-320 Aircraft;
- to examine the system followed by Indian Airlines for qualitative evaluation of the aircraft's maintenance personnel in respect of the above and to make recommendations for improvements thereof;
- to examine the adequacy of the shop equipment and maintenance infrastructure directly related to the

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maintenance of A-320 aircraft;

- to examine the adequacy of the ground handling facilities created for the operation of A-320 aircraft..."

Sir, it was basically to look into the question of preparedness of the Indian Airlines because we had placed such a major order on Airbus Industrie. We had decided to acquire 31 aircraft—originally we placed the firm order for 19 aircraft and optional order for 12, which option we exercised and it became the firm order. After this crash there was a public outcry about the lack of facilities on the ground, at the airports. So, we thought it necessary that this question should also be examined. Therefore, this Committee was constituted. This was the Committee which was to go into the questions of any technical design defects, if they exist. This Committee was supposed to go into that question. It was meant to go into the question of the preparedness of the Indian Airlines.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT: As far as the technical aspect is concerned, who certified this?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I have already said that the question of airworthiness definitely cannot be an issue. That cannot be an issue. Today, we are discussing the reported irregularities in the deal. We are not discussing the airworthiness or any other question relating to this aircraft. We are discussing the reported irregularities in the deal. I do not know if I have been able to really convince you or not.

SHRISONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Tripura West): You have yourself stated that the confidence of the passengers is of utmost importance. You have yourself stated that unless this confidence is gained, you cannot support and reopen it. Who will decide that? We are asking that question only. Somebody has to decide it.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I am

to be blamed possibly if I have not been able to convey what I mean to say. When I say that it is not merely airworthiness that is involved, it comes to the safe operation of the aircraft and so many other questions are also involved. I am sure Shri Kamal Chaudhry, who has himself been a very very able pilot, will appreciate the point which I am making. It is not merely the question of airworthiness. So many other things are involved.

For instance, I would like to read out from the Report just two sentences. I would say, that again is not conclusive. It merely points out to certain defects, certain areas where we have not been able to prepare ourselves fully. If we have placed the order for 31 aircraft, then we should have been in a position to maintain it...

17.00 hrs.

[Translation]

If I don't have anything to feed my goat and keep an elephant, the elephant is bound to die in a few days for want of food.

[English]

The question is whether I am prepared to operate the big fleet of 31 aircraft. Today we have got only 15 but we have placed the order for 31 aircraft. That is why am saying that I would just like to read out two lines only:

"The Committee is of the opinion that the induction rate of the Airbus A-320 aircraft has been too rapid for operating and maintenance staff to assimilate and prepare themselves for the high technology demands of the aircraft..."

This doesn't relate to the question of airworthiness. Those who were taking the decision to acquire 31 aircraft were not taking any decision to prepare the Airlines fully for the operation of these 31 aircraft. Shri Chidambaram has asked: Who were those officers? Shri Chidambaram said this. He quoted from something. I do not know...

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: You know, Sir. From your document.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: O.K. He quoted from some speech of mine either in Lok Sabha or in Rajya Sabha where he said, I made these points. He asked whether they were correct and whether I said so and who were those officers who briefed me? I think, he has not read my speech carefully. Had he read my speech carefully, he would have immediately come to know that this was not a briefing done by the officials of my Ministry side. But these were the arguments which were given in support of the decision to acquire A-320 aircraft. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KALP NATH RAI (Ghosi): Who were those officers?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Who gave that argument?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: That famous evaluation cell which was created on an informal basis—one man cell. That famous evaluation committee of high technical competence which consisted of just one person. When I tried to know... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: Who was that officer?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Captain Bhasin. (*Interruptions*)

I cannot listen to two persons and speak at the same time. (*Interruptions*) I have given it. I was not very keen on that day. This is why, even now, I am not very keen. In fact, I have said again again that if there are any allegations, if there are any complaints of irregularities having been committed, then that can be taken care of separately. The question of air worthiness, the question of safe operation of the airlines, the question of strict enforcement of safety standards should not be linked with the question of irregularities in the deal. I have been emphasising on it. But I do not know sometimes even when I am not mentioning anything, my friends

sitting on the opposition benches get very much agitated. I have not given any occasion; I have not given any cause for them to feel agitated. It must be something inside them which agitates them on this issue because I have not said it at any time. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI K.S. RAO (Machilipatnam): We remember the time when you used to get agitated when allegations were made against the Congress...

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Are you following me?

SHRI K.S. RAO: Yes.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Then I stand corrected. If you are following me, I have nothing to say. I am not going into it. This was not the briefing done by the officials of my Ministry. I said that they were the arguments which were given by the so-called high, technically competent evaluation cell consisting of one man. When I tried to know from the officials as in the case of earlier technical evaluation committee headed by Air Chief Marshal Dilbagh Singh which was created by virtue of a resolution passed by the Board of Directors who created this cell, there is nobody to let me know who created this cell. There is no resolution on the Board of Directors. There is no resolution. (*Interruptions*)

The point I was making was about the claims of fuel efficiency. Now the officials had not told me that it would consume 19.06 per cent less fuel than the Boeing or it would be more fuel efficient. This was the claim which was made by the Technical Evaluation Cell and it has been proved that this claim was not right.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: And it was accepted by the Board. Sack that Board.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Well, definitely we will see.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: My appeal to the hon. Minister is only this. I think just as he thinks that I did not read his speech too correctly, I am afraid he did not follow my intervention too correctly. My complaint is not when he is the Minister. Some officials in the Ministry of Civil Aviation have taken a decision that this aircraft is fuel-efficient, this aircraft is this, this aircraft is that. That decision was accepted by the Board of Indian Airlines. That decision was processed at various levels, at PIB, at various committees, various officers and the Department of Expenditure. If all of them have put their signatures on that, and if the Board has accepted the decision that was given to it, then sack the Board. Where are those officers? I am not talking of the officers who give views; I am talking of the officers who take decisions. If officers had taken decisions on technical matters, give them to the Government and the Government has taken a decision, sack that Board, sack those officers. Where are you keeping those officers?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: This is a very dangerous doctrine cutting at the roots of the ministerial responsibility. The Minister has to take the responsibility for every decision. He cannot take cover under bureaucratic decisions. It cuts at the very root of the ministerial responsibility.

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU: Mr. Chidambaram raised a point about the fuel efficiency. I would just like to know from the Minister whether the Boeing Company also came to the Government and said that 'give us some time, we will also produce fuel-efficient aircrafts much better than the A-320s'. And it was denied. It is on record.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I was merely pointing out that the points made by Shri Chidambaram were not true. I do not want to go into these final details. As I said earlier, about all these technical questions I do not think it is proper for me to go into the details.

The other claim was about the increased fund generation and futuristic design. And

there is the most fantastic argument which was given by the Technical Evaluation Cell. Questions have been raised by hon. Members about the lack of facilities on the ground, about not having enough landing facilities and facilities at the airport. Now one of the arguments which was given in favour of the decision to acquire these 31 aircrafts which are claimed to be of futuristic design of 21st Century mark was that these 21st Century mark aircrafts can be flown on the run-way which are of the 18th Century mark! The argument given in favour of it was that no further investment will be needed on the ground. With the existing facilities on the ground we can use, we can operate these planes safely. And this was an additional factor.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura): Was it not that with the existing system that we have in each of our airports these planes can be flown? Was it not also said by them?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: This is exactly what I am saying. The argument given was that we won't need any expansion of the facilities on the ground and no further investment on the ground will be needed. What is to be proved? That this offer will be cheaper than the other offers and this will be cheaper in these respects.

Another major argument is that if you buy these planes you would not need any further investment on the ground, you would not need any further expansion of ground facilities. This is a very strange argument. I have said earlier also in this august House that there is a total mismatch. We took decision to invest Rs. 2400 crores on buying these aircrafts, but we have not spent any money on upgradation of facilities at the airports. Particularly after the Bangalore crash, we have taken up this matter with the hon. Finance Minister and I must say that he looked at the whole question. I have gone on record and said earlier also that we will further expand the services only if we expand the facilities on the ground. We will not make any compromise as far as the safety

of the operation is concerned. This matter was taken up with the Finance Ministry. Hon. Finance Minister has agreed to reduced the import duty on instruments which are used for the Instrumental Landing System and on navigational instruments, from 173 per cent to 25 per cent. Now, we are preparing the proposals and I am sure, our effort is that before next winter, we will be able to create more facilities not only at the international airports, but also at other airports.

About various dates which have been mentioned by the hon. Members, I have no hesitation in saying that most of these figures are correct.

Sir, the Dilbagh Singh Committee was set up on 22nd August 1983; the Committee submitted the report to the Board on 22nd May 1984; the approval by Board of Indian Airlines to acquire Boeing aircrafts—decision was taken on 13th June 1984; request by Indian Airlines to Government to issue letter of intent to Boeing Company was given on 18th June 1984; approval of Government for issuance of letter of intent was given on 20th July 1984; issuance of letter of intent to Boeing Company was done on 24th July 1984; submission of proposals by Indian Airlines to Government for its approval under section, was done on 12th September 1984; reference by Government to give comments on Airbus Industries, presentation received directly by it, was on 14th November. The strange thing is that the Indian Airlines was asked to sent the evaluation within three days. On 14th, the Ministry had written the letter. Now, Shri Chidambaram will appreciate that you can sack a Board of Director if it takes a decision which is wrong as far as the technical parameters are concerned, on their own. But when they are goaded by some other sources to take a decision, then such Board of Directors are not sacked. Ultimately I would say—I have said here—that if I am heading the Ministry, I would not take shelter behind the argument that officers are taking decisions. Even if officers are taking decisions, in the Parliamentary form of Government, the responsibility is mine. The buck must be stopped

somewhere. Somebody must accept the responsibility. I cannot use these arguments, if I am heading the Ministry. (*Interruptions*) I think, the agitation is there because you feel that people who are responsible for it are going to be exposed. You have a feeling and that is why you are agitated. Otherwise there is no reason for you to blame the officials. I would say, as long as I am heading the Ministry, even if a decision is taken, under my Ministry, by an official, the responsibility will be mine and I will accept the responsibility. I would not take shelter behind the argument that some other officers had taken the decision. In that way, parliamentary democracy cannot function. The buck must be stopped somewhere. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM NAIK (Bombay North): They are masters in passing the buck. (*Interruptions*)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: If some decision is taken on technical matters, do you say that the responsibility is with you?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: No, I am not saying that. I am saying that political responsibility is mine. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: But are you saying, "we shall not shield the officers?"

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: But when? The point I am making is that for political consideration if you try to influence a technical decision, then you lose the moral authority to sack the Board. This is what I am saying. (*Interruptions*)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: There are three aspects of it: technical decisions by technical committee; economic decisions on economic matters by economic experts; and the third is the political decision, which is the overall responsibility. What has been referred to by my friend, Mr. Chidambaram, is regarding technical and economic matters. For them, do you take the responsibility?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Yes. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: A technical decision has to be finally adopted by the political authority. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: No, I am coming to that.

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN: We do not want the reply from Mr. Somnath Chatterjee. (*Interruptions*) Let the Minister reply. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Well, Sir, I am to be blamed if they have not been able to appreciate the point which I was making.

The point I am making is that Shri Chidambaram made this point in the context of a decision which was taken in the year 1988—rather even earlier. Today, in 1990, he is asking this Government to sack the Board of Directors. The point I am making is that they are still there. All these things are being pointed out today. Surely, those who were adorning these benches till few months back, also knew about it. There is no question of their not knowing about it. We have not dug them out from the grave. They are in the Government files. But a decision was taken in 1988. You could not take any action. It explains the whole thing.

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA (Pali): Between the lines!

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: No, why go between the lines?

The question is that when you try to influence a technical or economical decision for non-technical and non-economical considerations or for political considerations, then you lose the moral authority to sack the Board or to take any action. Then, this is what happens. You take the decision. And when you come to the Opposition, you ask the new Government to sack the Board of

Directors. What a strange logic it is! This is exactly what happens then. This should have been done by you. The people of this country know. The Government of the day may or may not take a decision to sack somebody. But the people of this country know that if they do not behave, how to sack them.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: What about the period between 1977 to 1979? What did you say about the Government of 1977-79?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: So, what? I am not defending. Do you mean that I am defending the Government of 1977-79?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Yes.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: How? (*Interruptions*) I think, I did not even mention about 1977, Sir. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Do not think that you are permanently there. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Well, Sir. (*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: If you kindly yield, I will ask two questions as I did not speak. My party did not speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You could have participated.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Will you kindly clarify, if you know about it? Is there any truth in this? I have heard about it. I do not know, but you may be knowing that even the Ministry of Civil Aviation, at one stage, did not agree and they gave certain reasons for not agreeing. And it was some other high authority under whose instructions this was signed in 48 hours. This is my first question.

Now, I come to the second clarification. This pertains to the safety about which you are concerned. Is it a fact that regarding

coiling unit of these planes there was an in-built defect. As these kinds of planes should be able to deal with temperature upto 51 degrees this Instrument started slipping from 35 degrees. Though it was claimed that this model of planes at that degree, it is found that it was not so. Was there any such in-built technical defect found? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I have said earlier also that Government noticed certain irregularities having been committed and procedural volitions while concluding the deal. We took note of what we have noticed and also what appeared in the Press and thereafter, referred the matter to the investigating agencies who have already registered an FIR. I do not think that it is proper for me to go into the details further. About the second part of the question, with great respect to Smt. Geeta Mukherjee, I would like to make an appeal not only to her but to all the hon. Members, that questions regarding alleged irregularities and questions regarding airworthiness or safe operation or technical parameters should not be linked together. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: It is not a case of a good plane being purchased in an irregular manner. That is not so. The apprehension is that not only that the plane should not have been purchased but should not have been purchased in that manner it had been done. Therefore, these questions are not totally de-linked.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: If there are any procedural violations or any irregularities being committed, that can be gone into. It is not proper for me to go into the question of technical defects. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN: You wanted to say something which should not go on record. They are supporting you and so you have to yield to their questions. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: That is not the reason. Please, let me complete. Unfortunately, this has become such a touchy

subject for Mr. Vakkom Purushothaman that a mere mention of airbus provokes him. What can I do about it? (*Interruptions*)

I have read out the Terms of Reference of the Ramdas Committee. We do not set out terms for the Court of Inquiry. They are prescribed in the Statute itself. Now the case of the accident has to be established by the Court of Inquiry. Aspects regarding the technical defect or design defect or a human error constitute the subject matter of the Court of Inquiry and it is not proper for me to go into that question. We are discussing the question of irregularities in the deal and we should confine ourselves to that question only.

Another point had been made by Shri Jaswant Singh, Shri Vasant Sathe, Shri Chidambaram and Shri Amal Datta and others. They want me to lay some papers on the Table of the House. Papers which pertain to this case are with the CBI. They are not with me. But if it is the desire of this House and if you permit, Sir, then the two papers which the hon. Members have demanded that they should be laid on the Table of the House, I.....

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: No, no. You should place all the papers... (*Interruptions*) Let the hon. Minister not be too reluctant. We have gone through this exercise many times in the past. You cannot place only two papers, one paper here and one paper there. This is exactly what happened when the Prime Minister offered to place the Bofors papers. We said—place all the papers and the Indian Express also carried the entire discussion about Bofors papers. The next day, he came with two papers. We will not accept this laying of two papers. You should place all the papers.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Why all papers? Why not only the relevant papers... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: We will not allow this to happen.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Who is going to say which is relevant and which is not relevant?

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY (Katwa): Before the papers are laid on the Table of the House, I would like to appeal to the Minister to guard that building properly where the papers are kept otherwise there can be a fire..... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM NAIK: Whatever papers are available with the Minister, should be laid on the Table of the House (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: How can he do that? It should be all papers

SHRISOMNATH CHATTERJEE: What is meant by all the papers? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN: Why do you want to hide something? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI A CHARLES: We want all the papers.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: He wants all the papers, not the relevant papers

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister complete his reply. If you have any doubts, you can ask for clarifications at the end. He has been on his legs for the last forty-five minutes. I accept that you may have certain doubts. I request you to listen to his speech and afterwards, I would permit you, if you have any questions to ask.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, I would like to assure the hon. Members that it would not be long before they will come to know about all the papers because the investigating agencies have been given instructions to conduct the whole thing expeditiously. It is not going to be like the Czech pistol case as mentioned by Shri P. Chidambaram. For three long years, we kept waiting. You said, we were going to discuss. Who stopped you from taking action for three years? He was talking about trial by the

papers, trial by discussion. I feel that it is still better than trial by muscle power, which you were yourself resorting to.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: What are you talking?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: All those who differed with you, you organised attacks on their houses, you organized violence in their public meetings..... (*Interruptions*) You are talking about Czech pistol case. That is why I am saying this. I marvel at your capability..... (*Interruptions*) Now, let me complete, I am not yielding..... (*Interruptions*)

Let me at least complete this. Don't think that I am angry with Mr. Chidambaram who is a very good friend of mine and he does not need your assistance. He is a very able Lawyer. He is a very articulate person. He does not need your help, Prof. Kurien. Please don't bother yourself.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Why has it happened?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I really marvel at your capabilities. For three years, you carried this calumny campaign, not in indoors simply, but you planted stories in the Press and every time, we challenged you. If you have the guts, come and file a case against us.

After that, I thought that the very mention of Czech Pistol case will make you feel a little here and there. But no. I really marvel at your capabilities. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: You bring the case. You bring the Czech Pistol Case here.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Who will bring that case? Will you bring that case?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: They had directed the C.B.I. to stop the inquiries. If they do not want to file a final Report, let them bring the papers here. This Government has

stopped the investigation of Czech Pistol case. This Government has stopped the filing of the case.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, exactly, that was the reason why I was saying that they do not need to feel much agitated on this. It would not be like the case which they had ordered. They tried to fabricate it. It won't take three years. Because it is not going to be a fabricated case. After three years—you were dealing with C.B.I.—now you are asking in this House that we will discuss it.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: It is because we were investigating it not fabricating it.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: For three years, you were investigating it. That shows your investigating capabilities. What a wonderful reflection on your investigating capabilities!

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: It is because we were investigating it according to law. We left it to the C.B.I. Unlike you, we do not interfere in the matter. We do not direct them to stop investigation. The Czech Pistol case had been investigated, fairly and properly. You bring that case here, now.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dum dum): They illegally amass and legally investigate!

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I know, how the trial of the famous case which he has mentioned was conducted. How they harassed that famous national champion!

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: How?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: How you harassed her? How you tried to harass her with all kinds of things which had nothing to do with the case? You were planting in the newspapers.....

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM: Is that a discussion on A-320?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please come to the subject.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, Prof. Ranga is a senior Member. I bow to his elderly advice. I am not going to join issues with Mr. Chidambaram. I leave it at that. (Interruptions)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I would not like to prolong further...

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY: I would like to make a point before you conclude. Sorry, I am interrupting you in between. You did mention that I would understand the induction of this sophisticated aircraft at this fast pace.

As far as this aircraft is concerned, regarding its engines V-2500 and other one—it is unfortunate that we have used even words like guinea-pigs—we said that: "Are we guinea-pigs that this experimentation is taking place?"

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I did not use that word.

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY: I have just mentioned about these words because it was used here in the House.

The level of research and development in our country is extremely poor as compared to the developed countries in the world. Even if you set up another committee about the airworthiness of this aircraft, this will prove to be one of the best aircrafts in the world including its engine also. You did mention about some snags. (Interruptions) As far as snags are concerned, you will get them even in the best aircrafts in the world. There will be snags and their rectifications every day. (Interruptions)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: The quality of the aircraft is not a matter of discussion here; we should not discuss that. We need not discuss the airworthiness of an aircraft. We are discussing the alleged irregularities in the deal. (Interruptions)

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY: You have read out two lines from the Report of the Ramdas Committee regarding fast induction of this aircraft. I also agree with you. It was the fast induction of this aircraft which had created problems. These pilots did not get proper training. You take action against the pilot or the particular officer of Indian Airlines. Our airfields and equipments do not match our aircrafts. I also agree with you. For next 100 years, our ground equipments will not match the aircrafts. In our country, it will not be possible due to shortage of funds resources. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I attach importance to his very valuable advice because he has experience about it. Definitely, I would like to benefit from his advice, particularly when the Demands for Grants relating to the Ministry of Civil Aviation are taken up for discussion. I made an appeal to the hon. members That these two question should not be mixed up. We are not discussing the technical competence or airworthiness of an aircraft. Shri Kamal Chaudhry will appreciate that as far as safety of the operation is concerned, it is not merely the airworthiness of an aircraft which is relevant; several other factors are also relevant. In that context, I have said that Shri Kamal Chaudhry will appreciate that point.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Jodhpur): What about the papers?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I would leave it to your discretion. The hon. members have quoted extensively from those two documents. That is why I have offered..... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH. I am not interested in speaking. I had my full say. It was my expectation that the hon. Minister would, at some length, elaborate the points I had made. I had not spoken about the airworthiness or the technical quality of this aircraft. I had indeed spoken about the irregularities in the method adopted or for choosing this aircraft. I had also spoken about some money aspects and short cut of

the procedure. About short-cut of procedure, I had made a specific reference to certain dates. In the minutes of the meetings held in the then Prime Minister's Office, you took a decision to acquire an aircraft. In the Board of the Indian Airlines, the decision was taken on 30th August, 1985; whereas the minutes of the meetings held in the then Prime Minister's office were recorded on 2nd August, 1985. There it was mentioned that a decision to acquire an aircraft was already taken. You took a decision on 30th August, 1985, to acquire an aircraft. There is a letter dated 26th August—it had passed on from one official to another—which says that this aircraft is beneficial due to its cost effectiveness and airworthiness. I specifically ask the Minister to tell us about these aspects... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, I have already said that most of the dates given by the hon. Member Shri Jaswant Singh are correct. Some hon. Members have also quoted very extensively from these two documents. I leave it to your discretion. If you permit me to place these two documents, then I will place these two documents. I leave it to your discretion. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (Sivaganga): Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan always gives the impression of fairness. I presume that he is as fair as he gives the impression of fairness. According to him, we are discussing the irregularities in the deal. The irregularities are not in one document, which the hon. Member Mr. Jaswant Singh has been able to locate or in another document. If there are irregularities, the irregularities start from the date when the Boeing order was made and end on the date when the 15th airbus was inducted into the fleet. He must place all the documents showing the entire course of decision making. Otherwise, we cannot and will not accept the selectivity on the part of the Government on the pretence of choosing the relevant documents. We know what the Prime Minister did when he refused to place the Bofors papers and came back and placed two papers. On that day, every newspaper including the *Indian Express* carried a head-

line that Bofors papers would be placed. If you stand by your case of irregularities, place the entire documents which will show the course of decision making right from the lowest official to the highest in the country
(Interruptions)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN I have already said that it would not take very long. The CBI is working very fast on this matter. What Mr. Jaswant Singh pointed out was that though officially the decision was taken by the Indian Airlines Board on 30th August, he and other Members have pointed out from a document that the decision was taken on 2nd August. That is how this document is related to the deal. I leave it to your discretion in regard to placing of these two documents. Some Members have quoted extensively from these two documents. If you in your wisdom, decide that these two documents should be placed on the Table of the House, then I will abide by that
(Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumduum) In any case you can lay them on your own
(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN No that cannot be done

PROF P J KURIEN (Mavelikara) The hon Member Shri Jaswant Singh had gone on record, not once more than once during his speech, to say that all the papers should be placed on the Table of the House and this House, both sides received that suggestion with applause. Hence that is the consensus of this House. If at all any paper is to be laid on the Table of the House then all the papers from the very beginning, from the starting of the dialogue on the purchase upto the end should be placed on the Table of the House
(Interruptions)

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA (Pali) A controversy has arisen regarding placing of the papers and it has been left to your discretion. I think, placing of two relevant documents would be enough from the point of view of the points raised by the Members. But the principles of jurisprudence and fair

play demand that all papers should be placed. I support Mr. Chidambaram that all papers should be placed. He can produce the xerox copies of the CBI record so that nobody could say that the Minister concerned or the Government has adopted a pick and choose policy and left something to be discussed, something to be hushed and something fishy. Therefore the principles of jurisprudence warrant that all the papers must be placed on the Table of the House.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN Because the Members had demanded, that is why I made this offer. I have said that the papers are with the CBI, they are not with me. But if you so direct me
(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN All the Members of the House are demanding, all the records have to be placed on the Table. Since it is the decision of the House to place all the records on the Table, they can be placed, but it is subject to examination
(Interruptions)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I have tried to clarify the points which were raised by the hon Members

I will conclude by saying that the most important aspect for us is the enforcement of safety standards in the operation of airlines. I would like to emphasise that on the question of safety and on the question of enforcement of safety standards, no compromise will be made, no chance will be taken.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Rise in prices in the country

MR CHAIRMAN Now we will take up the next item i.e. further discussion on rise in prices in the country raised by Prof Saif-ud-din Soz on 30.4.90

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura) Price rise is one of the most sensitive things. And when the Finance Minister is not here, you want me to make the