

12.14 hrs.

## COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

[English]

Sixty-Seventh and  
Sixty-Eighth Reports

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY (Kurnool) :  
I beg to present the following Reports (Hindi  
and English versions) :

1. Sixty-Seventh Report of the Public Accounts Committee on Action taken on their 226th Report (Seventh Lok Sabha) relating to working of Embarkation Headquarters.
2. Sixty-Eighth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on Action taken on their 45th Report (Eighth Lok Sabha) relating to Construction of a sub-standard airfield.

12.15 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER  
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

[English]

## Defects in Vayudoot Aircraft

SHRI BASUDEV ACHARIA (Bankura) :  
I call the attention of the Minister of Civil Aviation to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

"Reported Engine failures of Vayudoot Aircraft, defective door lock and non-availability of spare parts for this aircraft and steps taken by the Government in this matter."

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE  
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI  
JAGDISH TYTLER) : Sir, since the beginning of Dornier operations by Vayudoot in January, 1985, there have been 19 cases of failures of Garrett engines installed on the Dornier aircraft in the fleet of Vayudoot. This necessitated premature removals of engines before their scheduled overhaul life.

The overhaul period recommended by the manufacturers is 6000 hours with a Hot Section Inspection in between, after 3000 hours of operation. Since this was a matter of serious concern, as it involved the safety of the passengers, the matter was taken up with the representatives of the engine manufacturers i.e. Garrett Corporation, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. and the Director General of Civil Aviation. Since preliminary investigations of the cases of these engine failures revealed that as many as nine engine removals were apparently ascribable to engine defect, Government constituted a Committee of Experts to go into the causes of the failures of Garrett engines installed on the Dornier aircraft in the fleet of Vayudoot and to submit a report. The report of the Committee has been received on the 2nd April, 1987 and is being studied.

Pending receipt of the report of the Committee of Experts on the causes of engine failures, Vayudoot and Government had a series of meetings with representatives of Garrett Corporation, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. and the Director General of Civil Aviation to discuss the basic causes of engine failures, short term and long term measures to improve performance and maintenance, and steps to ensure that the maximum number of aircraft remain operational.

The main entry door of Dornier VT-EJF aircraft operating scheduled Vayudoot flight from Ludhiana to Delhi on 30th March, 1987 opened while in flight. The Commander reported that about 25/30 minutes after the take off from Ludhiana the door 'open' warning light came in the cockpit. Subsequently, the door opened. The Commander reported this to the Air Traffic Control of Palam and full emergency was declared at the airport. The aircraft landed safely with the open door at 1957 hours. There was no injury to anybody on board the flight. The Director of Air Safety and Regional Controller of Air Safety, Delhi, carried out an inspection of the door involved in this incident, and also those of the three other aircraft stationed at Delhi Airport. It was found that the front plungers of the door locking system were not engaging fully while the door handle was put in 'lock' position. Vayudoot was, therefore, advised to rectify the snag before releasing the aircraft for flights. They were also advised to issue instructions to their out-

station establishments to carry out similar checks and rectifications immediately. Vayudoot has since carried out necessary inspections of all the Dornier aircraft in its fleet to check the proper operation and locking of the door mechanism. In addition, it is now sending technicians on board on all Dornier flights to obviate recurrence of such incidents.

Vayudoot has reported that they are facing problems due to non-availability of spare parts which is attributable to inadequate product support from M/s. Dornier GmbH of West Germany. They have further reported that apart from the regular supply of spares their demands for the aircraft on ground were also not being met on priority. Even the aircraft components sent to the manufacturers for repairs under warranty clause, were not being returned promptly by the manufacturers. This matter was taken up with the manufacturers at the appropriate level and as a result, Vayudoot has received a larger number of spare parts.

We, in the Ministry are fully alive to the safety and security of passengers on the airlines. Let me assure the august House that this will not be allowed to be sacrificed under any circumstances.

**SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura) :** The Minister has only narrated the incident of engine failure. And this engine failure is four times greater than the world average.

12.21 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

A Committee was formed and it submitted its report in April. As stated by the Minister after this two serious incidents took place. One was on 30th April when the door of the Vayudoot aircraft opened when it was flying from Ludhiana to Delhi. The speed of the Vayudoot aircraft was slowed down and it landed safely. Before that on 25th March there was another incident in Calcutta. Calcutta based Dornier aircraft of Vayudoot Service had a miraculous escape when the emergency latch of the plane flew off while it was in the air.

The contract to purchase engines for the Dornier aircraft which is being used by the

Vayudoot was finalised in 1983. During January, 1985 and June 1986 10 planes were delivered. A committee was also there to finalise the contract. There were four members in that Committee. They are Mr. P. K. Kaul, Shri K. S. Chaddha, Chairman HAL, Mr. Sarin, Secretary, Department of Defence Production and Mr. B. K. Bhasin. The original cost of the aircraft was Rs. 2.15 crores. But finally this aircraft was purchased at Rs. 3 crores. One of the terms of the contract was that the company is to undertake maintenance of the engine. But they do not adhere to the contract which was undertaken. The door of that particular aircraft which was automatically opened when the plane was in the mid-air, was a replaced one. Previously there was a defect in the door and it was replaced and then again the door has opened suddenly in the mid-air.

A team of aviation experts from the Dornier company itself had inspected seven aircrafts out of ten and had suggested that all these aircrafts should be grounded immediately for repair as they were not being properly maintained. May I know from the Hon. Minister whether this maintenance work, which is very necessary, is to be done by that company? Was it in the contract when it was finalised? If so, then why within a year there have been as many as twenty engine failures, which is five times more than the world average? Why the maintenance of these aircrafts is not being taken up. This type of aircraft has been given air worthiness certificate for carrying only eighteen passengers and one flight attendant. To provide a flight attendant in the aircraft is mandatory but it is not being complied with. Now this aircraft is carrying nineteen passengers without any flight attendant. Sometimes even the passengers on board try to open the door of the aircraft and even overloading is also allowed beyond the safety level.

The Minister has said that now the spare parts are being supplied. But the servicing of the aircrafts is not being done because the essential spare parts are not being supplied. The engineering staff do not have parts like investors, wheel bearings, cooling units, hydraulic pump components and many other spare parts and thus the servicing of the aircrafts is not being done properly. These aircrafts have been granted CFA only for carry-

ing passengers and for mail carriage. But the aircraft is being used to carry heavy crated cargo. Even proper checks are not carried out to see whether the cargo contains any prohibited articles or not. It is also mandatory...

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** Please put questions. You have already taken ten minutes.

**SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA :** It is also mandatory to conduct spectrographic oil analysis procedure test on the aircraft after 100 flying hours. Vayudoot whose Dornier have completed over 3000 flying hours since July 1985 has carried out these tests thrice. This test is required to find out metal particles in the engine oil.

Due to all these factors the premature rate of engine failure, as I have already stated, is higher in the world average. The failure rate of Vayudoot Dorniers is 0.42 per 1000 flying hours against world average of 0.08.

Proper infrastructure has not been created before opening new routes like Calcutta, Malda, Balugbat. Neither in Malurghat nor in Malda air port it is there. There is no tele-communication link between Malda and Calcutta and Balughat and Calcutta.

*(Interruptions)*

**SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER :** I thought you are talking of Engine ..

**SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA :** These are the problems. You have introduced so many routes, but you have not created infra-structure facilities. This should also be discussed. Airport staff does not know whether the aircraft has taken off in Calcutta or not. The passengers have to wait for hours together to know whether the Aircraft has taken off or not.

I would like to know from the Minister—the Committee was constituted before finalisation of the contract—whether there is a proposal to purchase another 150 Dornier Aircrafts for Navy, ten Vayudoot, ten for fly away condition and 130 are under assembly. Before this contract was finalised, were these

aspects taken into consideration or not? Why is the number of failures in Engine increasing? Will the Government constitute another Committee to see whether there was any scandal before i.e. when this contract was finalised by the Committee?

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** Please wind up, Mr. Acharia.

**SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA :** When the responsibility of maintenance is with this Company, why is this not being taken up by the Company, when this was in the contract itself? Why was proper step not taken? These engine failures were occurring. The Committee had submitted its report long before. After the Committee has submitted its report what action Government propose to take to obviate this problem so that the accident is averted and there is the minimum number of such incidents? So, the Hon. Minister will please clarify all these points while giving reply to the discussion.

**SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balasore) :** Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am very grateful to the Hon. Minister for placing the facts before this House and he has not concealed any truth that is happening in Vayudoot Services in various parts of our country. Sir, you are allowing me only five minutes and therefore I am just putting a few questions for clarification. The Hon Minister in his statement has stated that spare-parts etc. are available in plenty. May I know from that Hon. Minister whether even when the aircrafts are grounded for repair, the spare-parts like invertors, wheel bearings, cooling units, hydraulic pump components and so on are not available and could not be supplied on account of which the aircraft are to be grounded for weeks together. If so, what are the actions taken or proposed to be taken so that these spare parts are readily available? May I know from the Hon. Minister when these spare-parts would be made available at the claim goes that they are available in plenty? My next clarification is that after test Pilot of the Dornier Company tested 12 aircrafts of which only one aircraft is air-worthy. If so, what is the thinking of the Government, especially out of 12 aircrafts 11 are found to be not air-worthy? What about the other aircrafts? Will the Hon. Minister take immediate

action so that all the engines are inspected by the test pilots/after inspecting out of 12 aircrafts only one aircraft is found air-worthy. If so, what is the thinking of the Government that out of 12, 11 are found to be not air-worthy? What about other aircrafts? Will the Hon. Minister take immediate action so that all the engines are inspected by the test pilots of the Dornier Company?

The Hon. Member Mr. Acharia was telling us regarding the conditions imposed by the manufacturers. I would like to know whether they are to visit and inspect and do repair work whenever such defects occur. If so, what are the actions taken by the Ministry?

Similarly, the Hon. Member, Shri Basudeb Acharia has already pointed out that in the absence of attendant and flight-attendant air-hostesses or air-hosts, whenever exigencies occur or whenever emergencies occur, nobody is there except two crew, one is the point and the other is the co-pilot. Is it a fact that in the cock-pit there is place only to accommodate two persons? If so, when this type of air-crafts were procured, why this point was not taken into consideration that no assistant or attendant could be provided to help the crew? How is it that in times of exigencies no attendant could be accommodated? Who will come to the rescue of the passengers? Similarly, thanks to the co-pilot and the pilot's presence of mind, they could manage the situation and I should say that because of his fine and expert handling, the situation could be saved and I congratulate him. May I know as the Hon. Member, Shri Acharia, said what is the cause for the 24th March incident as also the one which we came know about on 30th March? In addition to it may I know from the Hon. Minister whether it is a fact that on 21st March this year Vayudoot No. 607 while flying from Hyderabad to Jaipur, on the way, when it left Visakhapatnam after flying for 20 minutes it turned back to Viaskhapatnam and the air ticket money was refunded to the passengers on the ground that, due to "technical snag" the aircraft was to return. May I know, in such type of exigencies, as the Hon. Member, Shri Acharia has already told that, in the big cities and other places, in the big airports, there are communication

systems. But what about the small places where we are having Vayudoot services? I would like to know whether the Hon. Minister is thinking of providing communication system in these places where the Vayudoot services are being connected. If so, what is the planning that is done to connect these places through communication system.

(Interruptions)

Sir, you have already rung the bell. I should not disobey your bell. I would only say that when we have procured these aircrafts, the terms and conditions and also the value of the aircraft could have been finalised. I would like to know whether there were any global tenders for it or not. If so, why this Company was found to be suitable? This may kindly be clarified.

With these words, I thank you very much.

DR. G. S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur):  
Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I shall be very brief. I shall only put the questions.

Sir, what happened on 30th is really a very serious matter. But what happened after that is still serious. As reported in the newspapers the Vayudoot management hurriedly sent that aircraft, that particular Dornier aircraft, out of Delhi to Hyderabad. It is alleged, I do not know how far it is true, that it was done to tamper with the evidence.

Sir, right from the day the Dornier aircraft were purchased, it was being talked about in the newspapers that the quality was very poor and the manufacturers of Dornier aircraft took the Government for a ride. I donot know how far it is true. I hope the Hon. Minister will enlighten us on this point.

Again, Sir, I would like to know the details of the contract. If you read the statement of the Hon. Minister, there is enough between the lines. How come the manufacturers did not supply the spare parts when it was stipulated in the contract? And they agreed to do that only when it

was taken up at the appropriate level. I do not know what was the 'appropriate level'. The Hon. Minister said that now we have larger number of spare parts. Well, that too is not very clear. Formerly if the manufacturers supplied them, say, only 5 spare parts against the need or demand of 100 spare parts, now if they have supplied 6 or 7 spare parts, you can say that you have a larger number of spare parts. Will the Hon. Minister categorically say that we have enough spare parts so that these Dornier aircraft, Vayudoot aircraft, will not be grounded in future ?

Again, I want to invite the attention of the Hon. Minister to the fact that nearly a year ago, another Hon. Minister, Shri Madhavrao Scindia was travelling in a Vayudoot aircraft from Gwalior to Delhi. He noticed that a child was tempering with the door, as reported in the newspaper. He immediately reported this matter to the Hon. Minister and the pilot himself also reported this matter to the Hon. Minister for civil Aviation but nothing seemed to have been done. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister the contents of the letter sent by Shri Madhavrao Scindia and that of the pilot.

Again, the Vayudoot Pilot Association has written to the Hon. Minister and Shri Harshvardan, General Manager of Vayudoot that there is absolutely no arrangement of safety. For example, there should be a cabin attendant which has been repeatedly demanded by so many persons in the past. But despite repeated requests, the Cabin attendant was not provided as a result of which, two incidents had occurred and you can well imagine the consequences of such incidents which could have been disastrous.

So, may I know from the Hon. Minister whether he will see to it that cabin attendants are provided in each and every aircraft. When the Dornier people sent their representatives, on our request, to find out the truth, they said that the engines were grounded or the aircraft was grounded only because of poor maintenance and over-utilisation. I would like to know the truth whether what they say is correct or the facts are otherwise.

In the end, I would like to say that the Dornier aircraft is meant to carry only passengers and small pieces of luggages. As against this, these aircrafts are loaded with heavy luggages with newspaper bundles and what not, which is causing a great risk to the travelling people. As it is very risky to travel in Vayudoot, it is being said that it is not Vayudoot but "Yamdoot". That means, it is messenger of death. If you travel in Vayudoot, it will be faster for you to reach the other world. (*Interruptions*) I want to know exactly what the Hon. Minister has in his mind to ensure safety to the travelling public.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Shri Somnath Rath and Shri Deep Narain Ban Mahant are not here. Mr. Minister to reply.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER : First of all, let me assure the Hon. Members that the security and safety of the passengers is of our main concern and we would make sure that we would never compromise on this particular thing.

Initially when the Vayudoot started its services and the dorniers were selected, these were not selected only for the Vayudoot services. This was done by the Defence Ministry for their own purposes and the main buyers of the main manufacturers are going to be the Defence Ministry. We just became a part and said "You are going to manufacture so many aircrafts. We need aircrafts. Could you be kind enough to give us ten aircrafts ? Out of the 150 they are going to manufacture, we are the recipients of the first nine. Then one went to the ONGC, other to the Coast Guards.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Are you a party to that ?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER : No, no. We are not a party to that. I would just like to say that a Committee was headed by the Defence Secretary. You had asked me how this was evaluated and how we came to but it. A Committee was headed by the Defence Secretary which was constituted in March, 1981 to select a suitable aircraft for the Vayudoot as well as for the other uses like the Defence, the Navy, the ONGC

and anybody else who wants to buy in the country.

The first evaluation committee was constituted under the Defence Secretary Mr. Menon, which is called Menon Committee. He was a Member from National Defence College. The Chief (Development) of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, Mr. Bhandari, and the Director, Training, Planning, Indian Airlines were there. Then they evaluated different aircrafts. I have the details if the Hon. Members are interested. But this is not concerning us. This is concerning Defence Ministry.

But I would like to inform the Members that we have had total 19 engine/failures since Vayudoot started its operation out of which there were nine engine failures which were torque Sansor bearing, Compressor Carbon Seal, Plenum Chamber.

I have got just a report about these nine engines (*Interruptions*) I am saying a very important thing. Since you raised a very important question, I would like you to listen to it.

Out of these nine engines, this has nothing to do with the Vayudoot Operations or the maintenance because the garage people who have been here have themselves admitted that these failures are due to some faults in the engines.

There have been four more downing of the engines. This is because if the bird hit them, nobody in the world can save it. If the bird comes, this is again not the fault of the Vayudoot people or their maintenance. Out of four, there were three bird hits. One was the damage by a foreign object; a stone particle was sucked in which went into the engine.

Out of the remaining six, we can say that a fault lies partly with us. While starting an engine, we did not have enough charge battery to start the engine so that it did show a damage to the engine and we could not take any chances. We had to remove it and get the engine probably inspected. The engines are supplied by the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. We deal with

the HAL. They are the people who are supplying us.

We have ten aircrafts out of which Hon. Members said that five or six or nine are grounded. It is not so. It is grounded for a particular time, for the time it takes for the engines to be removed and the new engines to be replaced.

I can tell you today we have ten aircrafts and we have 24 engines out of which nine aircrafts are operational also. That means one aircraft is not operational because we were not able to get the engine from the HAL. They have the engine. They have informed us probably very soon we will be getting this. So, in the end I would like to say this. As far as engines are concerned, I have given you the details of failures. As so on as the warning light comes in the cockpit, no pilot worth his name of nobody who is running the aircraft industry would take a chance. Like I said, we are responsible to the people and under no circumstances or at no time would we ever take a chance with the lives of passengers. That is one of the reasons why, touch wood, Vayudoot has a completely accident-free record in the last six years. I pray to God, nothing ever happens. I have clarified to the Hon. Members as far as engines are concerned.

Coming back to the door incident, there was only one incident, from Ludhiana, where the door opened because there was an indication in the light and it was found that the back-door had opened. I have had an inquiry into it. I will be getting the report. I have got a part of it, but I am going deeper into it. But the aircraft had kept informed the appropriate authorities in Palam to be ready for an emergency landing, and the people at the Palam Airport were ready; the pilot landed the aircraft very safely and nobody was hurt; even the aircraft was not damaged. We thought, probably, the aircraft would be damaged, but it did not touch the ground; it was still six to seven inches above the ground, and the pilot made a perfect landing.

The second incident to which the Hon. Member had referred was not a door

incident. A small child had gone and fiddled with the emergency latch in the front. So, that particular window dropped out. Some child had done it and that was how it happened.

It is a 19-seater aircraft. It is true, we do not have attendants because Vayudoot was started as a bush operation. That is a hopping aircraft; after 20 minutes it lands; it hops and lands. So, it is not necessary—nowhere in the world it is done—when you have a bush operation service, to have an attendant. As far as the rules are concerned, I would like to confess that we are supposed to have that, but that also we had taken up with the Director General, Civil Aviation; we had a meeting with our counterpart in the Ministry where the understanding was that we can do without it. But, let me tell you, according to the Aircraft Act, we are supposed to have when we have more than ten people as passengers. But since our reason was different, to start the aircraft service as the bush operation, and because nowhere in the world people had taken permission that they should be allowed to be considered, that process. I would say, was not completed. But now we have started sending a technician.

As far as spare parts are concerned, we had difficulty in spare parts. The spare parts were not available. We tried to get as quickly as possible from the garage people. Some of the other delays were administrative delays, and we had told the Vayudoot people to take it up very strictly with the company. Recently we have got the spare parts.

I would like to inform the Hon. Members that, like I said initially, when we go in for engines and spare parts, it is usually the Defence Ministry which does. Directly we do indent occasionally. So, my concern is as much as that of the other Hon. Members to see that aircraft run safely; the passengers must feel secure that they are going in a very safe aircraft, and we will make sure that never do we take a chance with people's lives.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE  
MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY

AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): Sir, I propose that the lunch-break be dispensed with today.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope, the House agrees...

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is agreed.

13.00 hrs.

#### MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[English]

- (i) Need to issue necessary instructions to Kamptee Cantonment Board authorities to stop collecting taxes on movement of goods and also to remove barrier installed on Nagpur Jabalpur National Highway

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT (Nagpur) : Nagpur-Jabalpur National Highway passes by the side of the Kamptee Military Contonment. Kamptee Contonment Board has put a barrier on the National Highway for the last six months. The Contonment Board authorities are collecting heavy taxes on all goods and even a basket full vegetables which is carried by the agriculturists is taxed heavily. A great deal of inconvenience is caused in the matter of smooth running of the vehicles on the National Highway. Due to putting up of barrier and collection of tax, poor citizens are subjected to double taxation—first by Civic Body and then by Kamptee Contonment Board. This sort of double taxation is rarely found elsewhere in the country and has resulted in discontent among the citizens of Kamptee.

I therefore urge the Central Government to issue necessary instruction to the Kamptee Contonment Board to stop collecting taxes. The barrier which has been put on the National Highway should also be removed so that the flow of vehicles on the National Highway is streamlined.