

15.29 hrs.

AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA BILL

[English]

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL
AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI
GHULAM NABI AZAD): I beg to move.*

"That the Bill to provide for the constitution of the Airports Authority of India and for the transfer and vesting of the undertakings of the International Airports Authority of India and the National Airports Authority to and in the Airports Authority of India so constituted for the better administration and cohesive management of airports and civil enclaves whereat air transport services are operated or are intended to be operated and of all aeronautical communication stations and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration."

The Airports Authority of India Bill was introduced in the Parliament last year. The primary purpose of the Bill is to remove duality in the management of airports and to bring under a single authority, international and domestic airports of our country, for better administration and cohesive management of airports and aeronautical communication services.

A major problem at airports is multiplicity of organisations. Within Civil Aviation itself, two separate Authorities, namely NAA and IAAI, function in water-tight compartments, thereby aggravating avoidable problems of coordination.

International airports are managed by International Airports Authority of India, but even there, the vital functions of air traffic control and aeronautical communications are the responsibility of National Airports Authority. This dual control creates practical problems of divided responsibility, with adverse impact on the quality of service and safety.

Apart from the five International Airports, currently engaged by International Airports Authority of India, there are 87 domestic airports and 28 civil enclaves in defence airports, which are managed by National Airports Authority. There is a growing demand for operation of international flights at more and more airports. To meet this aspiration, plans have been set into operation for establishments of model airports in different regions of our country. The model airports will have facilities for Customs and Immigration services, so as to handle, in due course of time, international traffic. Thus, the distinction between airports managed by International Airports Authority of India and those coming under National Airports Authority would not remain for long.

Presently, there is a mismatch between responsibilities and resources of the two Authorities. Investment requirements for development of National Airports Authority airports and air traffic management services are high, but National Airports Authority's revenue potentials are inadequate because of low traffic intensity. The airports of International Airports Authority of India, on the other hand have high traffic intensity and, therefore, generate substantial surpluses.

* Moved with the recommendation of the President.

[Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad]

Merger would, therefore, facilitate better mobilisation and utilisation of resources for integrated development of airports.

It would facilitate closer integration, better administration and cohesive management of airports, aeronautical communications and air traffic management services.

The expertise developed in various fields in the two organisations can be pooled for improved efficiency also.

With the proposed unification, it would be possible to avoid overlap and pool the human resources for better utilisation of the manpower.

An unified Authority would be in a better position to undertake bold programmes of balanced airport development in the country by evolving, on the basis of its combined strength, innovative methods of securing resources for expansion and modernisation of facilities.

15.32 hrs

[SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA *in the Chair*]

Madam, I would like to point out that there is a printing mistake in Clause 2. For that, I will be bringing an amendment separately. There is just a printing mistake of one word.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to provide for the constitution of the Airports Authority of India and for the transfer and

vesting of the undertakings of the International airports Authority of India and the National Airports Authority to and in the Airports Authority of India so constituted for the better administration and cohesive management of airports and civil enclaves whereat air transport services are operated or are intended to be operated and of all aeronautical communication stations and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration."

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR (Mangalore): Madam, I stand to support this Bill. There is nothing much to discuss here. This Bill has already been subjected to close scrutiny by the Standing Committee. It is a step in the right direction. (*Interruptions*) Whenever you do right things, we wholeheartedly support you. But, at the same time, whenever we oppose anything, you must also take it in the right spirit.

Coming to the point, with the opening up of our economy and the so-called liberalisation, there are opportunities for making investments.

Now the main reason for merging the International Airports Authority of India and the National Airports Authority of India into one single entity is that the income generating capacity of the National Airports Authority is very meagre compared to that of the International Airport Authority. The traffic intensity is no doubt less in the national airports. But we should not forget that operation of the civil aviation plays a vital role in integrating our country. When we expect more and more foreigners to visit our country, it gives an ample opportunity for development of tourism. When they gain entry through the airports, then naturally they will have to

travel through the length and breadth of this country to examine the opportunities for making investments and also as tourists so that they can contribute to our economy. But our experience would show that the facilities that are being provided in our airports are very meagre. In many cases, the terminals are not able to handle the aircrafts which are already in operation. I would quote the example of the Mangalore Airport which is situated in my constituency. Now the traffic density, that is, the density of the travellers is very heavy between Mangalore and Bombay. There are three aircrafts in operation daily. And then one more aircraft is operated thrice a week between Mangalore and Madras via Bangalore. The terminal building is so small, so congested that simultaneously when we receive more than two aircrafts at the airport, it becomes very difficult for the passenger to find a place even to sit there. We have been making several requests to the hon. Minister. But the stock reply we get is that they do not have money and the developmental works will be taken up in the coming five year plan. Now, unless you provide the facilities required at the terminals, you cannot attract more and more passengers, you cannot attract fresh investments, you cannot expect new aircrafts to be operated from one point to the other point.

I do not know whether, with the constitution of the new authority, the Government would venture to allow private participation also in the construction and maintenance of the runways, the traffic-ways, the airport as a whole. I am sure, the Minister is giving due attention to this aspect.

A few days ago, I read a news item that the Government of Karnataka has already signed an MOU with one NRI to make investment for the construction and

maintenance of new runways in the Mangalore Airport. I do not know how far this could be implemented because as of now, control of the airport lies with the National Airport Authority. I would like to know whether, with the new entity coming into being, the State Government have any authority to enter into such an MOU.

Whether the State Government can contribute for taking up developmental works at the airports is a question to be considered. No doubt, the merger of these two authorities — IAAI and NAI — would provide for closer integration, better administration and also for cohesive management of the airports, aeronautical communication and also the air traffic management services. Providing facilities in the airports like sufficient space and some special attractions would definitely go a long way in achieving development even in the field of business.

Look at the airport of Singapore. Though it is a small country, the international airport at Singapore is very big in comparison to any of the airports which we have here. The number of aircrafts received, the volume of business which is entertained, the cargo services rendered at that airport, all this would contribute in a big way to the economy of that country. Likewise in India since we have opened up, I have already mentioned this point earlier, we require such a facility. Then only we can think of achieving some good business here also. So, speedy measures will have to be taken to achieve this objective.

The Bill was prepared in the year 1993. Then it was allowed to be rested in the Rajya Sabha for quite a long time. Thereafter the Standing Committees were constituted and naturally as per the rules the Bill had to be referred to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee has

[Shri V. Dhananjaya Kumar]

also submitted its report long ago. But I do not know for what reason the Government has thought that the constitution of the new authority need not be speeded up. No doubt, there is a provision made for vesting of all the assets of both these authorities in this new entity and simultaneously the interest of all the employees working at present with both these authorities are safeguarded. They will be hereafter treated as the employees of the new entity.

A provision has been made for the recruitment of employees hereafter by the new entity. Many a time the passengers who would wish to have a safe landing after boarding the aircraft find that the aircraft has failed to take off due to the sudden strike, what is called snap strike, resorted to by the vital sector like the air traffic control management. For reasons best known to them, they suddenly take decisions to go on strike and make the passengers sit inside the aircraft for hours together without even allowing them to come out to breathe fresh air. We have suffered this many times. So it would be advisable to consider that at least this sector is treated as an essential service.

The Government makes provision for giving good salary, for providing better service conditions to the employees of this Airport Authority. I would plead with the Government that it should make it mandatory for them so that they also render equal and better services to the users of the Airports, to the users of the civil aviation facilities. This is a vital department. At times people in charge of that, people who control these facilities can play havoc with the lives of the people also. Even in the matter of handling the cargo, one would like to

dispatch the cargo by air traffic for speedier disposal or for reaching the destination early. But, when they land in such troubles, there is no use in it; and people would naturally take diversions to other modes of transport. These aspects also will have to be kept in view.

I do not know, the Minister has not given any account about the real financial position of these Airport Authorities, as of date. But, a hint is given that the International Airport Authority has enough money whereas the National Airport Authority is starving for money. The proposed investments in the coming Five Year Plan is of the order of Rs. 3000 and odd crores whereas in the Seventh Plan, the provision made was only of the order of Rs. 1566 crores. May I know whether the Government would expect that there will be augmentation of income generation to that extent by the constitution of a single authority? It is not explained anywhere. How does the Government intend to do it? How does it propose to augment the income just by the constitution of a single authority? I can understand that after the constitution of the single authority if the Government is able to make immediate investments and provide better facilities in all the domestic airports also, they can attract more and more air traffic, more and more passengers and handle a good number of cargo and thus, income generation could be augmented. Without making investments and just by constitution a new authority to govern the affairs of both the national airports and the international airports. I do not think the lauded objective could be achieved.

The Government will have to think of a source from where investments can come in. That is why, I would like to know from the Government as to whether there is any proposal to invite private

participation in the development of the airports. The new entity, that is the Airports Authority of India could be a medium through which investment can be made. No doubt, the air traffic control should not be given in the hands of the private people; no doubt, the cargo handling facilities should not be given in the hands of the private people. But, at the same time, providing better facilities to the tourists, providing better amenities at the terminal buildings could be very well handled by the private people so that at least you will get better services — a good cup of coffee or tea in the terminal buildings. Now, we are made to pay through our nose; many a time, you will have to pay Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 per cup of tea; but that tea is also not upto the mark. The facilities that are being provided at the present moment and not upto the mark. That is why some attention will have to be paid to this aspect also.

When you make a provision for better air taxi operation, naturally, you will have to take care of the travelling public. You will have to take care of the passengers also. So, I hope the Government will initiate steps in this direction and speed up the whole process and also find out the money to make the investment. It is a universal principle. Unless you make fresh investment, you cannot earn anything more. So, you will have to find out money, make fresh investment and make available the facilities. Then only, you can earn more and you can achieve the targets which are proposed.

The Minister has been making a mention as to the demand for declaring more and more national airports as international airports. There is no doubt that now there is a great potential in Mangalore. Though I may be termed as 'selfish', you know the potential of the

Mangalore airport. If you can establish a direct link between Mangalore and the Middle-East countries, it will benefit a number of people who are working in the Middle-East countries, it will benefit a number of people who are working in the Middle-East countries.

When my leader, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had the opportunity of serving this country as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he made the issuing of passports easy. Taking advantage of that, a good number of talented people from that area could find jobs in the Middle-East countries. A connection from Mangalore to Middle-East countries would be very nearer. The people need not fly up to Bombay and then take a rout to Middle-East countries.

Mangalore has all the potential. About four or five years ago, vast land was acquired for the purpose of setting up an international airport at Mangalore. But now the land is lying vacant. Afterwards, the land was handed over to the NTPC to set up a thermal power project. Even the NTPC has no money. The land is lying vacant. Even now, the airport authorities — Civil Aviation Department — can again examine the possibility of constructing an international airport at Mangalore where the land is available so that the income of the proposed entity could be augmented and a direct link between Mangalore and the Middle East countries could be established.

With this suggestion I once again make an earnest request to the Minister to consider all these suggestions. I support the Bill. I would again request him that speedier measures may be taken to see that this dream comes true at the earliest possible opportunity.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS (Ernakulam):
Madam, this is a rare Government legislation which has got the wholehearted support of the entire House. This shows the interest the people of this country have taken for the development of civil aviation. The Airports Authority of India will bring under a single umbrella the National Airports Authority as well as the International Airports Authority. Before this Bill was brought to this House, a lot of discussion had taken place both inside the House and outside the House. The International Airports Authority, which has been looking after five major international airports, that is, Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and later Trivandrum, had surplus funds.

Whereas the National Airports Authority which is looking after 87 small and medium airports and 27 enclaves is short of funds. So, by bringing these two authorities under a single umbrella, we will be able to channelise the financial resources available to both the Authorities, so that the new liberal economic structure and the open sky policy taken up by the Government can be ably implemented.

Madam, when this Bill has been formulated, Government has taken adequate measures to protect the interests of the general public. I would like to refer to page 3, Clause 3, sub-clause (3) where the structure of the Authority has been specified. Unfortunately, many of the public sector undertakings and corporations have miserably failed because those who headed these organisations happened to be people without adequate knowledge about the organisations and they happened to occupy those positions through political

pressure and political influences. Fortunately for this Authority, it has been clearly specified and I would like to quote Clause 3, sub-clause (5):

"The Chairperson and the members referred to in clause (c) of sub-clause (3), shall be chosen from among persons who have special knowledge and experience in air transport or any other transport services, industry, commercial or financial matters or administration and from among persons who are capable of representing organisations of workers and consumers."

I congratulate the hon. Member for the special interest he has taken to see that the consumers as well as the workers in the Authority and Airlines are properly represented in these organisations.

Sir, I have some suggestions. After the implementation of the open sky policy, our skies as well as the airports are jammed with traffic fortunately, the Government and the Civil Aviation Ministry have taken pains to see that things go in a well organised manner. Safety has been given utmost importance. But we have to be a little more careful. Look at the five international airports in the country. Those who come to the airports either to receive or see off the passengers do not have space to sit and they have to suffer either in the hot sun or heavy rains, whether it be Madras or Delhi, wherever you go, you find that those who accompany the passengers and those who are to receive the passengers do not have any proper shelter or sitting facilities. When you plan a new airport or when you plan to modernise the existing airports, you please see to it that some shelter space is provided for those people who come to

receive the passengers or who go to the airport to see off the passengers.

16.00 hrs.

Similarly, either in the arrival hall or in the departure hall the passengers themselves find it very difficult to sit. There are not enough seats in the passengers hall. All these facilities for the passengers have to be adequately modernised.

When we go to the airports we have to pay the toll but we do not have the modern vending machines. A lot of time is being taken to pay the tax. The people who come to the Airport need business centres with modern communication and transmission facilities. We do not have such facilities. So, when you modernise our Civil Aviation industry, when you open our skies, you have to modernise the entire structure.

The same is true with regard to the communication system. We find either during the monsoon season or during the winter season very often flights are being delayed. Reason is that we do not have modern radar system. We should have a modern radar system so that whatever be the climate the flights should take off in time. Even a delay of 5—10 minutes in the morning cause a delay of 1-2 hours in the evening because the entire system is being affected. So modern equipments have to be brought in to regulate our Civil Aviation industry.

I have got to say a word about people's participation in Kerala for the development of Airport in Kochi. We have started the construction of a modern airport of an international standard purely with the participation of people. We are neither getting the financial assistances from the Centre or the State Government.

We are only getting technical assistance from the Civil Aviation Ministry but the people have come out with a cooperative society with the Chief Minister as its Chairman and on next August 21 we are laying the foundation stone for this modern airport. We invite the hon. Minister to attend this function.

Similarly, to lengthen and strengthen the runways of Calicut the people of Calicut have come out and they have given adequate fund for this. This shows the interest that the people take in the development of our Civil Aviation industry.

I think Madam with this legislation that we are bringing in the Civil Aviation industry in this country will get a new thrust. I request the hon. Minister when you think of the Civil Aviation industry think of the next hundred years. When you think of the radar system, think of the next hundred years. You think about this industry which is going to grow faster and this is going to be one of the industries which will help the development of our economy and the development of our tourism. So, I feel with the passing of this Bill the Civil Aviation Ministry will get a new teeth so that both the International Airport as well as the National Airport can be modernised, strengthened and can be made modern airports which go parallel to any modern airport outside the country.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum): Sir, I must confess that I am a little puzzled by this Bill. Is there anything more in the Bill than what is stated and whether the merging of this National Airports Authority and the International Airports Authority is only because of the stated reasons? Let me first go into the stated reasons.

[Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee]

The stated reason is nothing else but that a loss making sector has to be merged with a profit making sector.

The National Airport Authority is a loss-making sector. The International Airports Authority is a profit-making sector. We have to merge them in order to avoid having a loss-making sector. If this is the reason, I was wondering why is that in another area, a loss-making unit like IISCO is not merged with a profit-making unit like SAIL. Therefore, there is a doubt in my mind whether there are other things than what has been stated here. If this is the approach for a public sector area, viz., if there are loss-making units and profit-making units in the public sector, they should be merged in order to make the whole system viable. This is stated in the case of Airport Authority but not in the case of, as I mentioned say, in the steel sector. I have a suspicion. That suspicion is that, apart from that, why was it a loss-making at all. Let us very frankly face the fact. Travelling by air is a necessity for a very insignificant sector of the population. Insignificant in other sense, not numerical. Those who have tried to use air, their percentage is not even one per cent.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA
(Andaman and Nicobar Islands): Except members of Parliament.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Those people who do not travel by air and who pay Income Tax is only one per cent. Even all the Income Tax payees are not able to travel by air. There are certain other areas where, due to necessity, the people who do not pay Income Tax, have to travel by air. Take

the example of people living in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Mizoram. So, in this one per cent, only a very narrow fringe of population comes. As far as our national airports are concerned why is it that we do not add Surcharge? If we do that the airports will not lose. Why should we lose for the sake of those people only? This is the question which has to be answered. We are trying, through this Bill, to give subsidy to that small fraction of our population. Now, you are saying that you will be able to subsidise them better by merging the international airports with the national airports. This is the kind of logic that is being put forward here. I suggest that there is something else to it also. This question arises in my mind for two reasons. Very recently there has been a hike in the air fares. It is very interesting. It is ten per cent for long distance travelling. Take the examples of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Leh and Mizoram where people have to necessarily travel by air because there almost no other communication is available. Here the fares has been hiked by sixteen per cent or even twenty per cent. People who are really rich, they normally travel by air. In such cases, the hike is by only ten per cent viz., the so-called trunk routes which is very less. I have a suspicion that the private air taxi operations alone are now being asked to operate in these routes.

They are now being asked to fly not only in the trunk routes but also in these shorter routes. And unless the air fares are hiked, they may not be tempted in those directions. Exactly and similarly, the airports which were neglected so long in the name of loss are to be utilised by those private sector operators. Vayudoot has been withdrawn. We are asking the private sector to cover those regions. It is necessary that such airports should be improved for the sake of the private sector and, therefore, the profits of the trunk

routes should flow into the loss of non-trunk and non-international airports. These are the questions which trouble me. I want to know whether this position is being taken by the Government of India and the hon. Minister. The Minister has to answer to these things.

I have two proposals. One is that the charges should be increased at the metropolitan airports and at the international airports so that you do not subsidise. You refuse to subsidise. Every year we are told in the course of Budget speech that we have too big a subsidy for foodgrains and we have too big a subsidy for fertilisers. But under cover, we are subsidising the rich in their air flights and nobody mentions that. So, this is one suggestion, to which I want the Minister to respond it.

Then, I come to the merger problem. Now it has been pointed out by the preceding speaker that it has been provided that the Board should be such that it will comprise such persons who are capable of representing the organisations, the workers and the consumers. This is how the Board is supposed to be composed of. Now I have some very concrete suggestions for the Minister to consider. The provision says that the number of representatives on the Board is not less than eight and not more than 14 apart from the Chairman or Chairperson. There is a gap of six. The minimum is eight and the maximum is 14. Now I have a simple proposal to make. One of the biggest consumers are Members of Parliament. So much so that some of us or most of us can become frequent fillers in your new schemes... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Free consumers... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: All the same, they are consumers. Like in other Authorities and in other Boards, there should be two representatives from Lok Sabha and one representative from Rajya Sabha in this Board. Then, there should be an explicit provision that a representative of the Unions operating there should be in the Board. Then, there should be an explicit provision that a representative of the Unions operating there should be in the Board. Anybody and everybody can represent. Even the Prime Minister, Shri Narasimha Rao can represent the workers. Therefore, what I suggest is that from eight to 14, there is an elbow-room for six persons. Three of the them can be filled by Members of Parliament and the other three can be filled by the representatives of the workers functioning in relation to the airport authorities... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum): No labour leaders... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: You can have one Birla representative in the interest of the workers. That is your point of view. I believe those who represent the workers doing day to day activities in the airports should be in the Board.

I will come to functioning and other things also. I have also another suggestion to make. Why do you not have local boards like other central organisations such as the Reserve Bank of India etc.? Why do not have, at least to begin with, local boards for the previously noted five major international airports? Please have representatives of the States in the local boards. I will argue a little later as to why it is necessary. But my suggestion is that you have local boards for five major international airports.

[Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee]

facing in Vayudoot in relation to Indian Airlines will come up.

The hon. Member who spoke before me gave us the experience of Kerala where voluntary participation is taking place. So, around such airport, try to have a local board, maybe advisory. For instance, as the Calcutta Airport falls in my constituency, I should be there... (Interruptions) There are some MLAs and some Assembly constituencies in all the local areas of the airports. It can be some municipality with the Member of Parliament in it. But in the local boards, the representatives of the State, representatives of the legislature, representatives of the municipality etc. should be there. There are 87 airports. We can have their representatives in the boards. I am suggesting this in a very constructive spirit and that will solve many of the problems of the airports. I will come to them a little later.

16.18 hrs.

[SHRI P.C. CHACKO in the Chair]

I have one more suggestion. I just pose a problem to you. I do not know how you will take that into account. Any merger — I have seen several mergers during the course of my life when I was an employee also — poses a problem of *inter-se* seniority among the employees. I do not know how you are going to tackle it. But there should be one promotional channel at some level. You have to solve the problems of *inter-se* seniority. For that you have to consult the unions there. All the unions function in relation to International Airport Authority of India and National Airport Authority. So, you should consult those people and sort out your problems of *inter-se* seniority. Otherwise the same kind of problems as you are

Now, what are the functions of these airport authorities with regard to these kinds of peculiarities? Please refer to Chapter III. Perhaps you are aware but I am not very sure that you are aware. The functions of these airport authorities are to maintain runways, taxiways, aprons and terminals and ancillary buildings at the airports and civil enclaves. Now, are you aware that the taxiways are maintained not only by the direct employees of the airport authority but also by the contract labourers? Even the crucial job of soaring away birds, so that accidents do not take place, is not done directly by the employees of the authority but by the contract labourers. And these contract labourers, despite the Supreme Court judgement that if they do the same kind of job they should get the same kind of emoluments and perquisites, are not getting them. The contract labourers either agricultural labourers or urban manual labourers get the minimum wages decided at the State level.

At the Calcutta Airport, we have sweepers, both as employees and also as contract labour, but you violate this court judgement. And what are you going to do? These crucial functions, as I mentioned, like maintenance of taxiways, maintenance of terminals, maintenance of associated building where the staff stay, all these are done by contract labour. You are opposed to it I know. I do not know whether you will be able to persuade the Minister that this contract labour must go. And so long as it is there, they must be paid the same amount and same facilities which your permanent employees get. I must inform that these contract labourers have been able to get — through struggle, not because of generosity — Provident Fund and ESI facilities. You are

a Minister whom I do not want to consider as unsympathetic to labour as such and, therefore, I am drawing your attention to all this.

There is another suggestion which I forgot to make earlier. I want that in the Board there should be one representative from your ITDC. Somebody at the top level in ITDC should be represented in the Board because apart from those train journeys which have been handed over to the private sector, these air journeys are very very relevant for attracting tourists and, therefore, the perception of the ITDC people should be a valuable input in the Board of Management. There is also another reason why I mention ITDC. On page 6, it is mentioned that it is the function of the Airport Authority to run hotels, restaurants, etc. Why have you decided that despite having very well run ITDC restaurants, they should be handed over to the private sector. In Calcutta, I know that you are going to hand over the restaurant in the new terminal building to Oberois, although ITDC there do give good service. And it is not merely that. There is a story behind that. The ITDC restaurants there were initially engaged by the Airport Authorities, then they were absorbed by the ITDC people and now they are on the verge of being thrown out because the contract of the new domestic terminal is going to be given to the Oberois and this old terminal will be utilised for international flights, which are very rare. You are taking this step consciously or unconsciously, I do not know. I do not want to charge you as a saboteur of the public sector, but this is what is going to happen. You will transform ITDC into a losing operation while trying to save some other losing airport into a profitable one or a non-losing one, by merging the National and International Airport Authorities. so, I want an assurance from the hon. Minister that

the running of restaurants, wherever ITDC facilities are at least there, should be handed over to them only and in any case a representative of the ITDC should be in the Board. I do not want any Somnath Chatterjee to distract your attention.

AN HON. MEMBER: He is only supporting you.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: I shall pose a few more problems. I am very closely associated with the Calcutta Airport. Therefore, I tell you that this Airport Authority, as I said, why they should be associated with the local population.

About the new terminal building there, for which we have approached you with the West Bengal delegation which has come with the proposal that it should be named after Netaji, I want a categorical assurance from you. This new building was about to be opened in June. But in June it could not be opened. Why was it not opened? There are some very important functions and other things which are going to take place like the International seminar on industrial development etc.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Will there be aerobridges?

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Yes, there will be aerobridges.

They are not opening the new building. Do you know on what grounds they are not opening it? There is a private sector bus terminal there. The Director says that unless that private sector bus terminal is eliminated, they cannot open this terminal building. Previously, in West Bengal, all the buses around the city were

[Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee]

State Transport buses and only State Transport buses were reaching the airport. Now the Director is saying that their promise is to the State Transport people only and they are providing space for them. But, in the meantime, what has happened is that in the last so many years the primary transport connection has gone to the private sector. The Director is refusing to provide any space for them. This is creating the problem between the Transport Department of the West Bengal Government and the International Airports Authority at Calcutta.

There is another problem. Let me draw your attention to it. There is plenty of empty space around the airport. Some of the space is being utilised for all kinds of things. There is a regulation very recently that a particular area, which is at some distance from the airport but nevertheless which is the property of the airport authorities, is being utilised for the last 60—70—80 years as a playing ground and why do you not leave it to them. Unless you have these areas of interaction, unless you are able to interact with the local population, you cannot solve the problem. Otherwise there will be more problems coming from the local population.

I will pose another problem of the airport authorities. I live very close to the airport. There is a regulation that any person building a house there, around a particular radius, has to take a no objection certificate from the airport authorities. I have seen some such certificates. It is also mentioned that if the provisions or stipulations are not followed then the airport authority is empowered to bring down those premises. Why are you not doing that? It is proving to be

dangerous for the flights. There are tall buildings which are coming up with or without no objection certificate and the airport authority is doing nothing about it thus endangering all passengers of the flights. Birds, along with these tall buildings, are creating hazards for the airports. For birds you have contract labour and for building you have a Director who will not move.

I, therefore, suggest that you should have local cooperation. That is why I mentioned that a local Board will be very useful in sorting out these kinds of problems.

I will conclude with just one or two apprehensions. There is a suggestion from that quarter, who are very hardened champions of liberalisation because they consider the present liberalisation to be 'so-called' liberalisation, who are all in favour of private sector entry and foreign investment.

What I am afraid of is, are you really taking the first step towards handing over even the National Airport Authority by floating them first as a company from authority and then permitting them to have 49 per cent of shares opening up 20 per cent to foreign investment? You may deny it. Why am I saying this? It is because, already the Bangalore airport does not belong to either to the National or the International Airport Authority, but it belongs to HAL. A new airport is being constructed there. Who will own that? Is it the private sector or the foreign sector?

So, today in individual areas where international air travel is possible, you are opening up an airport for the private sector. It is the first step to handing over the entire National Airport Authority to the private and the foreign sector? I have this

apprehension in my mind because your Cabinet have Ministers like Mr. Pranab Mukherjee and Dr. Manmohan Singh who are all for handing our country over, through GATT or IMF or World Bank, to foreigners? These are the apprehensions which I expressed and I want a response from you despite the apparent simplicity of the proposals of the Bill.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria):
Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is the department of civil aviation but it works with a speed less than that of a bullock-cart. On 29 July, 1992, the Cabinet gave its approval to this Bill and the hon. Minister introduced it into the Lok Sabha in 1993 after a lapse of one year and today after an year of introduction he has come to the House to get the Bill passed. The hon. Minister took only two years to come before the House with the Bill. Therefore, God alone can save his department and its speed.

Sir, there are no two opinions that there is a need to reform international as well as national airports in India because according to the Government figures the number of foreign tourists will rise to one crore twenty lakh and their number may rise to two crore twenty lakh during the next five years. It will be deplorable not to maintain our airports well when tourists are expected in such a good number to visit the country. The revenues of International Airport Authority have risen from a mere Rs. five crore to Rs. 107 crore in twenty years. Its income in non-traffic sector has risen from Rs. 2 crores to 165 crores. The more capital investment is made in it and more reforms introduced, the less remains the scope for loss and this is why International Airport Authority has to be continually incurring losses till 1990 but within three years after 1990, it earned a profit of Rs. 45 crores

with its income ever increasing. But I am sorry to say that the department has been very careless in accelerating the pace of maintenance of international airports, their security equipments, the passenger amenities and development etc. Then different regions are not being treated equally. A development and extension scheme of Rs. 300 crores was formulated for the Bombay and Delhi International airports and Rs. 352 crores were spent on them but Madras and Calcutta airports have been placed in the 3rd phase in future plans of extension of international airports. We have collected this information from the department itself. Once Calcutta airport was discriminated against and many international flights were cancelled but now some of them have been resorted. I would like to know why have the very old and important airports of Calcutta and Madras been placed in the 3rd phase of extension plan. I urge that provision for these two airports should be made on the lines of Delhi and Bombay airports for which Rs. 312 crores were earmarked and their extension plans should be formulated.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Bombay airport is the superb one from the point of view of international flights and most of such flights are operated from here, but the slums and residential areas surrounding this airport could not be evacuated despite of giving them compensation and lands elsewhere because the Government was lacking in will-power and consequently, there is a risk involved in the security of lives of the passengers.

The second thing relates to the extension of national airports. There are 5 international airports in the second phase of plan and there is need to increase their number. Like international airports, passenger amenities should also be provided at the national airports. Last

[Shri Mohan Singh]

year, Indian Airlines took some initiative in this direction. Last year, the number of passengers on board in the flight from Calicut airport scheduled for Dubai was half of its capacity. On asking the reason, it was said that the runway could not bear the full capacity load. I urge that facilities of the standard of international airports should be given to the national airports also. Lucknow airport of Uttar Pradesh is very important in this regard. A quiet large number of people from Uttar Pradesh go abroad for employment and business purposes, their number being no less than any other State sending people abroad, but there is no international airport in Uttar Pradesh. I urge that Lucknow airport be declared an international airport and all necessary facilities be provided there. A provision of Rs. 3019 crores may be made for that. Then the new air-taxi operators whose number has risen from 6 in 1990 to 17 now and are having a fleet of 45 aircrafts in 1993 which is expected to grow further have a capacity of ferrying 21 per cent passengers.

I came to know from newspapers that they are evading the taxes payable to the airports they operate from. I urge that no loose rope should be given to them in this regard. You have formulated extension schemes by mobilising your own resources but the tax should in any case be collected on time from air-taxi operators so that the Government earns revenue and extension schemes of these airports are completed with your own resources besides Central aid. With these words, I conclude.

[English]

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY (Jagatsinghpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Bill seeks to bring the two authorities, that

is, the National Airports Authority and the International Airports Authority, under a simple umbrella or what is called Airports Authority of India. The Bill was referred to a department — related Standing Committee. In that Committee I gave the view that the proposal to merge the two should be critically examined. The single point that has been raised for the merger of both was that the International Authority's earnings are not that high. They have said that it is a losing concern. They have said that the earnings are not so much. And, therefore, if they come together there will be enough funds for carrying out expansion and also for efficient construction of the international airways etc. and to control it.

When the Secretary appeared before that Committee, I asked him a single question, that is, whether he has made any assessment, if the International Airports Authority is having more income, as to how much income could be ploughed back and what was his projection. He was unable to give any projection. I do not know whether the Ministry has examined the projections. By projections, I mean that when you merge these two, you must have a concrete idea as to how much money will be available so that it could be utilised for expansion. I think it is natural to demand from the Minister here whether he has made any assessment of it and has come to a conclusion that sufficient funds required for the expansion would be available by merging these two.

The second point is about the working of the National Airport Authority that was constituted. As you know, there were so many committees like the Raja Committee, the Tata Committee and the Das Committee. These Committees recommended that there should be two authorities. They say that the National

Airports Authority has less income. To know why it has got less income, certain factors will have to be taken into consideration. 65 per cent of its revenue is from navigation facility charges and these are to be reviewed every year. These navigation facility charges form 5 per cent of the income and they are to be reviewed every year and the addition should be made. But from 1987, it has not been reviewed and thereby, the position of the National Airport Authority remained tight and as a result of that there is a net loss of Rs. 830 crore.

If the navigation charges would have been revived annually, this would have brought in an additional income to National Airports Authority to the tune of Rs. 830 crores. Similarly, about the parking etc. in National Airports, the charges are less and if this should have been done by the standards of International Airports, especially these 02 airplanes, I think there would have been another income of Rs. 3000/- crores. This is complete inefficiency on the part of the management. I do not know what is the reason. That should be scrutinised. They say that the National Airports Authority's income is less.

I do not agree with this view. The persons who were called for evidence clearly said that the Government said that the National Airports Authority should be given budgetary support.

The hon. Minister should categorically state here how much budgetary support has been given to it during the years and as the ex-Chairman deposed, even the Government without giving the budgetary support were improving and having profit for the last two or three years, though not in the past. So, naturally what I mean is that : if this inefficiency is there and if this inefficiency

is covered up by the Government, then merging it with the International Airports Authority and creating one Authority, how will it be beneficial, I do not understand. It may be an assumption. But it cannot be a reality. Assumptions are not always translated into reality. The idea that drives the Government to take this position is not clear. That is my doubt. That is why, in the Standing Committee I said that it should be referred back to the Ministry to be considered and they have in their report stated that people holding the views of Shri Loknath Choudhury are in a minority. Our friends on the other side who are very much anxious to do it as early as possible, are very much more enthusiastic than the Government itself. It does not mean that we are opposed to it by a small number. We say that when you go for something, you must have a clear perception for what you are going to do and you must know why the losses are there are what is your projection. Without having a proper understanding of this problem, only going for merger will not bring the required result. *(Interruptions)* Who confuses, history will tell it. Don't worry. What is happening today will change tomorrow. At times, some people do it.

This inefficiency of National Airports Authority and the Government's callousness of not giving any budgetary support to it saying that it had made losses, is unfortunate.

Secondly, about the constitution, Nirmalda has said many things. I do not want to repeat it. I think those factors will be taken into consideration.

About the two sets of employment, you see some are working in the National Airports Authority and some are working in the International Airports Authority.

[Shri Lokanath Choudhury]

So, something has been done to keep them under one division and to keep the others in another division. It is like making *Jarasandh*. You are bringing two different elements together where are there contradictions. While doing so, how can they be integrated? If you really want integration. I would suggest that you should make integration in the whole organisation itself. So, do not be afraid. Please do not go half way in dealing with this matter. By going half way, you will only damage the prospects for which you are making this Authority. You yourself will be the cause of the damage. You know that if there are two sets of employees being controlled by two ways, having different pay-scales, it will definitely be harmful and it will bring discontentment. If you have any idea of building a castle, your castle will collapse.

My third point is about the expansion. Naturally we want expansion. Mere expansion will not do. You want to involve the people. That is all true. But to expand it, we must have the capacity also to make the common man enjoy the facility. That should also be a part of our perception. I think we have forgotten that. For bringing a healthy child, if you take a healthy element coming from somewhere and fix it to a non-healthy thing, it will be a disaster. So, I think the Minister should give me categorical replies. He should state whether the charge that was to be revised annually had brought a net loss of Rs. 830 crores. He should also state that in respect of parking charges, even if we have been down at the international standards, whether Rs. 3000 crores are a loss to the National Airports Authority. I would further like to know whether the income of the National Airports Authority has been deliberately made so due to inefficiency of those who are in charge of

it. It may not be due to any intention. The important point is that these types of people are also in charge of such an Authority. So, while I am agreeing to the suggestions made by Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee for including others, I would only suggest that the Government should re-think about one aspect. When they are moving fast, will it help them ultimately? Let them not repent for taking a decision for which the country and the entire air services of the country will suffer.

With these words, I conclude.

SHRI E. AHAMED (Manjeri):
Mr. Chairman, Sir, at the outset I congratulate the hon. Minister for having brought forward such a very important legislation keeping in mind the best interests of our aviation industry and the airports, I hope all of us would welcome this legislation. Even while welcoming this legislation, some of our hon. Members have said that it is a merger of two Authorities, one a profit-making Authority and the other one a loss-making Authority, to make an Authority as a profit-making one. It is true that the National Airports Authority is a loss-making agency. But as it is seen from the Budgetary provisions and also from the balance-sheet prepared by the National Airports Authority, in 1991-92, it has made a profit of Rs. 17.27 crores.

In 1992-93 it was Rs. 11.76 crores and in 1993-94. It is Rs. 17.33 crores. It shows that the National Airports Authority is also a profit-making agency. But apart from that, the reason given by the Minister for the merger is, as a matter of fact, something which is to be welcomed by everyone of us. The Minister has made it abundantly clear that the merger would facilitate better mobilisation and utilisation of resources for the integrated development of our airports. That is, as a

matter of fact, the need of the time so far as our airports are concerned.

Secondly, it would provide for the closer integration, better administration and cohesive management of the airport, aeronautical communication, air transport management service. This is also a matter to be taken into consideration as a reason for the merger. Subsequently, the Minister has made it clear that the expertise development in various fields in the organisation is to improve efficiency of the management. Therefore, this has been a long overdue one which fortunately, we have the occasion to debate and pass this legislation into a law. Therefore, we will all be very much happy if this avoidance of the duplication in the operational services can also be achieved.

What is the present position? The National Airport Authority is controlling the ATCs. But so far as Delhi Airport is concerned, the ATCs have no control over the runway. If an approaching aircraft finds an obstacle on the runway, the ATC cannot give information to the National Airport Authority under which he is working. He will have to contact the International Airports Authority officials, the manager of airport and he should again contact his counterpart in several other sections to take necessary steps to remove the obstacles, if any. So, this is a cumbersome procedure. By merging the two authorities, we will have an efficient functioning of this service airport operation.

Another example is of the Trivandrum Airport. In one sector, the management is of the International Authority and the domestic sector is under the National Airports Authority. There are

two generators, two transformers. Why is this duplicity? Better merge and put them under one management. So, merger is something which is inevitable and it is long overdue. This is a welcome feature so far as our airports are concerned.

I would like to mention one or two things. Even the management of our airports under the present International Airports Authority is not satisfactory at all. If somebody goes to the IGI Airport in Delhi, what is the situation there during the monsoon season? There is a leakage and, with the result, ordinary passengers and the visitors have to suffer all the difficulties. Down pour had created such a havoc inside the Airport that nobody was there to take care of it. For example, just see the standard of our duty free shop which is under the International Airport Authority, in the international airports.

17.00 hrs.

It is a substandard one as compared to the international standard. The functioning of our International Airport Authority is not up to the standard. By merging both, we will be able to do more.

I wish to make one point here. Even the functioning of the National Airports Authority is not satisfactory, I know the financial constraints of both the Authorities. It is not with a budgetary provision that it is going on. It is by generating the revenue by airport and aircraft operations that they are functioning. There is aeronautical revenue and non-aeronautical revenue. More aeronautical revenue can be generated if there is more lading and more aircraft operations; non-aeronautical revenue comes from cargo and other services. If we will just go to the cargo side, under the International Airports Authority whether in

[Shri E. Ahamed]

Delhi or Bombay or Madras or Trivandrum, I must say that is nothing but "cargo corruption" that is going on everyday. Whoever goes over there finds that there are touts and agents and they mislead them, mismanage things and also take bribes and other gratification from the people who want to take their cargo material from the cargo complex. So the management is very much deplorable so far as the cargo facilities provided by the International Airports Authority or any other Authority is concerned in our country. The only thing is, either we must generate funds from the aeronautical services or the non-aeronautical services. But in this case we can have resources by entering into joint ventures or through institutional finance.

My friend, the hon. Member from Mangalore was referring to the Singapore Airport. Why should we just take the Singapore Airport alone? Even if we take the Singapore Airlines, what is the position of Air India? The Singapore Airlines has ordered for twenty-four 747 Jumbos whereas this great country's national carrier Air India has placed order for only four. Even out of the four, I think we have received only two or three. This is how they are managing! As far as my information goes, they are reselling their aircraft after every seven years. After every seven years they are getting substantially good value and they are replacing the fleet with new arrivals whereas what are we doing? How much money will the Central Government be able to give? Even the arrival of one of the four 747, it was a great joy and it made big news. In all other countries everyday they are adding to their fleet one after another. But in our great country the arrival of a 747 aircraft in the Air India fleet is a very big news. How they are

managing and how we are managing! The reality is the mobilisation of fund; how we will be able to mobilise the fund. Either the Central Government should provide the funds, which according to us is having a resource crunch and it is not possible. Otherwise we will have to generate funds through the financial institutions where also the Government will find it extremely difficult to stand guarantee. Our financial institutions also have some other commitment. So the only way according to me is to generate funds from the joint sector, from the joint ventures. That is one thing that should be done.

My friend Shri K.V. Thomas has made a very relevant point. So far as our system is concerned, the development of our airport with the mobilisation of public fund is what Cochin has done. That is what Calicut is doing. In Calicut, with the assurance of the Minister, the State Government, under the leadership of our Chief Minister, has formed a Committee. That Committee has mobilised more than Rs. 10 crore. Even now they are mobilising the fund for the expansion of the runway on the assurance of the Government.

This is the public money. The only guarantee is the State Governments as well as the Authority. But, what is the present position of the National Airports Authority? As per the assurance given by the hon. Minister, we should have had the laying of the foundation stone in the month of December. But, even now, the National Airports Authority could not prepare the project report. When it was raised at the appropriate forum, what did they say? They say that they found a big rock there; which they have to blast. Has the rock appeared there yesterday or day before yesterday? The rock was there already in Calicut. It is in my constituency and that is why, I say this. Taking into

consideration the rock and other positions, the preparation of contract and other project works were being taken up then. But, now they say that they found a rock. If this is the way the National Airports Authority is going to conduct their affairs, then we will have the very same old experience of inefficiency, incompetence and such other things.

Even when the people are ready to give you the money, you are not prepared to implement the project. Then, what this Government is for? What this Authority is for? On the one hand, the Government say that we do not have the money for development and on the other hand, when the people are ready to provide funds, you say that we could not prepare the project report, our engineer was wrong in assessing that or we could not just assess what exactly we could have done there.

I would like to say the present position of Calicut. There are 19 weekly flights to Gulf countries and several inflights. Seven flights to Sharjah, three flights each to Abu Dhabi; Dubai and Muscat every week. Besides that, two private airlines are operating the services. To such a very busy airport, which has given a sort of a boost to the Indian Airlines, the National Airports Authority has not given due consideration even after taking into consideration its importance, its profit-making capacity or the resource that that airport will be able to generate.

Therefore, I would urge the hon. Minister to give an assurance on the floor of the House which was given to the Kerala Government and through the Kerala Government to the people that the mobilised funds will be properly utilised without further delay. I would just like to take only one minute more.

The next point I wish to say is about the Trivandrum Airport. I am very sorry to say that the Civil Aviation Ministry is giving a lukewarm attitude towards that Airport. Why do I say so? The reason is this. There are international airlines wanted to land there. The landing facility is also available there. Emirates Airlines, Kuwait Airlines, Qatar Airlines, Luftansa Airlines, Singapore Airlines and Malaysian Airlines want to land there. But, you say 'no' to them because it will affect the Air India. On the one hand, you want liberalisation; and on the other hand, you say they shall not come here. Air India is not having their flights run properly. If there is any air service to be cancelled by Air India, the first one will be the flight from Trivandrum to Kuwait or to other places. Only for Air India, are we to suffer like that? How much money the Airports Authority could generate if the landing facility is given? If the same handling is given to Indian Airlines or Air India, how much money they themselves will be able to generate? Why are we very much shy about all these things? I wish to say that this attitude is wrong. This is not conducive to the policy which this Government has declared. You all say often — hon. Finance Minister, hon. Commerce Minister, hon. External Affairs Minister — in every country and invite them by saying, "Come, Why do you not come to India?"

How would you come to India? Do you know what is the difficulty of an Indian to return to his home country. To come to India, a man from a Gulf country, until the introduction and operation of Indian Airlines, will have to go from pillar to post to get a ticket back to India. Air India is the only service which will be cancelled or which will have no facilities or which will invariably be delayed. Air India is, as a matter of fact, always 'Arriving Indefinitely' — AI. That is the position. Therefore, why

[Shri E. Ahamed]

are we to take such a narrow-minded attitude on this matter? So, Trivandrum airport should be opened to all international flights. Trivandrum should be given its due. That is one airport which has generated revenue and has brought Air India, I should say, out of red. Even now, the Air India says, it is their exclusive treasure. In the best interest of the country, change this attitude and allow the other International aircraft to land there.

I do not wish to take all the valuable time. Once again, I request the hon. Minister to assure me with respect to the Calicut airport and also to make some provision to have advisory committees with respect to each and every airport even by an executive order. Even if the provision does not find a place in the legislation, let the hon. Minister assure the House that there shall be an executive order to have the advisory body in respect of each and every airport giving representation to the local representatives of the people. In that case, I will also have some say with respect to the airport in my constituency, Calicut.

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum):
Sir, I thank you very much for giving me the time to speak on the Airports Authority of India Bill, 1993. I have been listening to the speeches of all the previous speakers. Even though on certain clauses some differences of opinion have been expressed. I am happy that this is a non-controversial Bill which has the unanimous support of this House. To that extent, as a Member coming from Trivandrum. I am also particularly happy.

The need for strengthening the air traffic and to provide more facilities, when the global changes are taking place and

when we have to compete even with the private airlines, cannot be over emphasised. I remember that Mr. Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee and Mr. Lokanath Choudhury have been airing some doubts about the real need before the amalgamation of the two authorities. The main stress, according to them, is that one loss-making authority is being merged with another profit-making authority. In my opinion, that particular issue has been slightly over-emphasised. It is true that the International Airports Authority is a profit-making one and that the National Airports Authority is a loss-making one. But that does not mean that this is only aspect behind this merger. If one particular aspect is brought to the notice, I will say that this merger is in the larger interest of the country and in the larger interest of both the authorities.

According to the latest figures in the Eighth Plan, the present debt servicing liability of the National Airport Authority is about Rs. 125 crore. In other words, a loss of Rs. 125 crore was incurred by the National Airports Authority during the Eighth Plan. During the same period in the Eighth Plan, the International Airports Authority has got a tax to the tune of Rs. 120 crore. So, while one unit has got a tax of Rs. 120 crore, the other unit has made a loss of Rs. 125 crore. When both are merged, on the one side one need not pay tax and on the other side, there will be no loss. It is not a mere merger of a profit making unit with a loss making one. I am highlighting these aspects to say that some of the opinions coming from that side are not at all supported by facts.

It was in the year 1971 that the International Airports Authority was constituted as an autonomous body, taking into consideration the need for heavy investment as also more

operational flexibility required for the development of major international airports. At that time, there were only four major international airports, viz. Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay and Madras. But in 1991, Trivandrum, which was requesting for a similar status for long, was also declared an international airport. But quite unfortunately, no substantial work is done either to improve the facilities or to make it a real international airport, except during the last one year. I am very thankful to the present Minister who has taken special interest to see that some of the needs of the Trivandrum International Airport are duly considered. And work is going on only for the last ten months. Mr. Chairman, you may remember that you were present when a delegation of Members of Parliament, Members of the State Legislature and some of the leaders of Trivandrum met hon. Minister about ten months back. At that time, he was sick. In spite of that, he was very kind enough to receive us and he gave a categorical direction to the then Secretary. Then only, the whole Department started working. Sir I come from Trivandrum. In fact, I stay just four kilometres from Trivandrum. And I am very glad to see that work is now really going on in a time bound manner. Work relating to land acquisition for the extension of the runway was over long back and the land was acquired fifteen years back when the present Chief Minister, Shri K. Karunakaran was the Home Minister in the Government of Shri Achyuta Menon. It was a time of great agitation when late Shri A.K. Gopalan threatened that he would go on a dharna if the squatters were to be evicted. But in very shrewd manner, in one night some arrangement was made to provide some alternate land to the occupants. So, they were removed and land was acquired for the extension of the runway. Though this work was over nearly fifteen years back, actual work on the extension of the

runway has been started just ten months back. Now, we have to strengthen the runway also so that by the end of 1997, the whole runway will be completed to cater to the needs of future development and it will be possible to have parking space for Boeing 747s, A-320s and A-300s together. Work relating to this aspect has started.

But I am sorry to mention that the real work relating to the second terminal has not substantially started. Even today, the hon. Minister was telling that he had given some directions in this regard. I am glad that the pace of this work is also being speeded up.

Sir, the need for this merger is a genuine one and it is necessary to meet the present and future requirements. It is not a question of merging loss making and profit making companies. There is also a duplicity of functions with overriding jurisdiction and there are two authorities looking to same type of work.

Here I would like to share my personal experience. About two years back, I was in the Bangalore Airport and it was evening.

I was waiting for a flight to Delhi and suddenly the electricity went away. As you know, Sir, in Bangalore when electricity is not and no fans are there the mosquitoes — I cannot say in what number — come in millions and nobody can stand there. So, it became very uncomfortable. I saw four foreign tourists standing there. We can put up with everything because we are the representatives of people. We can also travel by bus or by train but they were foreign tourists and they did not know how to face it. I rushed to the staff and asked them whether they can do anything. They

[Shri A. Charles]

said that it is none of their business and they asked me to go to the proper authority. I went there and they said that this is the area of technical staff and I should go to the ground staff. So, in this way for at least half-an-hour I knocked at every door but I was not able to do anything. I did not tell them that I am a Member of Parliament because I know their reaction even if I would have told them. So, I thought there was no point in telling them and I said that I am a passenger. Finally, I heard these foreign tourists saying, "this is worse than a slum". Can you imagine any tourist going to Bangalore airport or any other-airport if this is the treatment you are giving to him? So, this is one aspect of it.

I feel if there is one authority responsible for it there is some sort of double assurance that somebody will be responsible for each operation and if there is some lapse it will be rectified immediately.

Shri Lokanath Choudhury said that the employees will continue to be in two separate compartments having two types of service conditions. That is not true. After his speech I had just gone through the various clauses just casually. There is a specific provision in Clause 18, Sub-Clause 7 where it is specifically stated:

"After the expiry of the period of one year; or the extended period, as referred to in sub-section (2), all the officers and other employees transferred and appointed to the Authority, other than those opting not to be the officers or employees of the Authority within such period, shall be governed by the rules and regulations made by the Authority in respect of the service conditions of

the officers and other employees of the said Authority."

So, only during the transit period of one year till the merger is complete, till the *inter se* seniority and other conditions of service are settled an employee can opt out to go or he can remain in. And, if he becomes a full member of the service the new Authority can pass such legislation, can pass rule which will be binding on all. So, in my opinion the service conditions of all the employees of the National Airports Authority and International Airports Authority will definitely be protected. There are sufficient clauses to protect their interest. If they wish to resign they have the retirement and such other benefits.

In this connection I may bring to the kind notice of the hon. Minister that the Open Sky policy which was declared in 1991 was behind the back of this august House. I was a Member of Parliament in that Lok Sabha. You may remember when the matter was rushed through, at some odd hour some statement was made and that statement had never seen the light of the day. Only after the Air Taxi Operators hijacked the whole sky that we came to know that this new Open Sky Policy has been declared by the Government. At no point of time was that discussed. We never considered this seriously in the House.

So, I would request the hon. Minister that the policy that was declared then, any charges made thereafter and the existing position will have to be discussed in this House so that, at least, we may know what exactly is the present position.

Sir, I had a very bitter experience last week. On the 12th of this month, I had represented to you about the difficulty that people of Trivandrum are facing. We

are coming from the Southern most part of the country. It is impossible for us to come by train more or less regularly. The main difficulty that we are facing is that from Trivandrum to Delhi, it takes more than two-and-a-half days. So, if we want to go to Delhi and then come back to Trivandrum, that will take us six days. So, during one Session, we just go for two days. The only facility that is available to us is the airlines. Sometimes we try to manage that also with the facility of intermediate journeys that are provided to us. On the 12th of this month, I had an 'okay ticket' from Trivandrum to Delhi via Bombay. The flight was to leave Trivandrum at 12.30. I came to the Airport in time. I was told that the flight was a little late. It was delayed and delayed and finally at 3 O'clock, it took off. The connecting flight from Bombay was IC-406. It leaves at 5 o'clock. I was there. The Member of Rajya Sabha, Mr. Thennala Balakrishna Pillai was there and there were some Government Officers who had to attend to some discussions. So, almost seventy passengers were there. We had asked the Duty Manager to send a message that about seventy passengers are coming from Trivandrum. They have to catch IC-406 by 5 O'clock. We were told that the message had already been sent. So, we were not at all worried. At ten minutes to five, we were at Bombay. There the weather was rough. We were told that the landing will be slightly delayed. Exactly at 5 O'clock, we tried to send a message, through the pilot, that our flight is hovering over Bombay Airport; we are stranded; and we shall be able to land a little late. We have to catch flight IC-406. We were informed by the Duty Officers that they have got the message and there would not be any problem. So, we landed at 5 O'clock. Fortunately, we went out. The Duty Officers were there. There was an announcement that the passengers

bound for Delhi may get into the bus. So, we thought that we are safe. But after getting into the bus and when we were about to be taken into the arrival lounge, we were told that the doors of the IC-406 have been closed. It was not a case of flight taking off. We had pleaded and pleaded but there was no hope. Then, we again went to Duty Manager. He was very arrogant. There were also very *pukka* gentlemen whom we had met. But at that time, the Duty Manager, did not even have the courtesy to talk to the Members of Parliament. When we said that we are Members of Parliament, we were stranded, he said, he has no message. We, then quarrelled for about half an hour and spoiled our throats also. We had also wasted our time by waiting there. The 8.30 flight was delayed and all of us reached Delhi in the dead night viz., at 1 O'clock. I want an inquiry to be conducted into this indifferent behaviour of the officer. I was surprised to know that when I was at Trivandrum, at 3 O'clock, just twenty-five minutes back, the East-West flight had taken off. Had we boarded that flight, we would have reached Delhi by 8 O'clock.

MR. CHAIRMAN: At this rate, you may not get time to deal with the Airport Authority. You are talking about Indian Airlines. You speak on the Airports Authority.

SHRI A. CHARLES: Indian Airlines is very much a part of it. I am speaking about the whole system. This International Airports Authority has a lot of things to do with the Indian Airlines. So, I would say all these things will have to be taken into consideration and the Airports Authority should look into all aspects of giving good service to the passengers.

Then, for the purpose of encouraging tourism also, we have to see

[Shri A. Charles]

that more and more facilities are given. That can be ensured by the new Authority only. If more facilities are given, then we will be able to have more and more tourists. As I have already said that better coordination will be possible with the merger of the two Authorities.

Nobody has pointed out about the merger of Vayudoot with Indian Airlines, which has also taken place and that poses a problem for the staff because the staff of Vayudoot are not paid on par with the staff of Indian Airlines.

My last point is about the North Eastern States. I would request that the need of the seven North Eastern States shall have to be considered and Vayudoot service may be given to these States even on subsidy basis. There are several stations, where Vayudoot are now being operated occasionally even on loss. I do not think that there is any need for having such routes to be operated by Vayudoot. The real need is for the North Eastern States. Even if it is a loss-making unit, it has to be strengthened because of the need of that region. Even today we had a long discussion about the problems that are being faced by the people of the North Eastern States. We have to respect their sentiments. We have to protect their identity. We have to satisfy their needs. The capital of these North Eastern States will have to be tied up with the capital of this great country at least by Vayudoot, if not, by a regular flight.

My friend, Shri E. Ahmed has said that Trivandrum is being neglected. Sir, as a Member coming from Trivandrum, at present, I do not share that view because during the last one year substantial work is being done. The airport is being improved. The present project for strengthening, extension of runway and the construction of the second terminal

will be completed as per the schedule by the end of 1997. But I have only one request to make. The total project of the second phase has not been finalised. For the last thirty years, the threat of land acquisition around that airport is still there. Nobody can sell the land; nobody can put up a building; and nobody can buy the land. So, a lot of confusion is there. I have already given a proposal that the exact land that is required for the second phase will have to be identified and that will have to be notified so that in the remaining land, people can buy or sell or put up some buildings and regular life and activity can go on. At present, in the whole area, the life is static and the people are very much scared. So, I request that within a time frame, the whole project of the second phase shall be finalised and the land to be acquired shall, at least, be notified so that we know that these are the lands, which we require for the future development and the rest of the lands can be utilised by the owners of the land as they like. If this is done, the present problem of Trivandrum can be solved.

There are a number of requests for more international flights. When the airport has been declared as an international airport, more flights naturally would come. That has not happened so far. So, that aspect may be looked into and proper attention and improvement shall be given to the Trivandrum international airports.

With these words, I support the Bill. I would say that the Minister has been very kind enough to give a careful thought to the overall development of our air service.

[Translation]

SHRI SHANKARSINH VAGHELA (Godhra): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister for deciding about making Indian Airlines Competitive vis-a-vis. The private air lines and merger of the two authorities, i.e., IAAI and NAA. These two authorities must have been set up on the basis of certain reasons and now due to certain reasons only these are being merged. I am of the opinion that there should be decentralisation of power but if we go for a single authority, we must also have some monitoring authority over it and while doing so, we must ensure to avoid duplication of powers between them.

Sir, the treatment being meted out to the foreign tourists coming through our own airlines to our country forms the first impression on them about our country. I feel that Indian Airlines and Air India do not leave very good impressions on the tourists. So far as the loss of airlines or five star hotels is concerned, a common man has no link with such things. So, a common man should not be burdened with losses incurred by Five Star hotels or various Public Undertakings. Most part of the money in the coffers of our country is contributed by the common man. Who is in no way linked with these losses. The Government should either hike the fares or find any other way out but they should not involve the common man, he has no concern with this. You have stipulated a term of one year for Board of Directors and five years for the Chair person, but I feel that a term of three years is sufficient for both of them. The corrupt practices should not be adopted while making such appointments. The appointment should be strictly on merit basis. Like Army Officers are appointed on the Board of Directors in Central Excise or Customs purely on merit basis. So, only the efficient people

should be appointed on the Board of Directors which will serve some purpose. A relative or party workers should not be appointed on the Board of Directors. The number of Directors stipulated at 8—14 should be brought down because too many cooks spoil the broth. It is only good in the case if these people have their individual responsibilities. The number of Directors should neither be less than 6 nor more than 9 to ensure a smooth administrative functioning. If they are experts in their fields then, the number can be increased. There is no such thing as accountability. In the event of an air crash, the causes of the crash can only be ascertained only after locating the Black Box. Dr. Bhabha died in an air crash but the Black Box of that plane could not be traced till date. The possibility of tampering with the Black Box is always there. Only after its detection the causes of the crash can be ascertained. Who is accountable for it? What caused the mishap?

Now, I would like to say something about the employees. All the Government employees should be provided similar kinds of facilities irrespective of the fact that they are employees of Public Undertakings, State Government or the Central Government. The Central Government employees, State Government employees or employees of Public Undertakings or Banks have different pay scales. A uniformity should be ensured in this regard. Several employees have not been provided with proper Government accommodation while this facility is provided at many places. But the Central Government does not extent any facility. With all the facilities, the employees would be able to take more interest in their work. You can go for uniform pay scales and facilities to the Government employees and the Public Sector employees which is in your control.

[Shri Shankarsingh Vaghela]

Different pay-scales result in frequent strikes. There should be a policy of "Work first salary later" in respect of our Government employees but our friends have taught them the policy of 'salary first, work later'. The disintegration of Russia can take place here also. That is why, please, do not get misled by the communists.

You have also mentioned about running of hotels and restaurants. You should not do it on your own. You should hand over some of them to Private Sector and some of them should be run as Joint Ventures. You may try out whatever is profitable. If they are incurring losses, then these should be run as joint ventures but if the losses continue, then, these can be handed over to Private Sector because they always earn profit and normally do not incur losses. If needed, the participation of I.T.D.C. can also be considered in this regard.

So far as the security of Airports and those who come to see off/receive their relatives is concerned, I would like to say something about that. Despite such tightened security the planes are high-jacked and bomb-blasts take place at Airports. But the people who come to see off/receive their relatives/acquaintaneous are forced to watch their dear ones through a glass and they have to buy costly tickets to be able to do so. They are forced to bear rains and chilly weather outside. I make a submission that they should be allowed to go with the passengers upto the point where there is no security risk. There is nothing wrong in that.

It takes three hours to travel to any part of the Eastern Delhi from Delhi Airport. Similarly, sometimes it even takes four hours to travel from Bombay Airport to the Bombay city due to traffic-jam and

rains etc. My suggestion is that we should also adopt the system prevalent in America. Small air-crafts, small planes of States or small private planes should be allowed to land on the terrace. If Dhirubhai Ambani wants to use his own air-craft and land on his building, he should be allowed to do so. Because if some people want to spend money to save time, the same should be utilised by the Government. This practice may be adopted in metropolitan cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Madras. It would save on time.

Everybody should be allowed to go for joint ventures. Column 21 on page 10 mentions something about tenders. It should be open because there is scope for corruption if it is done *in camera*. The tender should be publicly opened so that everybody, who is interested in bidding, should know that the highest bidder has got it. The more the openness, the less the corruption. Be it buildings, hotel food, airstrips, cement or food-samples if adulteration is found in the construction material or food items should be got tested in the laboratories and then if anybody is found involved in corruption, he should be punished. It should be done openly. Recently a bridge was constructed after the name of Shri Chimanbhai Patel. It caved in the day it was opened for public and the traffic was obstructed. Who is involved in this sinister alliance? Who will take its responsibility? Who will be accountable to the fact as to whether the bridge was constructed properly or not? Whenever any lapse comes to the notice, the person who was in charge of the project should be held responsible even though he might have retired by that time. The Engineer should be held responsible for it. Who had indulged in corruption and passed it? Which private company was involved in it? That is why, I suggest that everything

should be open so that the person concerned should be held responsible.

Sir, the clause 24 on page 11 states about the funds. I would like to tell the hon. Minister that it should not be profitable fund. The funds should not be viewed from the profit point of view because Public Undertakings follow the policy of 'no loss, no profit'. Profit is earned by you through price-rise as you enjoy monopoly in a particular sector. What is the need to have profits? Go in for expansion and provide new facilities, lower down the prices/fares and provide new facilities to satisfy the employees and there can be many other facilities. Give more facilities to the consumers/passengers and then people will prefer Indian Airlines over other airlines.

Sir, today we find competition everywhere and it is good to have competition. We are happy to travel in Indian Airlines. We do not prefer other air services. But delays in flights irritate passengers we have become used of this trend so much that when some aircraft is on time it is a surprise for us. I had to go to Ahmedabad from Bombay on the 21st and the flight was scheduled to start at 7 O'clock. We were in the security check-up when we were told that it would take-off at 8 O'clock but it did not. Then we were asked to have refreshments and told that it would leave at 11.15 P.M. but finally it took-off at 11.45 P.M. If I had travelled by road or by train, then, I would definitely have reached earlier than this. I want to ask whether the Duty Officer was not aware that the Aircraft was yet to reach there? We were made to wait in the security check-up lounge. They should have their own police for security purposes. It is my suggestion that the Authority of Indian Airlines should appoint

their own security personnel. This security is not under your control. Nobody takes responsibility in this regard and the passengers are harassed for such a small thing. If somebody comes from the states he has a transistor, cells etc. with him. It is a matter of common sense that these are not for blasts. Your flights get delayed daily and a flight on time causes surprise. On making an enquiry on the phone we get assured that the flight is on time but at the Airport we have to waste two-three hours time. It causes great inconvenience to us.

When we reach the Airport, there is a very big queue for security check-up. Every passenger is in a great hurry to catch the flight. There should be two queues for this purpose. There is only one ladder to enter the Aircraft and come out of it. Two ladders should be provided for this purpose. The passengers have to take the bus to reach the Air-craft. I suggest that the Air-craft should be grounded at a distance of 50—100 feet so that the passengers could walk down to the Aircraft with their luggage. This way the time of the passengers and money on account of diesel will be saved. What kind of security is observed by not allowing anybody come within a distance of 50 feet of the Aircraft? In fact, security poersonnel keep roaming around here and there. Once we said that our Parliament session starts at 11 'o clock and therefore we walk down instead of taking a bus but we were not allowed to do so. The distance of the Aircraft should be as such which could be covered in two minutes. It is possible in every season but rainy season.

I would like to say something about the kind of Hindi spoken by the Air Hostesses. They say that 'Aaj ke hamare captain hain Captain Satish Sharma hain'. Here, the word 'hain' should not be used

[Shri Shankarsingh Vaghela]

twice. I have mentioned it several times and it can be improved upon but I do not understand why Hindi is repeatedly being treated with such contempt. Please get it improved upon.

Your good pilots, Air-Hostesses and Duty Managers leave the jobs and join other companies. What stringent rules have you made to check this tendency? You should say that since so much has been spent on their training etc., they should first pay a sum of Rs. 1,00,000 only then, they can leave the company. The Private Enterprises lure good workers of other companies. You should say that you have trained them and invested a lot of amount. Then why should somebody else take the benefit. A stringent action should be taken against persons having such vested interests. They should be asked to pay such a big amount so that they are not able to leave you. You must take appropriate steps in this regard.

Sir, Vayudoot Air-crafts are in a very bad condition. The doors of these aircrafts suddenly open in the air and one has to hold on to something in order to avoid a fall. If you can fly small air-crafts in the hilly areas then it is, O.K., otherwise Vayudoot should also be closed down as Pawan Hans. Big air-crafts are not suitable for hilly areas.

Secondly, our air strips are of different kinds. As our Minister of Railways is getting all the metre gauges converted into broad gauge, similarly all the Airports should have air-strips where aeroplanes of such types as 320, 330 or all other type of aeroplanes could land. You should make a permanent arrangement at all the Airports of our country where all types of aeroplanes like 320, 330 or 474 could land. And they should be linked to suit the areas like our

border areas of Gujarat. Surat is a very big Industrial town and there is Saurashtra. Keshmad Airport has been closed by you and Deesa Airport of Porbander, North Gujarat has also been closed down. You justify that small Airports do not get much traffic but even the arrangements for getting traffic is also to be done by you only. If some particular route does not suit you, then, you may hand it over to private airlines. They can fly their private air-crafts. But the arrangements at all the Airports should be proper where air-crafts could land at night also. Today the condition of the Airports is such that air-crafts cannot land at several airports for want of proper lighting. If there is a power failure, then, you should make some other arrangements to ensure the landing of air-crafts at night or even during heavy rains and there is no risk of accidents. Your excuse of darkness cannot be accepted in this scientific age. An alternative arrangement can be made. Make arrangements to convert small air-strips into big air-strips to benefit people. If you cannot run airlines, then, hand it over to the private agencies.

You have cut a joke by giving Ahmedabad Airport as international status. Have the people of Bombay become so powerful so as to stop the flow of revenue to Ahmedabad. Today of all the people who are leaving for U.K. or U.S.A. 80% are Gujaratis. People of Ahmedabad want to go direct to London or America from there. You should provide them a direct service so that they could directly go to America, London, New Jersey, Germany or at least African countries from Ahmedabad itself. They face great difficulties in going from Bombay. Do not depend on Bombay alone. The case of Gujarat is a genuine one. There are lakhs of Industrialists in Gujarat. You should make arrangements for their arrival and departure. You can

have the figures from Bombay and compare and then give priority to Ahmedabad. Do not depend on Bombay alone. The people of Ahmedabad should be provided facility of having direct flights to New York, London etc. from there itself. You will get adequate traffic from there. If they are to get a flight from Bombay then they will have to waste their 3-4 hours in it. If you propose to give the status of an international Airport to Ahmedabad Airport, then, you should implement it in the real sense and should provide all the facilities like international airports.

In the end, I would like to say that the air fare charged is equivalent to the fare of the railway's 1st class A.C. Compartment. My submission is that you should introduce a new class it may be called 3rd class, 1 class or X, Y, Z class or club class but it should be such that a common man could travel in that. A child always gets fascinated by a plane in the sky and aspires to travel in it once he grows up. He should also be provided a chance to fulfil his dreams. The fares should be lowered down a little to enable a common man to travel in it. You can find a way out to introduce a new economic class so that a person having a lower income could also travel in it. It is my submission that you should make arrangements to provide all the facilities of international level at Ahmedabad Airport so that the local people would get direct flights to foreign countries. Sir, with these words, I thank you for giving me time to speak.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, it is 6 O'clock. What shall we do?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY

OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): It is the second day of commencement of the House. So, I do not request the House to sit for more time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are 13 more speakers to participate.

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Sir, please extend the time of the House by one hour.

[Translation]

PROF. PREM DHUMAL (Hamirpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is 6 O'clock. That is why, it is our request to you to adjourn the House till tomorrow.

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH (Mirzapur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, please do not continue the proceedings of the House. Please adjourn the House for today. (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Sir, we will continue tomorrow.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why do we not allow some more Members and then adjourn.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, Sir, we will continue tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow, the 27th July, 1994, at 11.00 a.m.

18.00 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven
of the Clock on Wednesday, July 27,
1994/Sravana 5, 1916 (Saka)*