

[Sh. S.B. Chavan]
stration of these Laws a need for some further amendments has been experienced. This Bill that is before the House seeks to meet this felt need.

The Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to the Bill sets out the rationale for various provisions of the Bill. I would, therefore, dwell only very briefly on some of the more important provisions.

The House is aware that we have been strengthening the capital base of our nationalised banks so that their debt equity ratios reach a level which is internationally acceptable. For this purpose the House has been annually providing for capital contribution. At present the paid up capital of the nationalised banks is subject to a ceiling of Rs. 100 crores. With successive contributions this ceiling has been reached in the case of some of the banks. On the other hand, with ever expanding deposit base, the need for enlarging their capital base persists. It is, therefore proposed to revise the ceiling to Rs. 500 crores

The Bill also seeks to provide for uniformity in the tenure of all non-official directors and employee directors on the Boards of State Bank Group of banks and financial institutions and to limit their continuous membership on the Boards of directors in keeping with the principle enunciated by the Estimates Committee. The same principles would apply to the Boards of Nationalised Banks provisions for which would be incorporated in the Nationalised Banks (Management and Miscellaneous Provisions) Schemes of 1970 and 1980, by way of subordinate legislation.

As the Hon. Members are aware, the Direct Tax Laws (Amendment) Act, 1987 provides for financial year as the uniform previous accounting year for all the assesseses. For this purpose it is considered necessary to change the present accounting year of the banks and financial institutions also to coincide with the financial year. This Bill proposes to give the requisite power to the Government to notify the accounting year of the banks.

Hon. Members are aware that these have been persistent and wide-spread demands from various trade and industry associations to make bouncing of cheques a penal offence. In this Bill, it is proposed to amend the Negotiable instruments Act to provide for this. The provision has been drafted in such a manner as to avoid harassment to honest account holders.

The Bill also seeks to provide for authority to the Reserve Bank of India to direct special audits of banks for specified periods or for specific transactions. This enhances the investigative authority of the Central Bank of the country. It is also proposed to provide for making of the regulations by the Board of Directors of certain banks and financial institutions by notification in the official gazette as recommended by the Committee on Subordinate Legislation. There are various other amendments which are proposed to obviate certain practical difficulties encountered in operating the present provisions of the various laws and are mainly of routine or administrative in nature

As the Hon. Members are aware, there has been a phenomenal expansion of the banking system during the last 18 years or so. The branch net-work of the banking system has expanded from 8262 in June, 1969 to 55015 in March, 1988. The total quantum of deposits has increased from Rs. 4646 crores in 1969 to . .

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, you may continue after the Adjournment Motion

16.00 hrs.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

[English]

**Serious Situation Arising out of Recent
Accidents Involving Indian Airlines
Aircraft**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Datta Samant.

DR. DATTA SAMANT (Bombay South Central): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House do now adjourn".

In the last four or five months very serious problems have cropped up for all the passengers travelling in the Indian Airlines. Only yesterday while coming from Bombay the Airbus landed suddenly. While landing its front wheel just broke and two engines also broke. It fell down and even the wall of the plane had also broken. If the whole incident had occurred about half a minute before, all the 268 passengers including myself, the Hon. Member Shri Prakash Patil and the Maharashtra Speaker and some other MPs would have died. Forget about that, everybody's life is important. But the House would have been adjourned totally today because of the death of these four MPs.

This is happening everyday. Last month while coming from Bombay the Airbus was delayed by about 20 minutes. When I went there to climb up the plane, some repairs were going on in four places—somebody was at the tail doing some repair on a tractor, somebody was pushing something down and somebody was on the head side. This is the pitiable condition of the aviation in this country. I don't know whether there is any Minister for Aviation or whether there is a Minister or this Government is functioning at all as far as air travelling is concerned.

About two months back while I was coming from Bangalore in the Bangalore-Bombay flight, a call was given by the pilot that he received a telephone call that a bomb is planted and so you must be careful while landing and immediately you should go out.

About two years back while going to Bhopal the Avro plane landed at Indore. It took four or five rounds and made a belly landing because its front wheel was not coming out. This is my experience.

About 31 thousand passengers in one day are travelling in 162 flights in this coun-

try. While emplaning in the morning we have to pray God that I must reach safely. While undertaking a plane journey you must pray Yama that 'take me you Yama in the sky, I have come here and make me land safely in Delhi or somewhere else'.

Because I happen to be an MP I have to travel quite often. Otherwise no sensible man of this country will travel in Indian Airlines because of what is happening here.

On 19th October what happened was that Indian Airlines Boeing collapsed at Ahmedabad and 130 passengers were killed. Another 40 passengers who were going to Assam were also killed. What is the condition of this Boeing? It was an 18 years old Boeing—the oldest one—and had travelled 43000 hours and made 47000 landings. According to all the standards this is the old plane. Only standard repairs were not done. The PU Committee in their report of May 1988 has said that the average flight per plane should do 2700 hours per year but during the last one year you have been taxing this plane and the plane which had crashed at Ahmedabad had travelled more than 3000 hours. Just four days before this crash at Ahmedabad the same flight from Bombay-Rajkot had developed hydraulic lift problem and it was repaired. Just two days prior to this accident at Ahmedabad the same flight was there and the whole hydraulic system had developed the problem and it was grounded.

Ahmedabad airport is a very busy airport. There are 17 landings per day and there is no instrument landing system there. What a poor show Mr. Minister! There is one vertical measure and another is the parallel measure system. The vertical landing system is totally missing and the parallel landing system is not functioning. It is morning 7 O'clock. I accuse this Government. It is not just negligence. You have killed these 130 passengers. What for are you sitting there? The hon. Minister may be an honest and good person from Maharashtra but I do not want honesty, goodness and all these things. It is the function of this Government.

[Dr. Datta Samant]

It is total negligence. The pilot of this plane is quite senior but Deepak Nagpal is just from the flying club. He was taken immediately through influence and his average experience is about 250 hours. There are poor landing facilities and over-used aircrafts playing on the tight schedules. That is the cause of Ahmedabad disaster. It seems as if we are waiting for such type of disasters. Even an average passenger flying on these planes knows that such type of things are going to happen. Therefore, I say, this Government has miserably failed. I am asking the question after the Ahmedabad disaster has the Minister for Civil Aviation or Managing Director, Mr. Pais come so far either in the public to give probable cause of the disaster? Therefore, all these reasons which I have given are correct and this Government is responsible for all this disaster and the mis-management happening there.

In the last few months the main and back up hydraulic system of Madras-Singapore flight had failed and emergency landing was done next day after 18th October Ahmedabad incident. Between 1st September and 20th October this year there were as many as 52 groundings because of some problem of the aircraft. On June 19 this year a Boeing 737 landed on the belly at Indira Gandhi International Airport because pilot failed to open undercarriage. The plane had to be junked. In November last year 53 passengers on Madras-Bangalore flight had miraculous escape when plane landed on its rear wheels as its nose wheels failed to open up. On 6th September last year Vishakhapatnam bound 737 flight with 123 passengers on board including the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Shri N.T. Rama Rao had to make emergency landing after its wing got jammed.

There are about 21 incidents but as you are going toring the belt I am not going into each of them. Is there any functioning of the Indian Airlines? Is there anybody keen to supervise? Last year Airbus to Hyderabad from Calcutta had to be abandoned after it caught fire. All these incidents show that

especially in the last six months there is no maintenance. Nobody is bothered. Nobody is supervising. There are 47 flights. The number remains the same for the last five years. They have given some orders for Airbus. They say 12 Airbuses are coming in 1991. The pilots are not prepared to go and get training as per new technology which is developing all over the world because there is a monopoly and how many people may die our people are going to run because Indian's population is more.

Minister will afterwards go and give Rs. 2-3 lakhs and say '*Bhai Bhai*'. Sir, I don't entertain. I don't like such type of things.

I would like to mention certain other things here. I have come across the whole system while discussing with some of the pilots. There are 530 pilots. 152 of them applied for leaving the job and going to Gulf. Indian pilots are the less paid all over the world. You have to consider the demands of the workers. In Air India, one Mr. Jetley has come. He is like a military commander. Ultimately you have to live in this country. You have to hear the people. You cannot go on like this. They are paid on an hourly basis. For one hour of more work, you pay them Rs. 50. All these old standards are being applied here. Their counterparts in the Air India are well paid. Their salaries are very attractive. There is a lot of dissatisfaction among these pilots. Therefore, they are not prepared to work.

While going to Bangalore, I got out of the plane. Some of the pilots came to trace me. I said: I don't want your union. This Government has got a good excuse to shout. I am not the union leader. Then, they started talking: "We get Rs. 6,000. Out of this, so much is taken back as tax. Whatever overtime we do, we are not paid." The more important thing is that their demands are pending for the last 2-3 years. Their 1985-settlement is over. Why are you doing so? I am asking this Government when every year from 1981, your turnover—your passengers—went up by 10-12 per cent, why has there been no increase in the aircraft. You

have increased the rates by about double in five years. Therefore, the revenue has gone up to Rs. 1000 crores this year. It was Rs. 210 crores in 1980. Last year, your profit was Rs. 75 crores. When you are doing well, why don't you pay and look after the workers?

Even the demands of cabin crew are pending for the last 2-3 years. The staff of the Indian Airlines is so much dissatisfied that they are not prepared to give any cooperation.

As far as the maintenance is concerned, in Bombay in July, 1240 are the total flights. Bombay is a very advanced aerodrome. I will give their exact figures. Out of these 1240 flights, 808 flights (65 per cent) are delayed from one hour to eleven hours. One flight, on an average, is cancelled every day. It was found that 55 per cent of the delayed flights were due to delay in the repairs—engineering snags. That is the main cause and your aircraft has gone old. On the whole, delays and cancellations in 1981-82 were 20. But during June-July 1988, these were 46. This is the way, the Indian Airlines is working. There is nobody accountable for that. The capacity utilisation of the aircraft is 47. Every year, you are increasing the flights because of political pleasure. Thus, more flights and more aerodromes are fixed. The average life per aircraft to fly per year is about 2800 hours. Now you have increased by 5600. Each Boeing 777 needs about 5 1/2 hours for repairs. But they are not getting that much time. They are reaching sometimes late. There is no initiative because the whole staff is totally demoralised. Therefore, you are using the same flights. This is not only my experience. All the Members are travelling every day. I think, at the cost of life, 31,000 passengers are travelling every day by Indian Airlines.

In spite of making good profits and good turnover, this Government has totally neglected and not paid any attention for their maintenance. About 50 per cent Boeings are about 10 year old. They have not carried out any repair work with regard to these boeings. All this negligence is entirely because of the

faults of this Government. There is not a single aspect or a single point with regard to negligence for which this Government is not responsible.

I may mention here that three years back, similar accident occurred in Japan in the Tokyo Airlines and 500 passengers died. The president of this Airlines who is a government man had resigned *suo motu*. Now what had happened in Ahmedabad and what is happening to the Indian Airlines for the last four months? At what cost are the passengers of Indian Airlines travelling? In spite of paying heavy fares, they are to travel risking their lives.

Sir, I have nothing personal against the hon. Minister. But, I demand that he should resign just to show some sanctity for human life. He must resign on an ideological ground. It will certainly teach some lessons to the staff, to the Government and to everybody and it will show the high morality of the Minister. It is no use discussing and talking again and again about this problem.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That this House do now adjourn."

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE (Bombay North Central): Sir, Dr. Datta Samant is lucky in two ways. Yesterday, he miraculously escaped a mishap and today he could get his adjournment motion admitted.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): Otherwise, there would have been a different kind of adjournment!

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: Sir, there are serious problems as far as the Civil Aviation Department is concerned. There has been a general discontentment with regard to safety, delay and cancellation of several aircraft on several air routes. Recently, there have been some unfortunate mishaps; particularly the one at Ahmedabad is very unfortunate. We have been told that even yesterday several passengers escaped a mishap

[Sh. Sharad Dighe]
miraculously. So, nobody would deny that a good look will have to be taken at the working of the Department of Civil Aviation. Passengers are really concerned over the problem of safety and everybody is worried about the happenings in the Airlines in this country.

Similarly, many passengers are complaining about the delay and cancellation of flights. Really speaking, this is a genuine grievance. There are delays of course on several occasions. But in addition, flights on several routes are suddenly cancelled. As regards delays, we are suddenly informed that the aircraft will be delayed by two to three hours. But that is not the end of it. After three hours, we will again be informed that there will be a further delay of another two hours and after two hours there will be yet another announcement that there will be further delay of two hours more. This is the experience of all those who have to travel by the Indian Airlines.

I have already mentioned the safety aspect. Several mishaps have taken place. Many faulty landings and miraculous escapes are also on record. Therefore, from the points of view of safety, delay and cancellation, I would urge upon the hon. Minister to look into this problem seriously. These are serious and genuine problems of those who travel by the Airlines.

Of course, that is no reason for moving an adjournment motion and to demand the resignation of the Minister on the floor of this House. That is not the remedy at all. We must make constructive suggestions and find out the real reasons. What are the real reasons behind these things? It appears that the main reason behind this is the shortage of aircraft. I am told that we have about 50 aircraft out of which the working aircraft generally everyday are nearly 40 whereas for such a vast country with so many routes and also with some newly introduced routes there should have been nearly 200 aircraft. Then only we will be able to cope up with the traffic of these air passengers, as far as this vast country is concerned.

On the one hand there is always a demand from every section of the public and from every elected representative also that from this and to that end, there should be new routes. We should provide new routes. There should be Vayudoot service. There should be this route and that route. For a democratic Government, the demands also are to be met. These are the interests or requirements of this growing and developing country. The main problem which will have to be solved by the Minister would be to add immediately to this existing aircraft. These 50 aircraft are too inadequate and serious attempts must be made to add to this fleet so that relief can be given from the point of view of not only safety but also from the point of view of cancellations and delays.

The problem of the workers is also an important factor as far as these main problems are concerned. I am told that as far as Air India employees were concerned, they were given 11 per cent increase in their salary as per their demands. Now for the Indian Airlines employees also, I am informed that the same increase was offered but the Indian Airlines employees are demanding 27 per cent increase. Therefore, there is some dispute between the Government and the employees as far as their service conditions particularly the wage increase is concerned. It would be necessary not only for the Government to take a reasonable stand but I would urge upon the employees also to take a reasonable stand because this is an organisation which is run from the profits itself. The Government does not give any budgetary support. So, if we want to increase the fleet and the number of aircraft, then of course that can be done only from the profits which these organisations are making. From the national point of view also, the employees should take a reasonable stand and come to the help of the Government so that the number of aircraft can be increased from 50 if not to 200 but at least some substantial addition can be made out of the amounts which are earned by way of profits of these organisations.

Then, further facilities also can be pro-

vided for the satisfaction of those who travel by the Indian Airlines.

Therefore, my submission would be that the resignation of the Minister or to move the Adjournment Motion are not the solution. The constructive suggestion would be to take a serious view of the matter and make serious efforts to add to these fleets and to satisfy the employees also who are agitating for their demands and at the same time the employees should take a reasonable stand in the interest of the nation and in the interest of the safety of our people.

Then there are some disputes or rather some irritants between the two departments also—the Engineering department and those who are flying the aircraft. Between them also some rivalry is going on. All that has got to be balanced and some solution will have to be found out by which all the employees work as a team in cooperation with each other.

From this point of view, I would urge upon the government and the Minister to look into this matter so that improvement can be made, which is very urgent. Of course, the grievances are genuine and there should be no delay in taking stern steps to improve the conditions of the Indian Airlines. With these words, I oppose this motion.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): I am thankful to you for giving me a few minutes to speak on this subject. I am much obliged to my colleagues here who allowed me to speak out of turn because I have to go to some important meeting. I will be very brief. I am supporting the adjournment motion of Dr. Datta Samant, of course.

Day before yesterday, this matter, part of it, was discussed here, in the course of the calling Attention Motion, you know, which was dealing with the recent strike in the Indian Airlines Corporation; and in the course of that debate, many of these questions came up. Then the irony of the situation is that yesterday we had this mishap, which, according to papers, is an unprecedented

thing, which has never happened before—the collapse of these nose wheels. And now we are told that the technical people from the company which manufactured the aircraft have to be sent for to see and find out, diagnose the reasons for it. Incidentally, I am very happy that our former Pilot Prime Minister is present here today at least to hear this discussion; and I hope he will participate in it because he certainly has more expertise in this matter than any of us have. But I am concerned with the safety aspect. The Speaker was so much agitated this morning. It was not on our insistence that he agreed to an adjournment motion at all; he himself said, I am going to allow an adjournment motion. What is the meaning of this, that is, what is going on? If the hydraulic system of these nose wheels had given way a little earlier, a few minutes earlier, when the plane was still taxing after leading, I think a very very severe accident could have taken place; it was just fortunate that the plane had come to a stop and then this thing happened. So, obviously, the hydraulic system on which these wheels are based has failed; and it obviously means that there is no proper inspection, there is no proper check-up of these things; there is no proper maintenance work; there is no proper overhauling.

The other day, when I raised this point, I did not know about the accident that was going to take place. But in view of the accidents which have already been taking place, the delay and all that, in which I am not going into now, but the hon. Minister, replying to the Calling Attention day before yesterday said, we have got very good facilities for maintenance; he also said that the Indian Airlines Corporation had vastly improved its profitability. I can understand that, if you go on flogging all these aircrafts round-the-clock—they are ageing after all; and they are not meant to be used in this way; without any rest, without any proper time for proper inspection and proper maintenance—then such things are bound to happen. Yesterday's incident could not have taken place, if there had been proper inspection and maintenance of this hydraulic system of

[Sh. Indrajit Gupta]
the wheels. But the Minister is quite complacent about the whole thing. I think he relies entirely on what his officers tell him; and the fact that the hon. Prime Minister had, a couple of years ago, thought that the efficiency of these two corporations could be vastly improved by inducting as Chairmen these two big gentlemen from the private sector, Mr. Bajaj and Mr. Ratan Tata, has to be reviewed. Now somebody has to tell us what exactly is the improvement in the efficiency and all that which is being brought about by these two people. Nobody in the public sector was considered good enough to run these airlines efficiently and, therefore, these people belonging to the house of the Tatas and Bajaj were brought. They may have increased the profitability because that is the only *dharam* they know; they may do it by 100 ways by over-working a plane, by not allowing enough time for overhauling and maintenance, by flogging these aircrafts. But what is going to happen as far as the safety of our passengers is concerned? Many hon. Members have had experiences of these accidents and many hon. Members know very well that the whole time-bale and operation of the planes and the services are in a shambles at the moment. Total shambles! Anybody who travels knows, how many hours are wasted at the airport waiting for planes which never take off or flights which are delayed endlessly, but the flights are not cancelled. You are not even given the facility of being allowed to go home by being told that the flight is cancelled.

Only the other day, a fortnight ago, I was travelling by the evening flight from Delhi to Calcutta, which was supposed to leave at ten minutes past eight. It left eventually at 1.30 in the morning. But in between that period we were constantly being told that the estimated time of departure was being delayed, constantly, one hour, two hours, three hours and so on. We said, "Why do you not cancel the flight, and let us go home?" They said, "No, no. It will leave." It left at 1.30, reached Calcutta at 3.30 in the morning, I reached my house at 4.30 in the morning, after having set out from here for Palam at 7

O'clock or 7.30! This kind of thing is going on all the time and if this is due to scarcity of aircraft and if you cannot acquire more aircraft because of financial constraints, then please say so. But this is a monopoly undertaking. Do not forget that. It is not like Air India which is competing with so many international airlines. This is a monopoly concern on the domestic traffic of India. They can go on raising their fares all the times. They have been doing it also. And now, they are making very good profits. But why are this kind of serious delays and accidents taking place? Due to sheer negligence! I would not blame on the engineering staff at all. It is not necessary.

I know some members may say that the workers are callous, and they are not working here, this and that. That is not the point at all. Even the pilots are dis-contented. A Pilot, some officer whose name is—I think his name is Flying Officer Bhardwaj, it was in the Press—Bhardwaj, refused to fly an aircraft because he found after inspecting the cockpit before taking off that the voice recording box, or whatever it is called, the voice recorder was not working. He said, "I am not going to fly this aircraft until it is put right." But he was pressurised, he was threatened by the authorities that he must go, that it was not a very vital equipment. Does not matter if it is not working. You have to take the plane." He said, "I am not going. With all these passengers here, I am not taking it." And finally, he got off the plane, the passengers also had to disembark and ultimately I was told that after four or five hours an empty aircraft was flown to Delhi by the executive pilots. Was it his fault? Was he wrong in refusing to take the risk with all those passengers?

The hon. Minister the other day did not reply to my specific points which I had raised. And about the night landing facilities many pilots have complained, that in some of the airports the night landing facilities are totally inadequate. Is it a fact or not? We do not know. Then, why are we risking these things? It is better to cut down the number of flights; if you cannot handle so many flights, please cut down the number of flights.

People will travel by train if they cannot go by air.

SHRI SATYENDRA NARAYAN SINHA (Aurangabad): Provided the trains also run on time!

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Well, they are probably a little bit safer. That is all I can say. There are plenty of accidents on the trains also. But I find that the incidence of accidents may be a little less.

SHRI ATAUR RAHMAN (Barpeta): Trains are run on a zonal basis.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: So, all I want to say is—I do not want to take more time—that the hon. Minister should not be complacent about all these things, and go on saying, "Everything is all right. Everything is all right. We have got very good facilities."

I may point out that it is three years now, in September 1985 the last wage agreement was signed with the employees of the Indian Airlines. It is now November, 1988. More than three years have passed. No settlement is reached. No agreement is reached, and when they went on one day strike, only a token strike, then the attitude here still was that they were not going to meet their demands, or to settle their demands. This way of making people discontented is not way to run a vital transport service like this, on which the safety and the comfort of so many passenger depends. They are paying high fares. it is not as though the fares are very low. The cost of fuel and all that may be going up. So, you will again increase the fares and nobody can prevent you, because this is a monopoly undertaking. For goodness sake, attend to the safety aspect of the matter. There would have been a major disaster yesterday if the wheels had collapsed just five or ten minutes earlier. While the plane was taxiing at quite a high speed of 150 KMs or 200 KMs per hour just after it landed, if the wheels would have collapsed at that time, what would have happened? Why was the hydraulic system not in order? Why had it not been checked? Why had it not been in-

spected before? Why had it not been attended to? These are very serious questions and they cannot be evaded. In fact, I would have preferred if the hon. Minister had made a statement here about yesterday's incident. I do not know if he has got any information or not, which is reliable. But he must attend to these matters seriously. Otherwise, the whole country and public opinion is so much agitated over this mal-functioning of the Indian Airlines.

SHRI B.R. BHAGAT (Arrah): Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, although this is not a cause for adjournment motion, the feeling in the country about the air services is causing great concern. It is rightly said that the safety element is more in train. In plane, the safety element is very important. If anything goes wrong, it can lead to very serious disaster as had happened in Ahmedabad or Guwahati.

Sir, nobody is sure that the safety margin in Indian Airlines is above the border. All questions are being raised. Shri Indrajit Gupta rightly said just now that we are flogging our aeroplanes. A particular plane is flying 9 1/2 hours and only four hours are left for maintenance, which is not enough.

We need more than two hundred planes to maintain the services. But we are left with only fifty planes or sometimes less than that, because there is almost three to four bird hits every week. This is the report I got. It leads to demobilisation of planes. So, the actual availability of planes is only 45 or something like that. It is very difficult to maintain the services in a country like India. There are two alternatives. Either it should be developed in commensurate with the availability of planes or by acquisition of planes. Three problems are involved. Firstly, maintenance; secondly training and thirdly acquisition of planes. Now the cost is so much. For example if we want to have a fleet, the cost of it runs into thousands of crores. The entire funds for the same come from the budgetary support to the companies. The Government's responsibility is only to underwrite the loans, which they negotiate. More than that, they do not do anything. The entire budgetary resource

[Sh. B.R. Bhagat]

has to come from these companies themselves—Air India, Indian Airlines, Vayudoot, Pawan Hans. All these are running on commercial basis and they have to raise their own resources.

Mr. Indrajit Gupta said that the other alternative is to cut down the services. Can you do that? All around the House, there is a demand for more and more areas to be developed, new airports to be built up. So that suggestion of Mr. Indrajit Gupta is also not feasible. Therefore, we have only to examine the strategy of the fleet whether it has crossed the limit of the safety mark, about the training of the pilots, their quality, discipline, their morale and the training facilities. I learn that there is not a whole time Director (Training) in the Indian Airlines. If it is so, then it is a serious matter because we cannot compromise on training and maintenance. It has been repeatedly said that Indian Airlines and Air India conform to the training schedule, the maintenance schedule as prescribed by the manufacturers. Secondly, that they have a very rigorous maintenance schedule. The planes are tested first daily. But some say that four hours are inadequate for maintenance purposes. Others say that it is quite adequate and that daily maintenance is done in the night. The point is that we have to accept the technical opinion on this. They are the responsible authority. It is not only Air India and Indian Airlines but Director General of Civil Aviation is also there. The Minister has to satisfy the House and the country that in these two aspects, the Government is not allowing any margin to go below the safety limit.

There have been complaints that sometimes without adequate training, pilots are pushed into the Boeing. These are the different doubts and suspicions which must be allayed by the Minister so that the public is satisfied that the maintenance of the aircraft and the training of the pilots, both are of a top standard.

SHRI SATYENDRA NARAYAN

SINHA: What about delay?

SHRI B.R. BHAGAT: About delay, if a flight stops at 12 places, naturally there will be delay. It comes from Trivandrum, goes back upto Srinagar, then goes back to Delhi, then to Patna, Gauhati and it negotiates 12 stops landing and taking off. You can appreciate another situation. For Boeing the repair facility is at Delhi and for airbus it is in Bombay. Once I was travelling upto Patna via Lucknow. Something went wrong at Lucknow. The entire crew was taken back from Delhi. It had to be replaced. So, instead of leaving at 11 o'clock in the morning, we left at 11 o'clock in the night. You can imagine what will happen to a plane which is coming from Trivandrum and is negotiating twelve stops for landing and taking off. If something goes wrong in Trivandrum or in Madras or at some other place, the whole thing—the crew, the parts and everything—has to be taken from Delhi. So, I think they have to stay there for two days. So, these are the problem in over-stretching. More than the question of management or the efficiency of the Indian Airlines, it is also because the fleets are stretched to cover such big areas that these problems arise.

Then, there is the problem of industrial relations, the management relationship. I understand that among the top management, there is lot of discontentment. I read in some papers—the Minister has to deny it or accept it, whatever it is—that the three Deputy Managing Directors of the Indian Airlines are not on talking terms... (*Interruptions*). This is what I read in papers. I do not know. What I have read is that the relationships among the top management are not good, they are not cordial, there is no comradeship. Now, you see, the strike is going on. They have submitted their demands. Air India seems to have settled it on certain basis. There has been a pay increase of, I think, about fifteen per cent. But Air India is heavily in the red. It is losing. But still they have managed. Now Indian Airlines has made an unprecedented and record profit of something like Rs. 70 to 75 crores. The workers demand that they must get more.

So, all this is going on. Apart from other big technical factors, industrial relations also are not good. Shri Indrajit Gupta Ji has said—I do not know how it is related, but if it is so, then the Minister has to reply—that the appointment of an outside Chairman has not helped the matters. If the Chairman, for want of time—because he is not while-time Chairman, he is parti-time Chairman—is not able to build the top management into a very solid one, if there is discordance among the top management, well, it is the fault of the Chairman. It has to be seen. So, all these things have to be looked at from that point of view.

I shall conclude by saying that the concern among the travelling public is very genuine. The country has to be fully assured. Acquisition is not a practicable proposition although they are acquiring some planes. The question of covering the whole country will remain, the shortage of plane will remain, but the maintenance, the training, the industrial relations and the morale in the services and in the organisation must be beyond reproach, which it is not. There is a great concern about this and it is the duty of the Minister... (*Interruption's*).

DR. DATTA SAMANT: So, you support the Motion.

DR. B.R. BHAGAT: No. That is why I am saying it is not a question of adjournment motion if the Indian Airlines cannot acquire planes because it does not have Rs. two thousand crores. If the Government does not give anything, a pie, as I said—I started by saying that—how is it a matter of adjournment motion? Although it is a matter of great public concern, but it is not a matter of adjournment motion.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY (Visakhapatnam): Sir, I rise to support the *Adjournment Motion* moved by Shri Datta Samant.

AN HON. MEMBER: Dr. Datta Samant. He says, he is a doctor.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY:

O.K. But he will not be able to remove the sickness of the aircraft. He can only identify and mention it time and again.

Sir, while supporting the adjournment motion, I would like at the outset to specially mention that the nation is mainly concerned with the two tragic accidents in which two of our aircrafts were involved, one at Ahmedabad and the other at Guwahati which took a heavy toll of 164 lives in both the accidents. This is not such an ordinary matter which can be simply brushed aside. Sir, the Government can take a complacent view and explain it away by saying that something is wrong somewhere and the matter is being probed into. Sir, the Government is responsible, answerable and accountable for this. If that is not there, then the public sector units where absolute monopoly is there, cannot inspire the confidence among the people. I would only ask the Minister earnestly that, in the fitness of things, he should own up moral responsibility for whatever tragic accidents that have taken place in recent times.

Sir, just as in the case of some passengers who by chance survive and live without being involved in such accidents, similarly some Ministers are lucky and fortunate who are heading certain portfolios where rain is good, crop position is good, etc. like the Agriculture Ministry and so on. But unfortunately ever since Shri Shivraj Patil took over this Ministry, the flights are not sticking to the time, serious accidents have occurred and several difficulties have been experienced by thousands of passengers. On the top of it, several precious lives have been lost and it is the misfortune of this good Minister to head such a Department. I do not want personally to say anything about him because he is eminently and excellently suited for any important task in the interest of the nation. But this is the sort of performance of the Ministry which he unfortunately happens to head. Apart from the Minister, the top brass of the department is also responsible because this is under the public sector undertakings. They just can't throw the responsibility on the Minister and the Minister is alone answerable to the House. I wish that

[Sh. Bhattam Srirama Murty]
a House Committee should be constituted to go into the entire matter and examine the various reasons and causes which are responsible for these tragic accidents and fix the responsibility and ultimately decide upon the course of action to be taken against the persons concerned. The Committee may also consider to improve the ways and means of the situation and analyse the reasons and causes for the recent accidents. The confidence of the people has been totally shaken. They have lost the faith in the working of the Department. The credibility of the Government has gone down. Air travel means almost signing a death warrant. So, when the situation deteriorated to that extent, what is it that we can expect. The Minister can only give us a long list of various measures taken in order to ensure the safety of the passengers. But at the same time, the list of accidents is also increasing and the death toll is also increasing. What is the use of extracting only assurance on the floor of the House?

Sir, I tried to go through the debates of the Rajya Sabha where the Minister stood to answer some of the questions raised by the hon. Members of the other House. He first tried to explain it away by saying that the weather condition was not good both in Ahmedabad and also throughout. The climate was bad, the visibility was poor, the weather condition was pitifully very bad. That was the first reason which was adduced by the Minister. May I sincerely point out to him, this is not the way to explain away matters, just throwing responsibility on the nature and finding an alibi for it. If climatic conditions are not suitable for aircraft to take off, then why should it be permitted to take off? The human element is there, the responsibility is there, the conscious decision is there. And therefore, you have to explain. In spite of the weather condition—I don't doubt it, I don't question it, that is bad also,—why should the aircraft be allowed to take off? This is not the way to explain away matters on such serious issues and that is how information will not be given to us. The Minister was not able to give any informa-

tion, even what we are able to possibly get through reading in the newspapers, perhaps much less than that was contained in the Statement which he laid on the Table of the other House. But then when this was pointed out to him, he said, 'Not that information is wanting, we are full of information, information is there in abundance, the required information is available with us. The only point is, we are not able to analyse it, the experts are yet to go into them and make up their mind and really come out with solid reasons which contributed to this disaster.' Now, what has happened? In the meanwhile, have the experts gone into the matter? Have they analysed the matter? Have they come to arrive at any conclusions? What is the position? What are the reasons which have contributed to this situation? And I think the Minister must be able to throw some light on that aspect also instead of saying that the matter is *sub judice* which position, of course, he has taken there in the other House, and I am afraid the same position may be taken up here also. Sir, when the Minister says, 'because of the weather conditions' which are very right, then is it not the fact he has said that it is '*sub judice*'? Similarly, when we want specifically certain reasons and the grounds and the causes for this disaster, then he must also come forward with some helpful information which would give us an insight into the actual picture.

As far as maintenance is concerned, it is awful. Pilot in certain cases were reported to have repeatedly warned against the laxity in maintenance which has resulted in mishaps. The pilots on more than one occasion have said this, it has appeared in the press and newspapers have reported this. They were conscious of the various defects, they are aware of the and they have pointed them out, but then nothing has happened. Sir, a Dornier on one occasion was flying from Arunachal to Calcutta, in the middle, about 6000 feet high from the ground level, one of the doors flew away. What is this? You see the hopeless condition. Some time back the condition of the western helicopters figured in this House. I am not able to dwell at length on this matter, but at the same time, I would

like to point out and ask whether the Government have gone into the condition of western helicopters at all, whether they wish to withdraw them or do something about it possibly without endangering the lives of several other passengers who may like to travel by the same flights.

17.00 hrs.

Sir, as far as Ahmedabad disaster is concerned, I would like to specifically ask one thing. The aircraft which crashed at Ahmedabad had developed certain snags and this was realised and this was pointed out. The snag includes instruments landing both at Ahmedabad and Guwahati. In spite of that, nothing has been done. As far as other aspects are concerned, photostat copies of blanket safety certificates are issued by Engineering staff without inspection, without looking into the instruments. Without doing inspection, certificates of safety were signed by them. It was reported in the papers. Even earlier also, some of the Committees have gone into the matter and found that that as far as safety aspects were concerned, the Engineering staff had not taken sufficient care. It was pointed out time and again. But nothing has been done. Nothing has happened.

Doubts have been cast on the functioning of the instrument landing systems both at Ahmedabad and Guwahati. Without saying much about it, I come to Vayudoot. Over-utilisation of Vayudoot service is scandalous. The aircraft involved in Ahmedabad accident was acquired in 1970 and it must have spent about 30 years of life. Now in Guwahati also the same, thing had happened. Both the aircrafts had done more than 51,000 hours of flight. It developed mechanical faults which were natural. Therefore, that being the case, no prompt action was taken by the concerned staff on the spot, when mechanical fault developed. Yesterday itself, it appeared in the Press that hydraulic system of the nose wheel had given way in respect of the aircraft which met with an accident. What is to be done about it? When series of accidents like this are hap-

pening, Government ought to be careful and take adequate preventive measures.

I would request the hon. Minister that he should invariably touch Hyderabad Airport before he goes to his constituency. Whenever we want to travel from Delhi to Hyderabad, invariably we are in the waiting list. We will never be told that our ticket is okay. So, at long last, finally we may get the seat.

We asked the hon. Minister that there should be a direct flight from Visakhapatnam to New Delhi and vice-versa. It was more or less promised by the Minister. But nothing has been done so far. Regular service which we used to have from Hyderabad to Vijayawada is now given up. Instead now 3 or 4 times a week flight is operating by Vayudoot. I request that the previous practice of regular flight between Vijayawada and Hyderabad should be restored.

I would like to once again emphasise that the Government is to necessarily look into all these aspects and to whatever is required to avert similar mishap in future.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (Dhenkanal): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. We heard Dr. Datta Samant and there was lot of thunder in his speech but very little light was shed. Of course, he did give us lot of facts and data from various past discussions and newspaper cuttings. Sir, he did say there was lot of discontentment which was also echoed by my hon. colleague, Shri Sharad Dighe. It is a fact that there is a great deal of discontentment. Whenever delay takes place in trying to find a solution, it does lead to discontentment. But that does not mean that because there is discontentment we should neglect our duties.

Dr. Datta Samant while pleading the discontentment and the cause of the employees and then discontentments, which I agree that it should be expeditiously resolved, also stated that people are doing no work, they are negligent and Government is negligent. But at the same time, he wants more

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payments for them.

17.05 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

There should be some rationale, some link-up. There cannot be paying more and doing no work. This is a fact with which this House is concerned. It was only two days earlier that we had a Calling Attention Notice on the unsatisfactory conditions in the Indian Airlines amongst the employees and on the performance of the Indian Airlines. The Committee on Public Undertakings has also looked into it. It has given its recommendations, inferences, views and conclusions. There is total disenchantment with the performance of the Indian Airlines due to the delays, diversions, cancellations and so on which lead to a lot of discomfiture both to the passengers as well as to those people who schedule their entire travel plan. But, when you say that the safety has gone down to a low morale, I would like to submit that Airlines probably is the safest mode of transportation as compared to any other mode of transportation. This is highly sophisticated and technically highly superior to other modes of transportation. The checks and the preventive maintenance are of a much higher order and level. But, we have to make an introspection that with the level of sophistication and modernisation in aircraft systems, whether we are up to the mark as far as our level of preventive maintenance is concerned? This was the question put in the Committee of Public Undertakings to which we did not get satisfactory replies. Are we carrying out the requisite amount of preventive maintenance checks and certification? This is something which the hon. Minister will be able to tell us. I know it is not his charge alone Indian Airlines is run by some one. Pawan Hans is run by some one. Air India is run by some one. Vayudoot is run by some one. But whenever something happens, the poor Minister has to answer them of the House and he is accountable for the acts of commission and omission of somebody else.

We would like to know whether accountability and responsibility has been fixed for the previous crashes, incidents and accidents whether any heads have rolled, whether any disciplinary action has been taken and whether any action to deter future shortcomings in the performance has been taken. Some of these accidents take place in the same pattern. It indicates that probably deterrent punishment and deterrent action has not been taken. Being a public sector undertaking, although we would like that lot of autonomy should be given to the public sector undertakings, but, at the same time, accountability is also necessary. Government may not be giving them budgetary support. But, at the same time, the public sector has played a very important role in our economic development. It is an important part of the Policy of the Government. Apart from generating revenue, apart from doing well, we are also concerned with the safety, accountability and responsibility. After all, it is the public money which is being invested.

Dr. Datta Samant also also mentioned that we have been taking pilots from the Flying Club. Even Indian Navy takes pilots from the Flying Club. I wish he would have been objective enough to say that in the last three to four years, we have also established a Flying Academy at Fursetganj to train pilots, for our four public sector undertakings. We will be taking pilots from the Air Force and from the Flying Clubs too. But, at the same time, we have also been trying to upgrade our flying skills and technology.

I would also like to know from the hon. Minister that along with the sophistication and the induction of sophisticated aircraft and the fleet whether there is any in-house, in-built system by which the flight engineers, the ground staff, are sent for training just like as it happens in the Minister of Defence whenever any new acquisition is brought in Pilots and men are sent to the various firms so that they are totally acclimatised, they are totally enmeshed with the system which they are going to use. In today's context, it is the systems approach which counts and it cannot be taken individually or in isolation. So, I

would like to know as to what is the system which is being followed in the four Public Sector Undertakings. Shri Indrajit Gupta has said that this incident of yesterday was an unprecedented one. There is no parallel to it, at least in our country. It is only during the last eight years that we have been inducting this particular aircraft—Airbus—and we also know that there is a lot of international intrigue between the Boeing and the Airbus. The recent crash in France have brought out many comments in the Press that it may be due to intrigue. Sir, I am not saying that it is due to intrigue that this Airbus at Delhi Airport collapsed on its nosewheel. But, we would like to know the answers to all the questions. Preventive maintenance even for a cycle, or motor-cycle or ordinary vehicle is of paramount importance. In various organisations they have mileage control; they have the hours of engine life, they have the hours of flying and they have a life-span for a particular system. I would like to know whether there is any such system as far as these aircraft are concerned. I am not a technical person. But, as a layman, I would like to know as to what norms they follow as far as the aircraft are concerned.

Sir, there are very many systems which are integrated together. The number of parts, the number of computerisations, and also automation in the entire thing, has been on the increase. Therefore, the people who handle them have to be equally abreast of the recent developments. Therefore, I would like to know, whether we have the competency, whether we are upgrading our skill and increasing the training to keep in consonance with the increasing trends. These are the things which need clarification.

Sir, many of the hon. Members have pointed out that the present number of aircraft are not commensurate with the requirements which the country wants, that too, in a developing and fast-growing economy. I would also like to know about that. Of course, in this House we keep on demanding for additional services. There is such a demand from various States and various regions. What is the optimum number of

aircraft we require? When we decide to extend services, whether it is the third-level airlines or whether it is Air India or Indian Airlines or Pawan Hans, do we ensure that the entire system and facilities which are required for accepting an aircraft or helicopter are existing there. Or, is it a fact that in trying to meet the demands of our regions as well as our people's representatives, we do take short-cuts, as far as safety requirements are concerned? In this very House, we have discussed the lack of night-landing facilities, instrument landing system etc. in various air fields. we have also seen the situation where *Nœlgais* and buffaloes come and crash against aircraft and the aircraft get damaged. Passengers safety is also affected and also vital communication systems disrupted. Therefore, it is a very serious matter.

The number of incidents have not been very high. Last year and this year have been years in which in the international sphere also, there have been a large number of accidents and a large number of people have died. But that is no reason that we should not take a deep look at our safety requirements and arrangements. I would like to know whether the discontentment is leading to relaxation or in neglecting our safety precautions and safety requirements or whether there is really something wrong with our preventive maintenance doctrine or the practices that we are following. These are the things which the Hon. Minister can answer us. And it is no use our debating this subject over and over again about the safety of passengers, about the convenience of passengers if we are to be told that since the incident or the accident has happened, there is a court of inquiry going on and we shall let you know what are the reasons for the accident. After that everything is totally forgotten and no preventive action is taken after that. These delays, diversions and cancellations which many of the Members have brought to the notice are very irksome things for many and it should not be taken lightly because it is a Hobson's choice, because it is a monopoly. If the people have to travel by air because there is no other choice and because

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of the constraints of time and conveniences, then it is more the reason why safety precautions and the safety requirements of all the four public sector undertakings should be of an exemplary order and any shortcoming in that must be dealt with a heavy hand.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY
(Katwa): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not going to dwell with the small aspects of the problems that are connected with the civil aviation like the delay and other inconvenience caused to the civil aviation like the delay and other inconvenience caused to the passengers. And it is not the proper time to deal about that also because it seems, now the delay means little more life. So, I will concentrate mainly on the recent crashes involving Indian Airlines, Vayudoot, Pawan Hans, that is, the total working of the Civil Aviation Ministry.

Now, the Minister will obviously say that unless the inquiry is complete, he cannot say anything about the reasons for the crash. But then there are certain obviously perceptible, important factors that lead the people to think that there are serious faults in the total functioning of this organisation and the Ministry as a whole. Now all these things have been referred to here, like the question of maintenance, over flogging of air crafts, inadequate facilities of landing in different airports like the one that has come to the notice at the Ahmedabad Airport that the instrument landing system was not fully operational. Apart from that, what appears to me is that in the few years, during recent times, the discipline in the civil aviation sector, the harmony between the management and the workers, relations in some managements are being jeopardised. Discipline is harmed, discipline becomes a casualty if favoritism and nepotism and other kinds of corruption creep into it. Now so many things have already been reported in the press. I am not going into like how the blank certificates are issued and on that basis the flight is taken off low the new pilots are given responsibility for flying jets without fulfilling the norms for its flying. I am not going into all that. All that have come in the papers and

you must have a look into all this. There should be a proper survey and investigation into the functioning of all these three branches of civil aviation in our country.

Today what I want to raise is a very serious matter. From the Government side there are certain responsibilities. There are certain things that they have done; they have to answer for that. I come to a very serious matter about which I have given you a copy. That is the accident that took place on 14th July 1988 near Vaishnodevi involving a Westland Helicopter. Everybody knows in this country that these helicopters had been rejected by many advanced countries in the world...*(Interruptions)*... Everybody knows that these helicopters were faulty and defective. So many accidents involving these helicopters took place all over the world. Even our Prime Minister said in the other House that even if it is given as a gift we are not going to get it. We all know about the debate that took place in the House of Commons in Britain. The then Defence Secretary said that even if that is given to us as a gift, we are not going to take it for our Defence.

Many Committee—I am not going to name all the Committees—have all rejected the idea of purchasing the Westland helicopters. But then why have we purchased it?

How tragic these accidents are becoming to the lives of the people who are involved in it? This is a letter from a widow Sangamitra Gupta who lost her husband that day near Vaishnodevi and her eldest daughter in front of her own eyes. She was not on that flight because she did not get a place. Who will give her back her husband? Tell us. The Minister ought to reply to this. When I go through it I feel we are criminals. Why did we purchase this? On what consideration? A reply is necessary. So many Committees have rejected it; then who influenced us? This is a very important question.

When this lady raised her voice, took up a crusade, wrote to the Members of Parliament and to the newspapers; then from

Delhi, Pawan Hans sent their lawyers, attorneys to bribe her and they offered Rs. 3 lakhs as compensation. Is that permitted by law? How much maximum you can give as compensation to a victim? I think it is Rs. 2 lakhs. Then how was she offered Rs. 3 lakhs?

The Statesman, Calcutta gave this heading. 'The Government's Silencer: Is Pawan Hans trying to bribe the widow of a crash victim into silence?' Why Rs. 3 lakhs were offered? Then you should give Rs. 3 lakhs to everybody. Then why is it that for so many people you are not giving that? Who is offering that money? What is the idea behind it?

Sir, I referred these letters to the Prime Minister. The gentleman that he is, our Prime Minister, he did not reply to me. What we are lacking is the human touch in our feelings. It is not only commercial. It is not only profit making. What has gone wrong we have to go deep into it.

Sir, can I refer to another thing?

MR. SPEAKER: Please conclude in one minute.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: I cannot demand a parliamentary committee for everything. Once I suggested there should be a permanent House Committee to inquire into all these types of allegations to be chaired by you. (*Interruptions*)

I do not know who told the Prime Minister that I have something in my hand and that is why he left the House just before I started speaking. I wanted to know from him why we placed the order with the Westland company. I give a small quotation and then I conclude:

"What was the motive. Media reports suggest answers to this question as well. They indicate the ubiquitous Italian connection. International Holding Fiat S.A. of via Pretoria, 13 Lignano Switzerland 6901 is actually an Italian company that had for long been wanting to acquire Westland. The inhibiting factor was Westland's order book, which was not too encouraging but the

Indian order for 21 copters changed all that and the Italians got into action..."

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat now. Mr. R.L. Bhatia...

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: Sir, don't we have right to inquire into it? Should you not share the concern of the House? Don't you think we should respond to this widow? Are you not touched by this?

MR. SPEAKER: I am already touched.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: Since you are compelling me to sit down I will sit down but truth cannot be suppressed.

SHRI R.L. BHATIA (Amritsar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I share the concern of the House over the recent accidents in the Indian Airlines at Ahmedabad, Gauhati and now at Delhi. (*Interruptions*)

I am surprised because the Indian air services had earned quite a good name all over the world as well as in our country. As far as I can see this is the first accident of the Airbus because these Airbuses are here for the last eight years. The Minister may correct me if I am wrong.

17.28 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Similarly all these years we did not have very many accidents but in the last three months we do find that there have been some accidents. It is a serious matter. It is not a party affairs or accusing somebody. I think we are all concerned about it and we must go deep into the matter as to what are the causes. Since these services were doing so well in the past what has happened to them that in the recent past there have been some accidents.

Many questions that were put to the hon. Minister in this house during the debate

[Sh. R.L. Bhatia]
last time he mentioned some limitations **saying that** the air service is very popular and **there is** demand from all the members that all **the** areas should be connected and they **have** been obliging them. Now the air services are so broad-based that they do not have matching planes for these services. So it is upto him to go into the matter as to whether we can reduce air services or he should lay hand on more planes. As he rightly said last time there is constraint on funds. There is no budgetary provision to help them in this matter and what they are doing is to earn profits and deploy the same. **Probably** it is for that reason for better management, for better profits and for economy **that** they brought Chairman from the private concern because in their good judgement **they** thought those are the people and once **they** are brought in probably they will improve the situation. Of course, the profitability has increased. Of course, the air services **have** increased. But suddenly these accidents have created a problem for which we are all feeling very much concerned

I would like to know from the Minister as to what are the reasons for that. It is true that you must have set up an inquiry and you may not be able to say much at this time as that may influence the judgment of the inquiry. **But the** basic facts which are before us and **the basic** facts which have been raised by **my friends** on both the sides of this House **need to** be answered. The first is: **Whether our pilots** are sufficiently trained? **Are they capable** enough to man these aircrafts? **That is** the first thing. I am saying about the training. So far as I am concerned, I feel, that our pilots have been very popular. They have been taken away by the various foreign services. One of the reasons may be that they are being given more salary. But also, it is a fact that the Indian pilots have a big name. That is how the foreign air companies have been taking our pilots because they don't pay more money simply because they require a pilot. They also see whether the pilot is sufficiently trained or not. So, the first question that arises is whether many of our pilots have taken up jobs outside and what-

ever staff you have at your disposal and who are running these planes are trained.

The other question is whether the maintenance is adequate or not? My friend Mr. Bhagat said that there are only four stations. One is meant for Airbus, the other is for Vayudoot and the third is for the Boeings. And they are at quite a distance.

AN HON. MEMBER: For Pawan Hans?

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: For Pawan Hans, there is a separate station

We have to ask you whether the maintenance is adequate in this country because now the services are much broad-based. Therefore, it is all the more reason that we maintain these planes very well.

I also want to know whether there is dissatisfaction among the staff as Dr. Datta Samant has said. Is this one of the reasons also that we are having more accidents? Formerly, there were no accidents at all. Air travel was very safe and people preferred it. It is only recently it has happened. So, my third question is whether there is dissatisfaction among the staff and this is a cause for these accidents?

I would also like to ask whether there is a complete coordination between the pilots and the ground staff. But this is very important. Is there any difference between them or is there anything that is a cause of these accidents? This is a very vital question for which I would like the Minister to answer.

Now, we find in the Press that all these concerns are making good profits. Is it that only for profit sake we are running all these planes day and night and taking more and more job out of them and not caring much for their services and is it because of that these accidents are taking place? All these questions are very vital and I will ask the Minister to kindly reply us.

I am not speaking much because I will be just repeating what my other friends have

said. I do not agree with Dr. Datta Samant that he is trying to fix the responsibility on the Minister while his other friend, Mr. Bhattam Srirama Murty, was praising our Minister (*Interruptions*) because whatever department he has managed, he has got a praise for that. I hope this is the local politics which you are trying to raise here.

DR. DATTA SAMANT: The matter is serious. That is very important.

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: Then, I would request the Minister that you must have perestroika. You reconsider and discuss with all these chairmen, discuss with all the aviation authorities and find out a way as to what best can be done under the circumstances. I know there are two pressures on you: One, on the other side, that there should be more and more services; the other, that you have limitations so far as planes are concerned. So, between the two, you must discuss with the aviation authorities and find out a way and come with your options to this House. I think, we will support you, including Dr. Datta Samant. (*Interruptions*) We should help him and support him so that the air service becomes more safe and people feel more secure and our airlines, which has been efficient in the past, will continue to be efficient.

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS (Mavelikara): Sir, travel by the Indian Airlines or the Air India or by the other two airlines Vayudoot and Pawan Hans has really become a nightmare and an ordeal. I am happy that the Treasury Benches also support this adjournment motion and we censure this Government on this count. This is the trend of all the speeches made by previous speakers. I do not think anyone has complimented either the Indian Airlines or the Department or the Minister for running these organisations efficiently. It is true that the credibility of all these organisations has gone. Can this Government re-establish the credibility of these organisations? Can it be in a position to convince people about the service of these Airlines and make them feel that they would like to travel only by Indian Airlines

and Air India? Now the general feeling is that people want to travel by these Airlines only as a last resort. Various reasons for this state of affairs have already been explained by those who spoke before me and I do not want to go into all those details again. I support all the points mentioned by the hon. members.

Sir, even in the case of ordinary transport service by road, there is a provision under law that there should be reserve vehicles. If a private entrepreneur goes to apply for a permit, the first question put to him is whether he has got a reserve but to operate on the route. The purpose is to see that passengers are not stranded *en route*. I hope the hon. Minister will inform this House as to how much money has been paid ever the last one year to the public and private sector hotels for accommodating the passengers travelling by these Airlines and for giving them food on account of dislocation of flights. He may also inform as to why this dislocation has taken place. How are your efficient bureaucrats, sitting at the top, able to manage the situation? All the Five Star and other hotels are filled with passengers from Indian Airlines. I wonder whether there is a conspiracy between the private sector hotel management and the Airlines for the purpose of accommodating these stranded passengers and getting money at the cost of the public exchequer! This is my experience. When I go from Cochin, I get an opportunity to stay in Goa in hotels...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Most of the hotels belong to ITDC only.

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS: Yes, there are ITDC hotels and also hotels which are in collaboration with the ITDC. My point is that we have to find out the real reasons. This may reveal the approach of the top management of these organisations. When we analyse, we find that the reasons are lack of maintenance, lack of training, lack of industrial relations and lack of commitment. How are you going to meet all these things? I think these organisations are managed in the same way as the leader or captain of this nation, who himself happened to be a pilot,

[Sh. Thampan Thomas]

is landing the country in a mess. In the same manner, the pilots of the Indian Airlines are landing the passengers in a mass and confusion without any destination, proper guidance and aim. If I want to travel to Delhi, I reach Madras or Patna or Ahmedabad or else where. That is the situation today. This is happening every day.

Recently I had participated in a debate on bird-bits. To solve the problem of birds hitting the planes, To solve the problem of birds hitting the planes, the Government had brought a legislation prohibiting birds hitting the planes! This is the utopian way in which this Government functions. No concrete action is ever taken, except to pass a law prohibiting birds hitting the planes. What basic action have they taken to see that birds do not fly near the airports?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : May be, some birds might have been arrested!

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : Well, they may say that the birds are sent from abroad for destabilisation purposes! On one single day, four or five aircraft are stranded in various places. You see, the whole network is such that one aircraft which starts from Madras goes round the whole country. It works throughout. There is no time for its repair or maintenance. If you ask the staff, they would say their requirements are not met. They are not paid proper overtime. Their service conditions are very bad. I am told the Indian Airlines' rank was fifth in the whole public sector undertakings in regard to the pay earlier. Now its rank is 24th. Now nobody thinks that an employment in the Indian Airlines is an honour. Earlier the people used to think that if you get an employment in the Indian Airlines, it is an honour. At that time, its rank was fifth, in regard to wages and other emoluments. Now its rank has gone upto 24th in regard to wages and other emoluments. They themselves feel that they have discarded the interests of the passengers. You look at the passengers. On account of all these things the people who want to travel urgently or the

people who are paid by the exchequer for their travel or the people who are paid by the public sector undertakings or the people who can afford to pay huge sums of money or the persons who want to reach immediately to their destinations for attending to funeral or to attend to some sick relatives or somebody else, will invariably land elsewhere. The situation can only be controlled if you properly look into it. Then I say the time has come - even the whole House was concerned about it.- when you should appoint a Joint Parliamentary Committee consisting of such officials who can help us in going into the details for this purpose alone. Therefore, I would suggest that a Joint Parliamentary Committee should be appointed on the basis of this Motion to go into the working of the Indian Airlines, the Air India, the Vayudoot and the Pawan Hans as to what is happening there.

I would like the Minister to specifically answer this point. Recently one thing had happened. My State sends maximum number of people to foreign countries. In no flight you can get a ticket. All the thirty days in a month, it is overbooked. It is overbooked from all the stations either it is Trivandrum or Calicut or Cochin. It is mainly because a number of people go abroad from these places. For going to foreign countries they have to get down at Bombay and board another flight. In search of foreign exchange they used to go to Gulf countries. Then they send Rs 5,000 crores to India which is a substantial portion of money earned by them. You see how are they treated?

Recently it happened in Trivandrum Airport. The Air India could not operate its flights for six or seven days continuously. What was the reason that you should tell this House? It was not on account of maintenance or any trouble but only it is because of lack of coordination and infighting between these officials. It is true when one hon. Member - it is none other than Shri B.R. Bhagat, a senior Member of this House - in the course of his speech said that the Deputy Managers are not on talking terms. I know how the Managing Director of the Indian

Airlines was appointed. He was a junior officer. He was promoted by overlooking other people. It is because he is having proximity to the top. He was promoted to that position. You see what grumbling is taking place. The entire staff are disgruntled. They are dissatisfied over the appointment. How are they going to face it? How have you got an industrial relation there? Whether it is a Manager or an ordinary staff, are you formulating a policy and following it? Instead of that, if somebody else has got some access to the top or someone in the Government, then he is put as the Chief. Then quarrel takes place. Air India flights which could not operate in Trivandrum is a clear example of that. Many poor people who wanted to go out and earn foreign exchange from there, lost their visas, lost their jobs and also lost their livelihood because of lack of proper facilities.

I would like the hon. Minister to answer all these questions.

SHRI HAROOBHAI MEHTA (Ahmedabad) : Sir, I represent that constituency which witnessed on 19th October last, a very grim tragedy and the worst accident which had overtaken air passengers in India. 133 people had died as a result of that crash and only lucky ones had survived. I take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister who specially deputed the Civil Aviation Minister to be on the spot, on the same day and to take care of the rescue operations and to provide relief and compensation.

Immediately, a court of inquiry was ordered. But nevertheless, after that, the accidents took place. In fact, we have heard some Civil Aviation Officer speaking on the question, Shri P.C. Sen, Director-General of Civil Aviation says as follows:

" We definitely need to take a hard look at the whole system and take all positive corrective measures to see that these tragedies don't occur again."

But even after the grimmest tragedy overtook Ahmedabad; and on the same day,

another tragedy overtook a place in Assam, things have not improved; that is the worst part. Thereafter also the accidents took place; and on the top of it yesterday's accident. Therefore, this Management of Indian Airlines has not taken a lesson even from such tragedies. I, therefore, join issue with the Indian airlines. This is not the way in which airlines can be managed. I am not going to accept this that the air crash at Ahmedabad was a mere accident. We are also not so gullible enough to accept an explanation that it was bad weather. The airlines rules, ground rules, ground rules, maintenance, everything else, how a Pilot should also operate during bad weather, everything is provided in the Manual. Unless that Manual is violated either on account of some technical deficiency or on account of human error, even in bad weather, accident is not an inherent possibility. Therefore not bad weather, but somewhere some human failure, somewhere some mechanical failure, some failure of the equipment, all these things have to be gone into and enquired into by a court of inquiry. That is set up. Unfortunately, I am told that the court of inquiry is holding its sitting at Bombay only, not at the place where the crash took place. The court of inquiry should start hearing at Ahmedabad itself so that proper evidence can be produced before the court by all concerned without loss of time and without any inconvenience.

Public confidence in air travel has dropped to an all time low. Only when you land safely you think that have been miraculously saved. Of course, one thing has been done by the Indian Airlines. The hon. members will agree with me. They at least have contributed to the rise of spiritualism in India, because, I have seen that even some atheists start believing in God when they travel in air and when they land safely. Many of them start chanting Hanuman Chalisa at the time of landing. At least some of the atheists have started believing in God and miracle; that means at least the Indian Airlines must be congratulated for promoting spiritualism, which even our media had failed to do. The Indian Airlines passengers have started

[Sh. Haroobhai Metha] believing in God. Therefore, all kudos to the Indian Airlines. But what are the reasons for this, the government will have to answer. Airlines is not a direct department; it is a public sector functioning under the government. But the government is still answerable constitutionally; constitutionally, the Minister is accountable to the Parliament on account of parliamentary responsibility and parliamentary democracy.

Is it an account of over ambitious expansion which has led the services to the breaking point? You go on expanding services without providing for aircrafts. I am not for bringing aircraft from foreign countries at the loss of foreign exchange and our own resources. I am one who would advocate that please truncate your air services. Mostly only those people who travel at other's cost and the wealthiest people travel in airlines. There is nothing wrong in it if your air schedule is truncated. Only the Capital should be connected with Delhi. Why do you spend so much foreign exchange and the Indian money to sub-serve the purpose of only air passengers who are in the highest income bracket; instead, why don't you utilise that money to improve railways services, State Transport Services and bus services? We are spending so much foreign exchange and other money on looking after the speedy travel of the highest bracket people that we sometimes miss our targets in other areas.

Then your flight schedule has also overworked; it is really going helter-skelter; and on account of that flight schedule being disturbed, delay is not the main thing. On account of delay, you are putting the Pilots to over work; ground staff is also put to over work; and constant over work on account of delay will certainly put them to strain, and they cannot, therefore, work as meticulously as they would work if they are required to work only on schedule. The aircraft also are said to have been working beyond their age. The Ahmedabad aircraft was supposed to be the oldest or the second oldest. It had overworked, as it had been pointed out, it had already undergone 42,000 flying hours.

So, it was really unsafe. You cannot play with the lives of the passengers in order to make profits. All this is on account of the fact that the top management of the Indian Airlines has been entrusted to somebody to whom profits and money are God. You have brought somebody from the private sector. You cannot expect a private sector man to work in the public sector with dedication. They are not interested in the improvement of public sector. They would like to see that the public sector is destroyed, so that they private sector can again gain commanding heights in India. Therefore, the minimum that the Government owes to Parliament and to the people is to sack the Chairman Rahul Bajaj from the Chairmanship of Indian Airlines immediately. I am not asking for the resignation of the Minister. It is for the Minister's conscience, whether he feels to be embarrassed on account of such accidents or feels happy in continuing. Therefore, I am not making a demand for his resignation. But I do make a demand for the resignation of the Chairman or sacking him. The inefficiency, delays, accidents, all these things are on account of failure of navigation aids, or human error or whatever it may be, series of them. I am told that before this tragic accident in Ahmedabad that aircraft had been found to have been suffering from certain technical snags.

DR. DATTA SAMANT: Two days prior to that.

SHRI HAROOBHAI MEHTA: Two days before that, they say. Even then it was allowed to work for some time! If the Chairman has no interest in the safety of human lives, I do not think that he should be allowed to continue in the Chair. This is what can happen in any public sector industry if a private sector man is imported to head a public sector undertaking. This is one example. The sooner you take a lesson from this tragedy it is better. It is in the interests of the people.

There, are so many points. But the time is very limited. Therefore, I cannot cover all the points. Of course, all the causes will be inquired into by the court of inquiry where of

course, we will place our viewpoints. But certain specific points, I want to raise.

On the question of payment of Rs. 2 lakhs, the dependants have told me, they represented to us, that the Indian Airlines authorities were asking them to sign a statement that they would not claim any other compensation after accepting that amount of Rs 2 lakhs. It is not fair. If tomorrow the court of inquiry finds that there was some negligence behind this accidents, then of course, they will be entitled to file a suit for torts. Therefore, no such statement should be obtained or insisted upon from the dependants, that they would not claim any further amount. The amount of Rs 2 lakhs promised by the Minister soon after the accident, should be paid immediately.

DR. DATTA SAMANT : To all.

SHRI HAROOBHAI MEHTA : Secondly, the schedule should be rationalised. If necessary, it may be truncated right now. But please do not put the safety of the passengers in jeopardy. After all, I do not think we can absorb any more accidents in this country. Therefore, my submission is that the tragedy is great and, the airline has landed itself into a tragic situation. Therefore, a deep inquiry into the causes, and all those responsible for the functioning of Indian Airlines should take place immediately so that the situation can be remedied and at least the top management must be held responsible immediately. Because, this is not one accident. There is no such thing as accident. Accident is a myth. This is all on account of human failure, as well as technical failure and failure to provide the necessary equipment, that the accidents take place and overworking of the aircraft and other things. Therefore, the Chairman must be held responsible immediately and steps should be taken immediately to improve the functioning.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI (Guwahati) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, I hope the hon. Minister will appreciate that this is one of those rare occasions when views have cut across

party lines and concern has been expressed almost with unanimity on the functioning of the Indian Airlines.

And in my limited experience of Parliament, this is for the first time that when an Adjournment Motion was moved there was no objection from the ruling party which shows that the ruling party is equally concerned with the functioning of the Indian Airlines.

Our concern is not only because there have been two accidents and a number of near accidents, one in which we almost lost our dear friend Dr. Datta Samant. All of us, who have the experience of travelling in Indian Airlines, have faced situations of uncertainty at one point or another. I am not going into the question of delay. This has been dealt with by my other friends. Not only there is delay, but even the minimum requirement of an announcement as to what plane next would be going is never announced over the microphone. Sir, I have my own experience, some of which I want to narrate. I was going to Guwahati. The flight time was 6.40. Exactly at 6.40, we were taken to the aircraft; we were put inside the aircraft and the aircraft was not moving. After about forty five minutes, when I enquired, I was told that the aircraft was not moving because there was a VIP landing. I knew for myself on that particular day, neither the President nor the Prime Minister was moving in or out of Delhi. Therefore, the question of VIP landing was not there. I saw myself from the window of the aircraft that another plane was landing. In case there was VIP landing, there could not be landing of any aircraft. Therefore, the excuse that was given to me was wrong. Whatever it was the engine was switched on after some time and immediately switched off and we were informed that there was a snag in the aircraft. I would not like to name the person, who had given this information. I was told by the person of authority that this aircraft was repaired at the hanger for a particular snag, and when it was brought on the runway, the same snag developed again, immediately. The pilots were sitting in the Aircraft from

[Sh. Dinesh Goswami]
5.45. You can expect then emotional reactions when one is asked to sit from 5.45. to 8.01 asked a person of authority what will happen if the same snag develops again. I was told that it is quite likely that the snag which was repaired and developed immediately thereafter, may develop again, and it may be that the plane may be able to land but after it is landed, it will not be able to take off. If the snag is repaired at the hangar and if it develops thereafter, then there is something inherently wrong with the maintenance of the aircraft. I was about to come out. Because I had an urgent business, I had to go. Every one of us might have had this kind of experience. I do not know whether the hon. Minister had similar experience. May be additional care is taken, when the Minister is carried by an aircraft.

So far as Ahmedabad crash is concerned, we are told that this aircraft developed snags on a number of occasions before Ahmedabad had taken place. I have been specifically told by persons of authority that ILS was not functioning properly at Guwahati on the day of accident. There cannot be accidents because of bad weather. Bad weather is a normal thing in Europe. You do not get good weather in Europe. If there is bad weather, there are navigational facilities which aids in landing of the plane. If the situation is such that because of a bad weather the plane cannot land, then why do you permit the plane to land? These pilots were experienced pilots. Therefore it could not be merely on account of bad weather. A pilot of experience will never try to land the aircraft in a bad weather because his own life is at stake-unless there is something inherently wrong with the aircraft or with the navigational facilities.

I have seen the most casual interview of the Chairman in *Business India*. When he was asked about the navigational facilities in Ahmedabad, he said, 'I will have to look into'. There are many airports in this country. I had the privilege of being a Member of the Public Undertaking Committee, which examined,

the Indian Airlines functioning. We noted that there was no coordination whatsoever between the Civil Aviation Department and the National Airport Authority of India, under whose control the airports are there. They are working in water tight compartment.

I asked a simple question. There are many Airports where there is no water facilities. We were told that this is not the concern of Civil Aviation and this is the concern of the National Airport Authority of India. I told them that I did not purchase ticket from National Airport Authority of India and I purchased ticket from Indian Airlines and for the facilities, Indian Airlines should be held responsible. We asked for meetings of coordination. We told them that there should be one window where we could have all the three Departments. There is Department of Security, which is under Home Ministry, then we have the Department of Civil Aviation and National Airport Authority of India. We are promised that it would be done. But nothing was done.

18.00 hrs

The Public Undertakings Committee's report is also there which says that the planes have been flown much beyond the expected hours of flying. There are a number of cases of near accidents, delays and irritants. I can cite another instance of irritant. Very recently it happened. I was coming from Gauhati to Delhi. In Bagdogra, a lady with a dog entered the plane. Then the lady was asked to go out. She was told that she was not permitted to board the plane with a dog. If there was no permission to board the plane with a dog, why was she not prevented at the entry point? The lady refused and the result was that the passengers got themselves divided and for 45 minutes the plane was grounded there.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI
SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : Which side do
you support?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : I intended to support the lady because I love dogs; I support the lady because I am a chivalrous person; I support the lady because she was allowed to go into the plane. Look at her predicament. Probably her escorts had left. What I am pointing out is that these minor irritants are there. Everyone of us has this experience that after the engine is switched off, often the plane is grounded. At least on three occasions when I was coming to Calcutta and Delhi, the engine was switched on and immediately it was switched off on the ground that some snag has developed. This normally does not take place. Why are we worrying? It is because this is a new development which has taken place. Accidents will take place even if you take the utmost care. Accidents are accidents. But it appears that these accidents which are taking place are avoidable accidents because of mechanical fault, accidents because of human faults, because proper maintenance is not carried out. There are reports that blank air-worthiness certificates are being signed. I would like to know from the Minister that there are reports that because the pilot and the co-pilot are not on talking terms, and on one occasion because of lack of coordination wheels were not put down and the plane had to go for a belly landing. Up till now it has not been contradicted. There are reports which have appeared in which pilots of experience have come in public and stated in newspapers that Vayudoot is virtually a suicidal time-bomb. But none of these has been contradicted. In spite of the fact that Vayudoot plane itself is something on which you are always apprehensive of travelling, even then the authority are adding more and more stations in the route map. There are the points on which I would like the Minister to look into.

I once again say that on the day when the accident at Gauhati took place, there ILS was not functioning. On a number of occasions, the instrument landing system does not function. And this I am telling you because this has been reported to me by somebody whose views I respect and I believe that he will not tell me otherwise.

About Pawan Hans, the minimum facilities which are required for flying a helicopter at an altitude like Vaishno Devi, were not there. That is the complaint. An essential requirement of flying a plane is that the safety of the passenger must be put at the forefront. I believe that the safety aspect has been compromised. One reason is that if there are passengers at the airport, some people in the airport find it difficult because they have to deal with 200/400 passengers. Therefore, an attempt is made to run the aircraft. I know pilots also do not want to remain in a place like Gauhati. They want to be at good places. I hope, the hon. Minister will take into account all these factors.

This is not a matter on which we would like to take a partisan attitude. Obviously it has cut across party lines. And all is not well when a member of the ruling party demands that the appointment of Chairman from a private sector corporation is not good. When he was asked the question about the report of Indian Airlines maintenance, his reply is very interesting. He said: "I keep telling my executives of Bajaj Auto that there is always tremendous scope for improvement." Well do not compare Bajaj Auto with Indian Airlines. It is not that riding a scooter is the same thing as riding an aircraft. Therefore, I believe that the entire thing should be looked afresh. There is a lot of discontentment among the top officials and also the complaint is that often the test, whether the pilot has taken liquor or not, is perfunctorily carried out. Even when in the past when somebody has been found guilty, action has not been taken against him. I know what reply the minister will give because he will give a replies which has been fed to him by the very same people against whom we are making the complaints. His reply will be from the Civil Aviation officials, against whom we are making complaints. Well, probably you cannot help it. You will have to get that reply. But I will like the minister to accept the suggestion to go in for a Joint parliamentary Committee or have some very strong technical committee to go into all these matters. Kindly, for Heaven's sake, do not compromise with passengers safety and tell your

[Sh. Dinesh Goswami]
airport people that all is not well in the Indian Airlines. We know that there are delays because you are running short. We do not mind delays for unavoidable reasons. But at least we should be told. Supposing a plane is not going at seven, we should be told whether the plane is likely to go at nine, ten, eleven or twelve. We are not told and from seven in the morning, we are kept waiting. And also the flights are cancelled at random and you know the difficulties. I hope, the Minister will look into it because this is a matter on which, for the first time, concern has been expressed unitedly by this House and I hope that the Minister's response will reflect the united concern. That this House has expressed.

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL (Erandol): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard Datta Samant Ji patiently. He tried to blame the authorities, the Government, but what happens if we find water in the fuel tank, as it was found four years ago at Bombay? Is it not the negligence of the staff, of the employees? We do agree that there should be more pay, higher pay because of the rising prices, as Mr. Thomas has said. But we cannot overlook the negligence of the employees if the cows are allowed to come on the runway and the planes are damaged, as happened in Bhubaneswar and a year after in Baroda. These things should be looked at very seriously. Of course, when somebody is taken to task, sometimes the courts help him and strictures are also passed against the authorities who take the action. This is the example of the Minister who was earlier in charge of Civil Aviation. All of us know that one officer was taken to task. He was asked to leave for negligence. We all agree in this House that the aircrafts are over-worked, they are fatigued. So, some remedy should be found for this.

I would also like to know that when after Independence, we could manufacture SLVs, that is, Space Launching Vehicles, we could manufacture atomic power plants indigenously, to the extent of 98 per cent, then why we could not manufacture our own

aircrafts to be used for civil aviation. We could enter into joint collaboration with the Russians for our defence purposes and we started manufacturing Mig-21 sophisticated aircrafts, but for the use of domestic services for the passenger traffic, we have not given serious thought. Recently some agreement, I understand, has been made between the Dornier company and the Government of India. It should have been done earlier so that the burden on the existing aircrafts could have been reduced and the demand could have been met with the domestic aircrafts. We all know that we have to spend a lot of foreign exchange on purchasing planes and the planes also do not come as per the schedule. The new difficulties cropped up because there is a growing demand on the one hand and on the other we are getting delayed deliveries of the aircrafts for passenger traffic. As compared to other countries, for example European countries, our country is a sub-continent. If you travel from Delhi to Patna, it takes about one hour and twenty-five minutes and in this duration you cross four countries in Europe. Moreover, those airports are also international airports. Here in spite of vast distances, our Indian Airlines service was adjudged as one of the best in the world, in spite of many shortcomings, in its maintenance and other aspects. We should not forget that in this sub-continent, the pilot has to be very alert. When he starts from Delhi while going to Ladakh, he has to pass through India Gate, he cannot take out the wheels at the height of 5000 ft. but has to take them out at the height of 2000 ft. or 3000 ft. When he starts from Delhi in clear weather, he faces cyclonic weather in Calcutta as it is experienced today. So, he has to think about the bad weather in Calcutta before starting from Delhi. There will be a clear weather in Delhi, but while approaching Bombay there may be torrential rains. So, the pilots have to be very alert. They are of a very high calibre. But all the same I would like to suggest that the retirement age could be reduced. Earlier, the pilots who were above 45 years were asked to serve on the ground. But we see nowadays, old pilots also working in the aircrafts in the air. Can we not bring down the age of service in the air of

the pilots and ask them to work on the grounds till their retirement?

Sir, there was a talk of introduction of air-taxi service in the country some years ago. We should think of introduction of air-taxi service to reduce the burden of Indian Airlines. I would also request the hon. Minister to ask for more money from the Planning Commission to improve the services of the airlines, to bring more aircrafts to improve night landing and other facilities so that save travel is ensured to the passengers in the country.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ (Baramulla): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, actually I wanted to raise this issue at the zero Hour tomorrow. But this time when I came from Srinagar at the Delhi airport I contacted the Lok Sabha Lobby to know the discussion that is going in the House. They said that the discussion is about the Indian Airlines. I reached straight from the Airport to take part in the discussion.

Sir, I share my anguish today not for the accidents, not for the delay, not for the mal-administration, but particularly for the first important point in my mind is that I had congratulated Mr. Shivraj Patil when he assumed office of this Ministry. The copy of the letter is with me, because Mr. Shivraj Patil's earlier record is very good. I had written to him and I had congratulated him because I found that Shri Shivraj Patil is an organised Minister. But I find in his time, the Indian Airlines continues to be in the cess pool of corruption and mal-administration. I feel terribly sorry for this because Shri Shivraj Patil in my opinion is one of a very organised Ministers. The anguish in my mind is double. I am given only five minutes. I know a story of corruption, I know stories of mal-administration and I must speak about that here.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: At some other time we can listen to your stories, not now.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: This is a

serious thing, Sir. So far as the accident is concerned, I would only invite the attention of the House and the attention of the hon. Minister because the press in India is very free and it is a great honour to this country. It has become a watch-dog and we are also supposed to be the watch-dog. So, we read the findings of which were published in 'India Today' and other magazines.

I cannot go on talking about the kind of accidents, these accidents have a design, these accidents explain the design of administration. The administration in Indian Airlines has failed and if Indian Airlines would not have the monopoly, I and my colleagues would travel by some other airlines, accidents or no accidents, because this is in the cess-pool of maladministration and corruption.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): Die by some other plane!

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: And therefore, maladministration and corruption has found its way to accidents. What happened only yesterday? It is not for nothing. If there is a fair and genuine accident, we go before the people because we talk to people, we understand them.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Are you wanting a Joint Committee?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: There is an inquiry going on.

Mr. Haroobhai Mehta says, there should not be a Rahul Bajaj. I feel one with him in this, he is a socialist, I am also left of centre, I say, Sir, we are a socialist democracy. Certainly Tatas and Birlas can't do. They may be very good people, but they don't know the common man's plight. Let Rahul Bajaj travel with me, I will tell him the kind of food that is served and the kind of letters we write, and there is no response. Therefore, I feel one with him. He says, the Chairman should resign. I say, it must be a couple of people. Are you very happy with the Managing Director of the Indian Airlines

[Prof. Saifuddin Soz] whom I approached 5-6 times during the last six months, Mr. Deputy-Speaker? And he knows me, I am a Member of the Public Undertakings Committee, I never wanted any relief for myself, I said, 'ordinary problems' but he could not solve even one. So, the Chairman should resign, we have to ask Mr. Shivraj Patil whether he is happy with the Managing Director or not. Therefore, he must make a clear statement on this. As I said, my anguish is doubled because of Mr. Shivraj Patil being the Minister. I can read out the letters some time before you.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now now

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Might be laid on the Table of the House.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: Sir, why I was saying that is, there is maladministration. I will give you one or two examples of the Srinagar Airport. Sir, for the last six months I have been telling the Indian Airlines—I have praise for Mr. Shivraj Patil, he is a busy Minister, but his response is very good, I rate him as a very capable Minister. But I thought why should I not go to the Managing Director and other officers. I told them, there are five very important senior positions vacant in the Indian Airlines at Srinagar and nobody goes there from Delhi. Three people are there for 5 years, actually they had been detailed for two years, now they are staying there for 5 years, and here three transfers were effected, Mr. Shivraj Ji, and for the last six months I have been telling them, 'Why these three people are not joining there?' Because they have the political clouts. What about Mr. Sitaram Kapur, who has been languishing there for five years? I rate him as the most honest person there and he is begging the Department, saying 'Relieve me from Srinagar.' Half of his family is here and half of his family is in Srinagar, and I know it certainly, Sitaram Kapur has been borrowing money to run his family because he is an honest man. It is your Department, Mr. Shivraj Patil, why there is no appreciation for honest people? At least there should be no punishment for them.

Now I tell you, let Sitaram be here, let Kaul and others who have political clouts, who have godfathers, go there. I told M.D. 'Why are you not doing this? It is a simple problem.' And his junior officers also heard me speaking. You see, we have no time to go to these officers, but we go to these officers because my Indian Airlines officer at Srinagar is suffering. There is a big crowd, there is nobody to attend to them. So, people from Delhi don't go there and you don't recruit people from Jammu and Kashmir State. I wrote a letter to the Minister and I explained it to the M.D. Sir, for the last two years even loaders have not been selected from Srinagar. There is a select list with them. I told him, 'Mr. M.D., you have made a selection, you have conducted an interview, so loaders should be appointed. But they have not been appointed.' I raised a question. But then, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, they feed the Minister with wrong information. Last time I raised a question, it was a Starred Question. I said, there should be a visitors' gallery.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now come to the point.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: Mr. Shivraj Patil said, 'Visitors' Gallery is being constructed there.' I tell you, Sir, I have come just one hour before, there is no visitors' gallery being constructed there. I had alerted the Minister that these officers are making tall claims and they are going by default putting the Department into disrepute. There is no temporary visitors' gallery. I will tell you another fraud. Safety has been spoiled my dear friend, because there is corruption, there is maladministration. You do not know why it happens. Last year there were catering tenders and the highest bidder should have been given the contract, who is rated as very good caterer too. But the highest bidder was not given the contract. Last year's caterer was continued because of some interference. There are so many things.

Irrespective of the Party affiliation, we have been talking about adjournment-mo-

tion. The Minister, Mr. Shivraj Patil should make an honest expression in respect of our pleas that we have made to him. Otherwise it will be a futile discussion.

SHRI N. TOMBI SINGH (Inner Manipur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, while I oppose the adjournment-motion. I cannot disagree with the fact that this has given a chance to give a deep look into the affairs of Indian Airlines and other sister organisations like Air India, Pawan Hans and Vayudoot. Indian Airlines has been built up over the years and I happen to be a representative of a region wherefrom Indian Airlines happens to be the quickest means to reach Delhi. It is because earlier from my home State, it took minimum 3 1/2 days to 4 days to reach here. During the last three decades, I have been travelling by various grades, various aircrafts of Indian Airlines and to some extent Vayudoot also. If I quote my personal experience during these three decades, it will be a long story.

I would like to say Indian Airlines has been built up over the years and now it has attained a status where we suppose that automatic mechanism of administration, mechanism of check and maintenance, mechanism of travel facilities including reservation, cancellation etc., all these must be there. We need certain level of competence at every level. Demand has been made of resignation of certain personnel at certain levels. I do not join the demand for resignation, because resignation would not serve the purpose. But nevertheless I would like to stress upon the need for competence. Everywhere competence should be stressed, at the stations, at the headquarters and at different departments of the flight organisation. I do not join also in making sweeping accusations against Indian Airlines.

I would like to make certain constructive suggestions by way of taking part in this debate, which should be considered. Equipment for maintenance and emergency should be well spread over all over the country. There are certain important cities, metropolitan cities. It is a big country and Indian Airlines flight touch down frequently

all the important cities. At all these stations, there should be sufficient equipment for emergency. Our experience has been that even in certain major stations too—I do not like to name them—there has been certain serious shortfall, certain shortage of emergency maintenance equipments. When a plane is out of order and a snag develops in the course of flight in transit, we are told that we have to wait for a plane to come from Delhi or Bombay which would bring the necessary particular part. Only after they fit in that part into the plane, it will take off. Such a situation has to be avoided. I would like to refer to the maintenance and standard of the outlying stations. It is at and around outlying stations that we experience major risks. I had travelled mostly in my region via either Patna, Bagdogra, Gauhati or Calcutta, to reach my station Imphal. We find that these stations are badly managed. In some stations, our experience is that the sense of arithmetic of the management officials namely the ground staff is quite weak. Very often they call for individual check ups, drills on board etc and there are complaints particularly before departure and in transit. It happens not once, but frequently. This has to be avoided.

The other point that I would like to stress is that the safety measures should be increased in these outlying stations. I had been demanding in the North-East—apart from Gauhati which is already well-equipped—wherever airports or runways are there, there should be night landing facilities. There should also be automatic instrument landing facility. Otherwise, accidents are bound to happen in these areas because we are flying at high risk. Particularly when you fly in bad weather in the evening, Sunset is very early. There is difference in the Sunset hours between our region and Delhi by about two hours. When a plane reaches that region by Sunset, by accident or through some unforeseen situation in the schedule, such planes will need ad hoc instrumental landing or night landing facilities invariably. Such facilities are not existing in the other airports except in Gauhati in the North-East. To be more particular, I may

[Sh. N. Tombi Singh]
mention Agartala, Imphal, Silchar, Shillong and Aizal. All these places should be equipped with night landing facilities. It is not merely a political demand or anything else. It is only for the sake of safety of passengers. passenger safety is above every other consideration. Therefore, I would like to request the hon. Minister to pay special attention to the improvement of night landing facilities in those outlying stations.

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY (Alipurduars): I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the recent accident which has taken place and to which the other Members of the House have not made a reference. It is very clearly mentioned in The Times of India.

"The bulk of Indian Airlines fleet consists of Boeing-737s which number 25. Many of these are now old. The one that crashed in Ahmedabad, killing 130 on October 19, was one of the oldest in the fleet."

Again it is said that notice has already been that it "may not fly higher than 26,000 feet until maintenance crews carry out stringent inspections around the country

From where we have got this aircraft?

"The Boeing company itself had recognised structural design defects in its earlier 737s and had made changes after the 291st plane had rolled off the assembly line.

The whole of our fleet or most of them, are Boeing 737. This is the oldest design which the Company itself is changing now. So, it is very risky to operate this aircraft. It will play havoc with the human life in this country. Perhaps, when we buy something from outside, commission may also be kept under consideration. But, it should not enter this field when it is directly related to the human life. For the sake of commission or something like that, you should not buy the rejected ones, as we have already men-

tioned in the case of Helicopter deal. This is my request. The House should know as to why this plane, the oldest plane, has been put into service.

Secondly, the employees of Indian Airlines are demanding to place them on par with their sister concern, the Air India. Why there is a disparity? Air India is demanding parity with something else. Therefore, there must be a parity between the two and negotiations should begin in this direction. The Chairmen and the Government should sit together and settle this matter so that the employees will also be happy.

Many Members have already narrated their experience. I have also got much experience when I happen to take the flight from Delhi to Guwahati or from Guwahati to Bombay. The entire organisation is in a rampant condition. Who is managing, who is looking after, how the passengers are travelling to answer these, there is nobody. Many a time, we find that the aircraft is not working and it is landed there. Perhaps, it will take a day or two to take-off. Ultimately, the passengers must have to stay for days together. This is a routine thing. We have this routine experience. But, yet we don't mind for that. The machine may go wrong. But the safety of the life of passengers is very important. Even the passengers are prepared to wait for hours rather than travelling in bad conditions.

Already several hon. Members have spoken. I have got nothing much to add. But I would like to have one clarification. Are you going to change all the old model aircraft? How many Aircraft are going to be inducted into service immediately? You have to regain the faith of the people of this country as far as air travel is concerned. I know that air travel is the safest mode of travel. But now it has become very dangerous and suspicious. Therefore, you have to regain the faith of the people of this country. The hon. Minister has to answer certain questions regarding how many aircraft he is going to purchase; from which country he is going to purchase and about their condition and their

fame in the world market.

with these words, I conclude.

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHARY (Hoshiarpur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I rise to oppose the Adjournment Motion. It is a sad thing that of late the number of flying accidents have been on the increase with Air India, Indian Airlines, Vayudoot or Pawan Hans. The accidents are from minor incidents to major incidents including fatal accidents. It is also equally sad that the incidents are being politicised in the form of Adjournment Motion or asking for a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: The Speaker has admitted the Adjournment Motion.

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHARY: Flying is a complex game. When everything is fine, it is like driving a Limousin fully automatic, on a wide road with no traffic. But when the smallest thing goes wrong it is like a punishment awarded. You require a perfect body and mind to handle these sophisticated machines. A split second decision is required with automatic reaction. I am sorry to say that lately the whole system is not properly geared up for this purpose. It is a long chain. Even if there is one weak link, then the chain breaks and there is disaster. The Hon. Minister is just sitting next to me. It was only day before yesterday that I had just mentioned that there would be an accident. Yesterday again I repeated this to him not knowing that we had already had an accident. Fortunately no lives were lost. (interruptions)

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS (Mavelikara): How could you project this?

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY: I had predicted about what would happen in Punjab and it has been happening. I have been predicting for the last 21 years about flying. If the atmosphere is not fine, you know, something is going to go wrong. It is just as a Hakim touches your body and says that

something is wrong with you. I would like to mention about his problem. It is the men who are on top and who are not handling these sophisticated machines who are responsible. We have no dearth of professionals in our country be he a pilot or a ground technician. This group of people who are on top, whether it is Indian Airlines, Air India or Vayudoot are fighting amongst themselves. I hope the Hon. Minister with whom I have had an opportunity of working close in the Defence Ministry would handle these people first because I know that in case you have an ailment you go to a doctor be he an allopath, Homeopath, Ayurved or Hakim and certainly you don't go to a cobbler or a washerman. I would not take much time of the House and not go into the details of other accidents.

As far as this yesterday's accident is concerned, from whatever I have seen from the photograph, the under carriage lever was down and locked. Hydraulic gauge indicated normal pressure. Emergency under carriage handle was stored in a proper position, that means, it was not used. However, both main under carriage doors were open and the nose door crushed to open position. This itself appears to be a case of strfracture, that is, material failure. I am sure the inquiry conducted will go into the details and would find out the facts. I would once again request the Hon. Minister to change these officials on top who are mishandling the airlines.

SHRI A.K. PATEL (Broach): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I rise here to support Dr. Datta Samant's Motion. I will avoid criticism especially this delay, corruption and malpractices or other parts. But I would restrict myself to Ahmedabad accident because I was the sufferer and I was the victim of that accident. I would say that in that accident the main responsibility was of the administration. That day I was there at the site of accident. Usually the reason given was there was less visibility. I drove to the same place in my car. There was no problem of vision and it was very easy to drive. There was nothing about less visibility. The flight was just hovering on the airport and it was not landing. I entered the office and enquired

[Sh. A.K. Patel]
about it. I was told that it was because of less visibility. And immediately after a few minutes they told me that there was a crash of the plane and it was lying there. This thing could have been avoided had these craft were overhauled which was long overdue.

The same aircraft had some problem in Coimbatore on the 23rd September. This aircraft was coming from Bombay to Ahmedabad. It was the rainy season. When it reached Baroda water was pouring from from the roof. One of my relatives who came from abroad and who was travelling in that aircraft just complained to the staff that water was coming. It was not the refrigerator water and it was because of some leakage. One seat was given to protect him from the water. One foreigner who was travelling got angry with the staff and the pilot. During that time there was a sudden change in the internal pressure of the flight and the flight was taken back to Bombay and was landed there. In that way there are so many things

On 10th November I have had the personal experience. I was trying to come from Delhi to Ahmedabad. The flight was at 6 O'clock. One hour after boarding I was told that there was something wrong in the reaching and we had to come out and wait for a pretty long time.

The Indian Airlines have no right to kill people. Flights which are not in order should be put to scrap and they should be maintained properly, so that people's lives are saved.

About the compensation, when the Hon. Minister visited the place that day he declared that compensation will be given about Rs. 2 lakhs. Till today there is no payment made. That is why I request him to look into this.

SHRI N.V.N. SOMU (Madras North):
Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the outset let me congratulate Dr. Datta Samant for having escaped fortunately because lakhs of workers are depending on him. Now a days travelling by air has become very danger-

ous. Two tragedies on the same day involving loss of so many lives occurred. Even then the Airlines did not reform itself.

For the last one year flights to Madras — whether direct one or the Airbus via Hyderabad — did not take off punctually. Minimum two hours late was experienced by the passengers. It is unfortunate that flight information is not given promptly and properly even to the MPs. When we ask even two hours before the departure, they use to say 'so far it is on time' Such is the bad condition prevalent in the Airlines.

On one occasion, Mr. Deputy Speaker you yourself also had a miraculous escape when the flight was landed at Delhi in which you came from Madras. I want to bring to the notice of the Hon. Minister Shri Shivraj V. Patil that on the 4th of this month the Airbus bound to Madras via Hyderabad was delayed by three hours. All of us and most of the Members of Tamil Nadu were travelling in that flight. Security check was over. We entered and seated in the aircraft. Crew members also armed the doors. But suddenly we were informed that there was an engineering snag. We were in that aircraft itself for nearly three hours. We were simply sitting in that small place. Then, another aircraft came and we were all shifted to that. Then the flight took off at 9 p.m. and we reached the next day early morning.

On the 21st of this Month also the Airbus bound to Delhi was delayed at Hyderabad nearly one hour because a passenger with the ticket of Bombay got into it.

I request the Minister to give an airbus direct from Madras to Delhi and from Delhi to Madras. There is no direct flight to Madras from Delhi and from Delhi to Madras in the morning. I request the Minister for this also.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is an entirely different matter. On some other occasion you can speak.

SHRI N.V.N. SOMU: This is a serious matter. Pre-signed certificates of breath

analyser test are issued to the pilots. This is a fatal mistake. On 22nd ground crew members of the Indian Airlines went on strike. The Minister should have used his good offices to avert the strike. At least a joint parliamentary committee should be appointed to streamline the airlines. Government should not be anti-labour.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): Sir, I would like to thank the hon. member for participating in the debate and for making very valuable and good suggestions. While expressing that I am sorry for the incident that took place yesterday I would like to congratulate the Members who were on board and who came out unhurt.

The debate has been a debate without any rancour and polemics. It has been full of agony and anguish and it is but natural for me to share this agony and anguish. Many good points have been made by the hon. Members and it may or may not be possible for me to reply to all of the good points that have been made. But the hon. Members can rest assured that I have noted down all the points and we intend to act on them to the extent it is possible for the Department and for all of us.

If there are any points which are left out in my reply and if the Members want that some explanation should be given on those points I would only be happy to explain to them not in the House probably but outside the House when they would have the time and I would also have the time. I seek this kind of indulgence from the hon. Members because many points have been made and I may not be able to reply to all the points.

I would like to respond on the points made on the incident that took place yesterday, accidents on 19th of October, on training, on safety, on delays, wage settlement, acquisition of aircrafts, functioning of our other public sector undertakings, what has been done in the Department and about the Committee which was suggested by some

Members to be appointed.

Yesterday for the benefit of the hon. Members I would like to say that Airbus came to Delhi from Bombay. It landed safely. It taxied safely. It came to a stationary position. The ladder was brought. It was put near the door and the people who were on board were about to leave. Then slowly the nose gear started collapsing. It ascended into the well in the aircraft and the fuselage, the body of the aircraft, started slowly descending and it touched the ground. The rear gear was outside and the doors were opened. Then the passengers were brought out. Five or six passengers had met with some minor injuries. Out of them three were treated for more time but the three were immediately allowed to go home and then we were informed about that. We have started looking into this incident as to why and how it could happen. It took off safely. It landed safely. It came to the stationary position safely. When it was standing stationary, it slowly descended and touched the ground. How could it happen? What is it which is responsible for this? Is it some defect in the machine or is it something else? Is there any human error involved in it?

These are very very sophisticated machines and very complicated procedures are followed for flying these aircraft. We would certainly like to go into all these details and take corrective action if it is necessary to take corrective action against others also, if they are involved. But before we come to any conclusion, it would be rather unjust to pronounce judgement and then, if it is required to change our judgement. So, I would seek the indulgence of this House to give us some time. If it is necessary and if I am directed, we would be placing the report of this inquiry on the table of the House for the benefit of the Members. Then also, we can consult them. We can go by their advice because the debate has been very very objective. Nothing can be more helpful for improving the efficiency of any organisation than a debate of this nature. It is from that angle we would like to place the report also and we would like to seek the advice of the Members. But at this point of time, I would not venture or I

[Sh. Shivraj V. Patil]
would not dare to say that it was because of this reason or because of that reason or because of this person or because of that person this has happened. I hope that the hon. Members will appreciate this point.

It may not be necessary for me to dwell in greater details on this incident. After the report is received, it may be made known to the Members.

About the two accidents, well, the accidents took place on one and the same day. They came like bolts from the blue. Suddenly on one day within two hours in the eastern part of the country and in the western part of the country, these accidents happened and valuable lives were lost. When the hearts of the Members are full of agony on that, we can realise the agony of those people whose kith and kin have been lost and the kith and kin of the pilots and those who have been working there. I can, on this point, only say that we can convey the heart-felt sympathies to all who are kith and kin of the persons who have died in these accidents. No amount of compensation can bring back the lives. I have been saying this thing and I continue to say this thing. Money is no compensation for the lives lost. It is very small compensation. It is a very insignificant thing compared to the lives. I am not going to deal with the compensation part of it.

DR. DATTA SAMANT: What is the reason for the Ahmedabad accident?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I am coming to it. Different theories have been put forward. According to some, the error was human error. I am not giving first preference or second preference. I am just saying that. According to others, it could be mechanical defect. According to some others, it could be because of the defect in the instruments which were at the airport. According to the fourth theory, it could be because of climate also. I have never blamed the nature or the climate for this accident. Now, it is not good to say that because of climate this happened or because of one reason or the other reason

this happened or because of one person or other person that happened. This is not good at this point of time. So, we are not rushing to pronounce judgement on these points. I hope the hon. Members would appreciate it. Supposing I make a certain statement on the floor of the House that this is the reason. Now, you can appreciate what complications it would create for the court of inquiry which has been constituted and which has to go into all these details and give a judgement. I say that the report of these inquiries will also come and we can act upon these reports. Necessary action will certainly be taken on many things such as maintenance, training, etc. I again seek the indulgence of the hon. members. Please do not push the Minister into a position from where he would not be able to pronounce his judgement. I would rather not pronounce my judgement. I may have my own opinions, but when a court of inquiry is appointed, it is not given to me to say that this or that could have been the reasons. We shall have to wait a little and I seek your indulgence.

The stand taken by the hon. members, I should say, is very considerate. You have been over kind to us who are working in the Ministry. You have not been rash or harsh and you have not attacked us. You have only expressed your agony and I appreciate your stand on this point also.

As regards maintenance, a very valid point has been made by the hon. members. They have been asking whether we are maintaining our aircraft as we should; whether we have the kind of equipment that is required to maintain our aircraft; whether for this purpose we are updating our maintenance facilities or not and so on. They rightly feel concerned on these points. I am also one with them when they say that maintenance facilities probably need a sort of upgradation. I have never said that the maintenance facilities are the best in the country. I was just comparing the maintenance facilities that we have in our country with the maintenance facilities available with other organisations which fly aircraft and I was trying to say that our facilities were quite

good and comparable. This does not mean that there is no scope for improvement. This does not mean that maintenance is done in the best possible manner. And this also does not mean that we should not look into this kind of things.

Now, hon. member Shri Goswami perhaps suggested that a committee should be appointed. I would say that my Government, my leader and we all of us feel that a committee should be appointed to look into all aspects relating to maintenance and we will seek a report from that committee and the recommendations that will be given by the committee will be implemented.

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS: Is it going to be a Joint Parliamentary Committee?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: No. This is going to be a technical committee these are technical matters. This technical committee will go into all the details and its report will be acted upon because we all feel concerned and we will see to it that no stone is left unturned to provide safety in the best possible manner.

As far as the training aspect is concerned, hon. members have expressed their views concerning the training of our friends in the Indian Airlines who fly the aircraft, maintain and handle other duties also. So, it is also necessary to see whether our training facilities are good or not.

SHRI B.R. BHAGAT: Is it a fact that we have no full-time training courses?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I am coming to that point. In our country there are aero-clubs which are giving initial or primary training to persons. Fortunately, we have now got the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Udan Academy which was appointed only a few years ago. This is a full time institution established to train people and in this institution we have the simulators, we have the aircraft and other kinds of equipment and we have also got the teachers and trainers to train the students. We would like to develop this insti-

tution so as to see that the requirements of the pilots of our Airlines, State Governments, other organisations and the requirements of some individuals also can be met. This is in the stage of development. We would like to develop this institution. We would like to see that this institution, if not fully does contribute to a very great extent in providing the trained personnel.

19.00 hrs.

The Indian Airlines also have the institutions where the training is imparted to the pilots. On this point also I would say that we would like to appoint a Committee of the persons who are well versed in these areas and that Committee will examine all aspects of the training of the people who are required here and we would like to get the report as quickly as is possible and we would like to act up on that report also. It is because these are complicated matters. They require a sort of expertise. Though we are concerned and our hearts are full of agony and yet probably, we would be required to have the assistance of the experts and with those who are well versed in these matters, we will constitute the Committee of experts.

So, in this fashion we would like to look to the maintenance and the training part of our airlines and would like to go deep into the details and get the exact plan and the schemes and concepts and all those things and we would like to act up on them.

As far as the safety part is concerned, I share the concern expressed by all the Members over there. It is not given to me today to say that well, we are doing very well and the criticism you are levelling against us is not good. After these two unfortunate accidents in which the lives have been lost, some incidents that have taken place is not given to me and I am not going to take that kind of a stand. For God's sake, if I say something more on this point, please don't misunderstand me that I am standing up here to dispute what you have said or trying to defend the position we have taken. I would just like to explain to you nothing more than

[Sh. Shivraj V. Patil] that. Having said that, we also feel concerned. In Civil Aviation, it is the safety which is the most important thing. If the Air Force people are there, it is the risk element that is most important. We are asking them to take the risk. We are asking them to fly in very difficult conditions. They have to fly. They have to stretch the machine. They have to stretch the human beings. Then, they have to produce the results. But their full adventure is more important. Risk taking ability of the pilot is more important. All those who are involved in it — why pilot only — the safety in Civil Aviation is a most important thing. That is why we would like to provide safety by looking into the maintenance, by looking into the training modernising things and by changing the methods at certain places and seeing that no lacunae are left over there and we would like to provide the safety

Some people have said that because we are using old aircraft, that is why this has happened. Some people have placed one kind of aircraft or another kind of aircraft, one kind of helicopter or another kind of helicopter but unfortunately for us and unfortunately for the people throughout the world, all kinds of aircraft and helicopters have met with accidents in the country or outside the country also. So a machine may be good or a machine may be a little more capable but then it not only the machine, there are other elements also involved in it. So, to say that the machine is responsible — that part is certainly important, we have to look into it — or to blame a machine totally may or may not be correct in a cases. Here also, I would seek your indulgence and I would request you not to misunderstand this statement of mine that machine is not important and we do not want to see whether the machine is good or not. I am saying that the accidents have taken place to all the machines. The most sophisticated machines have also met with accidents. Even while one is walking, an accident takes place. Even when one is going on a bicycle, also an accident takes place; even when somebody is going in his car, an accident takes place. But those accidents are completely different. We shall have to be

more careful because we are flying in the sky; and if an accident takes place to car on the road, well, he has something on which he can stand, but, in the air, it is completely different; so, the standard of safety has to be maintained; and we are going to look into these thing.

But may I give some statistics about the safety record of the Indian Airlines. Please do not misunderstand that I am disputing you or I am trying to unjustly defend myself; I am just trying to explain to you; you may accept these figures or you must just not accept these figures; but these are the figures which are given to me which are with me. In 1983, in the world, the number of fatal accidents that took place was 20, but in India it was nil; in 1984, the number of fatal accidents that took place in the world was 16 and in India it was one; in 1985, in the world, the number of total accidents that took place was 22 and in India it was only two; in 1986, the number of fatal accidents that took place in the world was 22 and India it was nil; in 1987, the number of fatal accidents that took place in the world was 25 and in India it was nil; in 1988, the number of fatal accidents that took place in the world — this is the biggest number — was 24 (upto this time) and in India these two major accidents.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: It is not correct to compare India like this. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I am not disputing. I would not go into all these details when you have taken this kind of a stand. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS: What is the number of aircraft in America and what is the number of our aircraft? What is the pro-rate figure?

SHRI KAMAL CHAUDHRY: As long as there is air travel, there will be accidents. But the main thing is that the avoidable accidents should be reduced to nil.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I do agree; the statistics from different countries can

also be given. But then there is one more statistics if you want; otherwise, I will leave just here. I am not standing here to dispute what you are saying; I am fully in agreement with the sense and the feelings which you have expressed here; and having said that, it is not useful to go on quoting statistics and all that. I will just leave that aside.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Accidents are global phenomenon.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: About the delay, again, I am on a very very weak ground; I am not in a position to say that the delays have not taken place; delays have taken place and it would be necessary to reduce the delay. Now when you expressed the concern you did not express that kind of concern to embarrass the Minister or to throw brick-bats at our friends in the Indian Airlines. You have some experiences and you explained those experiences; and if I do not understand your feelings on this point, probably I would be committing a mistake. I am not standing here to defend and say that delays are not there and all that. But here I would like you to understand that the number of aircrafts which we have with us is very limited — 50 aircrafts; with 50 aircrafts, the Indian Airlines is working; and if accident has taken place to 4 aircraft, then we have 46 aircrafts; and then you look at the size of the country, the length and breadth of our country; we have to fly to different places. Now, people in north eastern region, people in Kashmir, people in Trivandrum and in Kerala, people in Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, these people have to be served. What our friends in the Airlines have been doing is that they are stretching this to such an extent that they should reach all people and try to meet their demand. Now, they have a philosophy of their own; they say that they should do their best to help our people, but, in the process, sometimes you know things happen in such a manner that it is not controllable. If one aircraft is flying in a particular direction, it is not possible for them to fly on time. If one aircraft is going to the South, to the North to the East, it is not possible for them to fly on time. But

we have discussed this matter and I hope that we would be able to reduce the delays and reduce delays quite substantially.

DR. DATTA SAMANT: How?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Yes, that is exactly the question you should ask me and that is exactly the question on which I was going to say a few things.

How do we reduce the delays. First of all, we have reduced the flying hours of our aircraft. We would be flying a little less.

I was touched when the Hon. Speaker called me and said that "the entire House is of the opinion that you should fly a little less, but should fly on time and you should provide better safety." Now, here is concern expressed by the very symbol of the authority of this House, on this point in a very very reasonable and rational manner. He has tried to come to the point and tried to suggest that this should be done and "if you reduce the people the Members would not embarrass you or your colleagues in the Department but they would like to support you. And that is why if you have to take this unpleasant step, unpleasant to some, because the routes may be reduced a little, you should do that".

Now, may I submit to you, that we have already taken steps on this? We are trying to reduce some routes, not all routes; and while doing that also we would like to see that some facility is available at all places. This is one thing we are doing. And then, we are giving more time when a flight goes from one place to the other place in between they are landing at different places, and if the time given to them for disembarkation, for taking passengers on board, for cleaning and all these things is not sufficient — half an hour's time is given and it becomes very difficult for them—we have taken steps to see that more time is given at the starting point or at the point where the flight ends also; sufficient time is given so that they can take this kind of delays. There is some cushion to take this kind of delays.

[Sh. Shivraj V. Patil]

One more thing I would like to mention. Hon. Members have very rightly suggested "why do you not take more aircraft, and why do you not fly?" Well, we have done exactly the same thing. We have taken some aircraft on lease. And fortunately for us two aircraft have already arrived. We are painting them, we want to paint our colours on the aircraft and then we would like to fly them. One more aircraft, I am told, might have come; three aircraft are already readily available. One more aircraft we are taking from the Bhutanes Government and one aircraft is coming from the Soviet Union and one more aircraft will come. In this fashion we will have six aircraft at our disposal. I hope that with these six aircraft, without increasing our responsibility to fly to other areas in a manner which will again produce stresses and strains, it should be possible for us to reduce the delays also.

I am sure, that with this it should be possible. Over and above that, we would like to introspect ourselves. I would like to introspect, all my colleagues in the department will introspect, all the regional managers and those who are there will introspect, and we will try to see as to why this is happening and why there are delays. If more coordination is necessary between the Airport Authority and the Airlines Authority and other persons also, we would like to bring about that coordination. We will also like to give them some other kind of equipment which will help them to reduce the delays. And I am sure, that with this kind of planning and with this kind of thinking it should be possible for us to reduce the delays. Hundred per cent delays will be reduced or not, it is very difficult to say. Because especially in the North Eastern region for the benefit of the hon. Members coming from that area it is the intention of the Government to provide more facilities in the North Eastern region because the transport facilities are not as good in those areas as they are in other areas. So, we would be trying to fly more in the North Eastern and Himalayan regions and I think that would be the just thing to do, but exactly in those areas, the climate some times is inclement.

The climate is not good for flying. It would be necessary to see that the climate is good and we have to take precautions. We cannot take the risk. We would rather not like to fly. We would rather take criticisms for having not flown over that area from our friends over there than compromise with the safety aspect. Moreover at times, for the safety reason some information is given and we will have to take all precautions. That also causes some delay. There are so many other reasons, because of which the delays do take place. On all these points, we would like to be very very careful. It seems that my colleagues in the Department and in the organisation have felt the pinch and they are determined to help me in this respect. Probably I would be able to give a better report to the House after sometime... (*Interruptions*)

DR. DATTA SAMANT: Labour wage agreements are pending for three years.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I am coming to that. The next point is wage settlement. I spoke at very great length on this point two or three days back in this very House. I would say that the intention of the Government and the intention of the public sector undertakings which are directly dealing with them, is to be helpful, is to do their best. But then it has some implications and repercussions on other organisations? That also has to be understood by all concerned. My only appeal to all concerned is to keep all these things in view and try to arrive at a settlement which will give some satisfaction to all concerned. We would be the last to keep our colleagues dissatisfied in the organisation and then expect something good. But at the same time as a Government, it would be necessary to see what are going to be the implications of the settlement in one organisation on other organisations. There are organisations within the Civil Aviation Ministry and there are organisations outside also. That is our difficulty. I hope that this genuine difficulty of the public sector undertakings and all other concerned will be understood by all the Members.

Sir, on acquisition, I have already said

that we are trying to acquire the aircraft. Six aircrafts are coming and they are on lease, and we will be using them. Next year from April onwards we are going to get about 19 airbuses and within one year we would have a sufficient number of aircrafts, which will meet some of our demand. The demand is increasing by leaps and bounds. It is going up like anything. In Indian Airlines, it is going up by ten per cent or twelve per cent. In Vayudoot, it is going up by thirty per cent and in other organisation it is going up by forty per cent. People want to travel by air. They do not want to waste their time and time is precious for them. That is why, they prefer this kind of mode of transport. Then, it becomes necessary for us to cope up with the demand coming up from different directions. In the process, stresses and strains develop, in the process difficulties arise. We shall have to find money. We shall have to plan. Even if the money is there, the aircraft cannot come easily. We have airports where the facilities for landing, communication and navigational facilities are available. We would not like to fly where the workable facilities are not there. We are not satisfied with the workable facilities. We would like to make them more and more ideal and sophisticated. For this purpose, we are going to acquire some equipment of modern nature, advanced equipment, more sophisticated equipment which can cope up with the modern aircraft and all those things. We would like to see that the airports are also upgraded commensurate with the advanced kind of aircraft we would be inducting here. In this fashion, on the one hand, we will have the advance kind of aircraft and on the other, we will have better kind of navigational and communication facilities. We have expanded the airports. Indira Gandhi International Airport has been expanded. Sahar airport has been expanded. Madras airport has been expanded. And at many other places we are expanding the airports. We are giving the navigation and communication facilities to be set up over there to facilitate all those things. And then at other places also we are trying to expand the airports and we are trying to provide more and better communication and navigational

facilities. The process of acquisition of these instruments, equipment and machines has already been started. I hope, within some time, it will be possible to bring them at par with other places.

About Pawan Hans certain questions were asked. One question which was asked about Pawan Hans was why an amount of Rs. 3 lakh was given as compensation. The answer is that they were insured for Rs. 3 lakhs. So it was possible for them to give Rs. 3 lakhs to them.

About the aircraft, Westland helicopter and all those things, this matter had been discussed in detail many many times and it would not be necessary for me to go into all those details at this time. Only one thing which I would like to say is that in getting the Westland helicopter we have not spent any money from our coffers.

Fortunately, for me, certain very good developments have taken place in the Civil Aviation Ministry. And for those things which have been done in the last two or three years time, I cannot take the credit. All my colleagues, the leader, the Government and the House also can take credit for that.

If the Civil Aviation has to develop in the country one of the most important thing is to train the people who will man the Civil aviation activities in the country. There was no institution at all. The Indira Gandhi academy has come up and it is going to meet some of our requirement. This is going to be a big boon, not for today only but in times to come, for civil aviation activity in the country and it is going to meet the primary demand.

A criticism has been made, "why Vayudoot has been created". Vayudoot has been criticised left and right. I feel for the young organisations. My heart bleeds when the criticism is flung at Vayudoot. Not that Vayudoot might not be committing any mistake and that everything done by Vayudoot can be defended and all those things. But the intention of creating Vayudoot should be understood by this House and people out-

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side. The sole intention of creating Vayudoot was to reach the north-eastern areas where the rails are not there. It is not possible for us to build bridges in big valleys and take trains and buses and all that. So it was decided that hopping from one top of the hill to the other taking the people would be possible. And the best mode of transport in that area is to fly small aircraft or big helicopters. So Vayudoot came into existence. You will be surprised to know that Vayudoot is covering that entire country with 19 aircraft. Out of 19 aircraft, 2 have gone out of order. They have met with accidents. They are flying 16 or 17 aircraft throughout the country, flying more in the north-eastern region, in Himalayan region, in inaccessible areas and trying to reach the people in order to see that the industries go from city to rural areas, in order to see that even people living in rural areas do save time which is necessary for them. To give this kind of facility Vayudoot has been created. I would seek a little more compassion from hon. Members and people outside also to Vayudoot which is just a child which is growing. It is going to grow very big. And we are certainly not going to leave it in the lurch. We would do our best to give it more aircraft and to provide other facilities which are required. If necessary, we can seek the help of all my colleagues and the House also to get more money for these things. For other things we may not seek money but for Vayudoot probably we may need something because this is something very special.

Pawan Hans is also an organisation which has been created to provide aviation facility to ONGC and other organisations which were depending on others from outside the country. We should appreciate it. It is Pawan Hans only which is having forty-two machines with them. As far as machines are concerned, they are very well-off and it would not be necessary to seek any financial help to support Pawan Hans for this purpose. But look at the intention. We should be self-reliant. We should depend on ourselves and we should reach those inaccessible areas, the far flung areas. In Himachal Pradesh we should reach, in Kashmir we should reach, in... (*Interruptions*).

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: Intention is all right, Sir, but Pawan Hans has not come.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Well, I am talking about the intention and this is an organisation created. Then, we have created a National Airport Authority also. This National Airport Authority is going to develop the airports in different areas. They are going to see that it is not sufficient to develop the airports in the bigger cities but the airports in the far flung areas also should be developed and there we should provide all the facilities.

Civil aviation may not be very big today but tomorrow, in the days to come, it is going to be a very very important mode of transport and if we do not prepare for those things, tomorrow suddenly, within a short time, it cannot be done. So, the infrastructure is laid in creating IGRUA, National Airport Authority, Vayudoot and Pawan Hans and in acquiring more aircraft. Now, for some time we did not acquire the aircraft for seven or eight years, steps were not taken to acquire them. But for the last three or four years the credit should certainly go to the Prime Minister and I have no hesitation in saying that it is because of his saying that twenty aircrafts we are getting. We have Vayudoot aircrafts and we have the Pawan Hans also. So, the basic structure is laid down and it is going to help us in the future... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS. What about taking action against the Chairman? Have you got any comment on that?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Well, I am dealing with important points. Sir, I have tried to say all that is being done. We have taken some steps, we would like to take some more steps also to improve, but just removing persons here and there... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI HAROOBHAI MEHTA (Ahmedabad): Then promote him, don't remove.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I beg your pardon. That is not my intention. I am not saying that. The level which we maintained, let us maintain up to the end. Well this is no

good supposing I blame somebody or somebody blames me... (*Interruptions*). I will tell you with full authority of the Government that we will be very careful in not taking action arbitrarily, but I will tell you that after the Report is received, all that is necessary and just, will be done, but not arbitrarily... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI HAROOBHAI MEHTA: When an ordinary employee could be suspended pending enquiry, why do we have different standard for the top people?

DR. DATTA SAMANT: Hundred of reports have been submitted about the accidents which have taken place so far. What action has been taken so far? One more report will just be piled up.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: It is not like that, Sir. We have taken action. I have a list of the names of the officers, pilots and others against whom action has been taken. But it will take your time and it is not going to be useful saying that we have taken action... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS: You take strong steps. That will create confidence. Sir, last point which I would like to make is this.

SHRI B.R. BHAGAT: You know that it is the responsibility of the good management. It depends on the higher echelon management which includes the Chairman and the Senior Managers and the Deputies. I want to request the hon. Minister. Is he in a position to give assurance to the House that the management at the higher levels which include the Chairman and the managers are working as a team and are fully doing their work with all responsibility?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, it is a very good point raised by the hon. Member and I do agree with him that for better result, harmony is required. I can say with some authority that there is harmony to a great extent, but to have 100% harmony — I did not have it in this House or in my own house

or in somebody's house also. So, Sir, 100% harmony cannot be expected. (*Interruptions*)

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ: What about the maladministration and corruption?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Sir, the last point which I would like to make is that I am really grateful to all the Members who have spoken in a very very objective manner and I am overwhelmed by their understanding from both the sides. There is agony, if somebody has felt it, it is not without reason and nobody can take objection to the strong feelings which the people have. Now, Sir, as far as the Committee is concerned, we do have the public sector undertakings Committee consisting of Members of both the Houses. If they want, they can certainly go into the working of the Indian Air lines. It may not be necessary to have another Committee for this purpose.

DR. A.K. PATEL (Mehsana): I am not satisfied with the reply. I am walking out.

19.32 hrs.

Dr. A.K. Patel then left the House.

DR. DATTA SAMANT (Bombay South Central): Sir, the hon. Minister, Shri Shivraj Patil is from Maharashtra. He is my personal friend. He is too much gentle and very emotionally he has put up the case. But I don't think it is going to help the feelings and the agony or what is happening in the Indian Airlines. The frustration and the agony of the whole House have been expressed. The Members have supported my points raised in this debate. We want some results to come out of this. You may displease somebody, you may remove somebody and you may take action against anybody. You may like to show your goodness and like to be accommodative with everybody and adjusting with everybody. But I would like to ask a categorical question. From 1982 onwards, you have not added a single aircraft. What is the Government doing? The passenger traffic has gone up to two-folds. What about your

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revenues which have increased from Rs. 260 crores to one thousand crores of rupees? What are you doing for the last five or six years? You have not replied to these questions. You say what is not done, you are going to do it in future. That is not the reply we want from you. I say it is the failure of the Government. I would like to point out in this House regarding the yesterday's accident that if it had happened just half a minute earlier, 260 passengers would have died. It is not an excuse. Now, the whole thing has come in the news. It is an airbus. One can imagine. I am not an engineer. It is something funny. Regarding Ahmedabad accident I raised a pertinent question. The aircraft was 18 years old. Prior to two or four days, while flying to Rajkot and Coimbatore, it developed some hydraulic defect and it was grounded twice. It is a serious matter. At least you should have told that the defect developed at Rajkot was corrected. The instrument for landing system at Ahmedabad airport was not working. You say that there is no need of a committee to enquire into this. It is the duty of the Government to clarify these points. It is not going to prejudice the working of the organisation. But none of these points was replied to by the hon. Minister. Regarding the duration of the aircraft in the air, the Minister says that whether it is an old plane or a new plane, the accident was to happen. It is like narrating from 'Bhagwat Gita', whether he is old or young, if he is destined to die, he will die. I do not want to know that. Sir, I want a categorical reply from the Minister. 50% of Boeings are more than 10 years old. The particular aircraft which flew to Ahmedabad was 18 years' old. It has completed its range of 45,000 flight. Another point which I have made is in regard to the aircrafts and the boeings which must fly only 2700 hours per year. For the last two years all these Boeings are flying 5000 to 6000 hours in a year. I am not an engineer, but this is the inquiry which you should make with all your staff. The Minister will not reply all these things. When they are going to fly like this without maintenance, Sir, how are you going to look after them? There are 47 flights — I also men-

tioned the same thing, the Minister also talked like me only, I am happy. I am raising the points, but I am expecting to hear what you are going to say. There are 47 aircraft and 162 stations in the country. How are you going to accommodate them? It is your good self saying that 'I am accommodating everybody going to Gauhati, going to Assam'. What is this? It is after all an aircraft. 31,000 people are at the mercy of these flight everyday. It is a serious thing. So, we do not want such an answer. I am not satisfied with the reply. (*Interruptions*). It is a query. I am not satisfied. It is my right to reply mentioning all these things. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He has the right to reply, we cannot stop him.

(*Interruptions*)

DR. DATTA SAMANT: Sir, the accidents are the worst. There are about 102 nations in the world and in respect of India, it cannot be compared. Sir, every 10 minutes the planes are flying there in the United States. Here there is hardly one in an hour. So, we cannot make a comparison. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He has a right to reply. What do you want, you tell me.

DR. DATTA SAMANT: This is my right to reply. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You cannot direct me. Don't direct me from there. He has a right to reply. (*Interruptions*)

DR. DATTA SAMANT: Sir, the hon. Minister is going to bring in more aircraft and airbuses are coming in 1991. I have already raised this issue. Sir, it is not replied and I don't want again a reply. There are no pilots, no machinery, he has failed to provide them in the last two or three years and now these pilots you are sending for training to France. And you have issued a memo to them stating that 'if you fail in the examination, the training expenses will be recovered from you,' and they have boycotted this training. You want

the airbuses come, there are no experts to run these new aircraft. There is no coordination whatsoever.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: There was one good pilot who was there, he left the Indian Airlines!

DR. DATTA SAMANT: Sir, issues are raised and I don't say anything. He may be a good man, he may be emotional or he does not want to displease anybody. But, Sir, I want to ask another thing: Why do you want the Chairman there? He is not effective, he is not working. You send him away, there is no question of public sector or private sector. On the contrary, he is shelving the responsibility and putting it on somebody. Sir, you can't say, it is the responsibility of the Minister.

I am going to suggest another thing. There are a number of VIP planes. You bring them for the use of the Indian Airlines for the average public till one year. I am not against the VIPs, they can take the Air Force planes and they can use them.

Another thing is, in respect of the Committee Report which you have suggested, it must be the real Committee and the suggestions should come to this House and they should be implemented — what are the failures and what you are going to do. Otherwise, when there is criticism, then I would say we appoint the Committee and it is just wiped out.

These are the suggestions I am making. I made a lot of accusations. (*Interruptions*). Only one minute I will take.

I am not satisfied. It is not a personal accusation against the Minister, ultimately he is a responsible man. If I had been in his place, I would have resigned because it is a thing we have done and we are responsible for it and it is a good principle in a democracy.

As far as the agonies and frustrations and the delays of the Indian Airlines are concerned, I think all Members are unani-

mous on that. The only thing they have forgotten to say is that 'we are supporting Dr. Samant's adjournment motion'. (*Interruptions*). You have shown that at least on this issue we are one. The Minister has talked a lot of emotional things, I am not satisfied with them. So long as the decisions are not implemented — after one month or 15 days some improvements we want should be there; otherwise there is no use of discussion in this House. With all the sympathy shown by all the Members suggesting all these things and the Minister giving the assurance that he is going to look into all these matters — I am still not satisfied.

Sir, though I am not satisfied, still I don't like to press it for voting. (*Interruptions*).

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Has Shri Datta Samant leave of the House to withdraw his motion?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

The motion was by leave withdrawn.

19.41 hrs.

BANKING, PUBLIC FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL—
Contd.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now the hon. Minister of finance is to continue his speech on the motion for consideration of the Banking, Public Financial Institutions and Negotiable Instruments Laws (Amendment) Bill.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI S.B. CHAVAN): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had completed half of my speech.

As the hon. Members are aware, there has been a phenomenal expansion of the banking system during the last 18 years or so. The branch network of the banking system has expanded from 8262 in June, 1969 to 55015 in March, 1988. The total quantum