

[Shri C. Janga Reddy]

the river waters. I do not agree to the argument that the transfer of Chandigarh and increased share of water to Punjab will put an end to the extremists activities in Punjab. These extremists and terrorists are encouraged by religious fundamentalists and external powers who are interested in disintegrating India and our Akali friends are trying to increase their share of water by using the leverage of violence in Punjab and are acting against the legitimate rights of Rajasthan and Haryana guaranteed to them by the 1981 Accord. The people of Haryana and Rajasthan can also start a peaceful agitation not on the line of terrorists but on the line of Mahatma Gandhi's concept of satyagraha. I wish to reiterate that the problem in Punjab is not due to the issue of Chandigarh or river waters. The Punjab problem requires a political solution. We must identify the people behind it and also ascertain their demands. We must try to find ways and means to solve the problem. We are prepared to hand over Chandigarh to them if the extremists guarantee that the Punjab tangle would be solved by this transfer. But it is not true. We fail to understand who is the ring leader of this movement. It was felt that with the Punjab Accord with Longowal, the extremist and terrorist problems in Punjab would come to an end and there would not be any demand for Khalistan. But Longowal was assassinated and incidents of terrorism increased thereafter. More and more people are being killed everyday. Earlier only a select set of people were attacked, but now even the innocents are not being spared. Are these people being killed for transfer of Chandigarh or for the demand for more water? It is naive to think on the above lines. We have to put an end to these everyday killings. We have to think in a different direction and find a political solution to the khalistan issue.

Even in South there are river water disputes. Talks are going on regarding the distribution of Cauveri river water and the Telegu Ganga Project. These rivers belong to the nation and are not owned by any State. That is why I suggest that these rivers should be considered as national rivers. The distribution of river waters should not be treated as inter state dispute. All the rivers should be under the control of the Central

Government, which should allocate waters according to the needs of each state. The centre can maintain the unity and integrity of this country only if it invests itself with this power.

15 00 hrs.

You are aware that there are river water disputes between Karnataka and Andhra in the South; and between Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra for the sharing of the river valley. Why do these disputes take place? The reason is that *ad-hoc* decisions are taken, and there is neither a Central board nor a Central Committee to effect distribution.

Therefore, if the Government is interested in solving the water disputes between various states it should develop all the major rivers as national property and allocate water according to the genuine needs of each state. It should not take *ad-hoc* decisions. They have to think of a permanent solution at the national level about the problem of river water distribution. If they want to appease the terrorists then it would not solve the issue. If they want to resolve the tangle with the help of the Tribunal, we shall extend our cooperation.

But the Tribunal would hardly help in solving the problem. A political solution can alone help. Again, if under the pressure of terrorists or Akalis any Agreement is reached and the interests of Haryana and Rajasthan are ignored it would give rise to another problem.

15.02 hrs.

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STATEMENT RE LOSS OF TWO  
AN-32 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARUN SINGH): Mr. Speaker, Sir, With profound regret I wish to inform the House that two Indian Air Force AN-32 aircraft are missing since 22nd and 25th March, 1986, respectively. They have not yet been

found, and it must therefore, be presumed that they are lost along with their aircrew and passengers. This has led to considerable speculation. I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Lok Sabha and, through this august House, the nation and the Armed Forces, of the facts known to us about these two missing aircraft.

The first AN-32 aircraft was on air maintenance task in Ladakh area. It took off from Pathankot Air Force Station at 0803 hours on 22nd March, 1986. Apart from four members of the aircrew, it had fourteen Army personnel and one officer from the Border Roads Organisation on board. When the aircraft was about 70 nautical miles from Pathankot and at a height of approximately 25,000 feet, the pilot decided to return to Base due to bad weather. Thereafter, there was no contact with the aircraft. An intensive search by air and ground parties was immediately launched, but the aircraft, or its wreckage, have not been located. It has been reported that after the aircraft was reported missing, there was heavy snowfall in this sector, and the aircraft may have been covered by deep snow. The search is continuing.

The second AN-32 aircraft was on ferry from the Soviet Union. It left Muscat on its last leg of the ferry to Jamnagar at 1328 hours (IST) on the 25th March. The last radio contact with the Captain of this aircraft was at 1445 hours when he intimated his estimated time of arrival at Jamnagar as 1545 hours. Thereafter no radio contact was made with this aircraft, which was beyond radar range. When the aircraft became overdue, an aerial search was launched by IAF and Naval aircraft, and Naval and Coast Guard Ships. The Civil authorities in coastal areas were also alerted. All flights ex-Bombay were requested to monitor distress signals. So far this aircraft has not been located. The search is continuing. This aircraft had three members of the aircrew and four supporting crew on board.

Hon'ble Members would rightly be concerned about these two sudden and inexplicable accidents. Therefore, I would like to share with you the history of the induction,

performance and operation of this aircraft in the Indian Air Force.

The transport fleet of the IAF had consisted in the past of Dakotas, Pakets and Caribous. To replace these aging aircraft ten types of medium transport aircraft of both Soviet and Western origin were evaluated by the IAF. After detailed evaluation it was decided to induct the AN-32 aircraft which fully met the qualitative requirements of a medium transport aircraft for the IAF, capable of operating from high altitude airfields.

The AN-32 is a robust and reliable twin engine turboprop aircraft. It is fully pressurised, and is equipped with the most modern avionics. This aircraft is fully capable of route navigation in bad weather, since it has a weather radar, modern navigation system and powerful short-range and long-range radio communications. It can also land in very low visibility at airfields fitted with Instrument Landing Systems.

The AN-32 aircraft intended to be the main stay of the medium-haul transport fleet of the IAF. The first aircraft were received in India in July, 1984. A large number of these aircraft have since been inducted and are in regular Squadron Service. The fleet has completed approximately 23,000 hours in service. This aircraft has, thus far, had an excellent accident-free record. There have been no previous major accidents since the induction of these aircraft in the IAF.

Nothing certain can be said at this stage, therefore, regarding the reasons for these aircraft being lost. The aircraft are fitted with a flight data recorder and a cockpit voice recorder which are crash-proof. After the crash sites of these missing aircraft are located the recordings in these instruments would, most probably, reveal the causes of these accidents. Courts of Inquiry have been ordered to investigate the disappearance of these two aircraft. All possible clues as to what might have led to their sudden disappearance are being examined by them.

I would request all Members, in conclusion, to share the agony of the families of personnel of these two aircrafts in their hour of need.