

have no control over the employees of the company. We have taken over the management; we have not nationalised that company. It is for the company to deal with the labourers or its employees.

Visit of Indian Airlines officials to Canada

*821. SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether some officials connected with the court of enquiry of the Indian Airlines A-320 Airbus crash in Bangalore visited Canadian Capital as late as on 15th April, 1990 in connection with the enquiry; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The Officers travelled on the instructions of the Court of Inquiry.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question of A-320 Aircraft has assumed importance as it is becoming 420. I don't know how things are shaping in. As you know, recently the hon. Minister made a Statement that a very important file is missing. The moment this crash took place, the Minister announced a Court of Inquiry. Later on some irregularities were alleged and the CBI came into picture. They had also gone into it and they filed an FIR but nowhere the missing file was mentioned. They have not even pointed it out. The Ramdas Committee has also given an Interim Report and even there also no clue about this missing of file has been given. I would like to know what does this mysterious file contain. Does it contain the terms of sale or what is it about?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, first of all I would like to clarify that I did not make a Statement. In fact, responded to the demand made by the hon. Member that all the papers connected with A-320 Aircraft should be laid on the Table of the House.

Again, I would like to repeat that I did not make a Statement. I merely responded to the demand and I expressed my helplessness to the fact that I am not in a position to lay all the papers on the Table of the House, because one very important and vital file is missing from the records of the Ministry. The FIR itself mentioned about this fact. Some hon. Members were flaunting the copies of the FIR. They had not gone through the contents of the FIR. Had they gone through the contents then possibly they themselves would have turned down their demand for placing all the papers on the Table of the House.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Does the Ramdas Committee also mention about it?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: I have already clarified on a number of occasions that Ramdas Committee was appointed to go into the question of preparedness of Indian Airlines. Last time I had quoted that Ramdas Committee in its Report has said that the rate of induction of this futuristic generation plane was too rapid for Indian Airlines to assimilate and prepare themselves for the safe operation of this aircraft. Even Ramdas Committee is of that view.

About the officers who visited Canada—The first team went there to get DFDR, Decoded at Ottawa—they visited at the instance of the Court of Inquiry. The Court of Inquiry had asked us to make certain investigations on the technical ground. We don't go into the merits of the question. We do as they ask us to do and the Report is submitted to the Court of Inquiry.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: How much more time will the Government take to know what was the actual reason for the crash of this aircraft?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, that exactly is the purpose for setting up the Court of Inquiry. This is not for the Government to tell. Government does not interfere with the functioning of the Court of Inquiry. The Court of Inquiry is headed by a High

Court judge and it is for the Court of Inquiry to investigate and go into the question in detail and come to the conclusion.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: It was already reported in the Press that the reason for this crash was a human error and not the technical error.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: The hon. Member is right. It is because all sorts of stories are appearing. In fact only the other day, when we were discussing in this House, the reported irregularities in the deal, most of the hon. Members, who participated in the discussion, instead of speaking on the reported irregularities, they were speaking about the quality and the airworthiness of the aircraft. I cannot help in this situation. But I have repeatedly said that it is not proper, it is rather improper on my part or anybody else's part to speculate about the cause of the accident. The cause of the accident is to be established by the Court of Inquiry and the Court of Inquiry is going into this question. We have given them time to submit their Report by 30th of May, but if their proceedings are not completed and if they need more time for investigation, then they can ask for more time

SHRI BHABANI SHANKAR HOTA: Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether any Interim Report or a Final Report by the Court of Inquiry or any other Committee set up by the Government on the crash has been received by the Government?

If it has been received, whether, it is a fact that the Committee has squarely blamed the pilot who was manning the aircraft which crashed and if so, then what is the reason thereof?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, we have not received any reported about the cause of the accident. I have already said that at this stage when the Court of Inquiry is holding its proceedings, it is not proper for me or for anybody else to go into the question of the cause of the accident—whether it was because of some technical deficiency or

because of design defect or because of human error and so on—because the cause is to be established by the Court of Inquiry.

Yes, the Inspector of Inquiry, has submitted his Report. That Report is not submitted to the Government because the the Court of Inquiry was constituted. So, the moment the Court of inquiry is constituted, the Inspector of Inquiry who starts investigation soon after the crash, it becomes the part of the Court of Inquiry. His Report has been submitted to the Court of Inquiry. Now, his Report will only be treated as part of the evidence which will be available to the Court of Inquiry.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is willing to place all other papers and files except the missing files. If so, will you allow them to be placed on the Table of the House? This is number one.

Secondly, it is a normal practice that if a file is missing, it can be re-constructed by the papers in related files through various Ministries. May I know whether any attempt has been made to re-construct that so-called missing file till you actually find out where it is missing? (*Interruptions*)

Some people who are privy to secret need not protest too much (*Interruptions*)

My another question is this.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Sir, you never allow more than one question now why are you allowing two questions?

MR. SPEAKER: It is only one question.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: You are new to the Parliament. There are different parts to a question like a,b,c,d, etc. my dear friend.

Arising from what he has said, I would like to know this: There have been accidents. Boeing aircraft of Air India also had an accident but was saved luckily. Accidents do occur; but we do not ground the entire fleet

of an airline, and that too endlessly. I would like to know: have you some technical information at least, to satisfy yourself whether these planes can be used; or, are you saying that till the final report of the cause of the accident is received, these planes will not be made serviceable, will not be put into service? What is the loss that the Airlines is suffering because of the grounding of these aircrafts?

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, again I would like to repeat—I am being made to repeat—what I have already stated earlier. I had said that some hon. Members had quoted from certain documents. They had referred to those documents, and there was a demand in the House. The hon. Members naturally wanted to know about the authenticity and genuineness of those documents. I had said, that if the hon. Speaker directs me—I had said, these papers are not with me; the matter has been entrusted to CBI for investigation: they have already registered and FIR—I can go back and I can lay those papers on the Table of the House.

When the demand was made that all the papers should be laid on the Table of the House, again I expressed my helplessness that I would not be able to lay all the papers on the Table of the House. Again I left it to your discretion. I have already said it, Sir. I am ready; I am at your disposal. I am leaving it to your discretion. I am ready to lay any papers on the Table of the House, which are relevant. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: No, Mr. Biplab Babu. What is this? Let him clarify it; the Minister should not be disturbed like this.

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. KALKADAS It had already been decided that you will look into the papers.

[*English*]

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Now,

the other question relates to the grounding of the fleet. The day after the accident, I had made it clear in Bangalore itself that because of one accident, the fleets are not grounded. When this demand was made, I had refused to take this decision to ground the fleet. But subsequently, continuously for three days four major snags developed, where we were forced to bring back the plane—some snag was reported; the plane was brought back after taking off, 15 or 20 minutes after taking off; in one case it could not take off. In cases where it was brought back, the snag was rectified, but the people who were travelling on that plane refused to board the plane. We have said it several times that because of these four major snags which developed continuously for three days after the accident, very serious apprehensions and doubts came to the minds of the travelling public. It is very important for the safe operation of the plane that the travelling public, even if the plane is of a very high or very superior quality, should not have any doubt or apprehension in their minds about the safety aspect of the aircraft. So, we were compelled to take the decision because of these serious apprehensions which had taken grip.

The travelling public was greatly affected. Now these doubts and apprehensions had to be removed. For that, we appointed a Ramdas Committee. This Committee was to go into the limited question of the preparedness of the Indian Airlines. This point is being emphasised again and again that the plane is of a very high quality. I have never questioned the airworthiness of a plane. For instance, in Japan planes are being manufactured which can run at a speed of 230 Kms per hour. Now if we import this plane and try to run it on this track from Delhi to Kanpur, for instance, or any other track, which is not suited for a plane of that speed, what will happen? It may be of a very high technical quality. But if the track on which it has to run, does not match with that super technology, then it is bound to crash. While considering the question of safe operation of any kind of aircraft, it is not merely the question of airworthiness which is important; it is not merely the question of technical

soundness which is important; the other questions like navigational facilities, instrumental landing facilities, training of the staff facilities, maintenance staff facilities, engineering staff facilities, so many related questions are equally important, if the aircrafts are to be operated safely. I have said earlier that it has been mentioned about it in the Interim Report of the Ramdas Committee which has been submitted to the Government. There cannot be a more harsh stricture than saying that the rate of induction of the aircraft was too rapid for the Indian Airlines to assimilate and prepare themselves for safe operation of this aircraft. All these questions have to be addressed to. Doubts have to be removed. The Government has taken a decision that till the report of the court of enquiry comes, the Indian Airlines will not operate this aircraft. It has to establish the cause of the accident; whether it was because of human error or whether it was because of some major design defect; whatever it is. I am not going to speculate about that.

About the losses which are suffered by the Indian Airlines—the hon. member Shri Vasant Sathe has asked about them—about Rs. 2 1/2 crores are being lost per week. This loss is accruing to the Indian Airlines because of the grounding of this fleet.

MR. SPEAKER: I think we should not discuss it any more because I have already admitted a motion on it under Rule 198. The BAC will decide about the time for its discussion tomorrow. Next question.

Haldia Petrochemical Project

*822. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Haldia Petrochemical Project has been finally cleared in all respects; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI M.S. GURUPADASWAMY): (a) and (b). Earlier, a letter of intent for setting up a petrochemical complex at Haldia with a capacity of 100,000 tonnes/year ethylene was issued in November, 1977.

Recently, in February, 1990, the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation Ltd. has applied for a fresh letter of intent for petrochemical complex with a capacity of 300,000 tonnes/year ethylene at Haldia conforming to the minimum economic sizes prescribed for such projects. The application is under process.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: I think the Government of India is aware that the West Bengal Government's concept of the project is both naphtha cracker and eight down stream projects together. It is not separate. Does the Government of India agree with the concept of the project of the West Bengal Government as projected by them? In this connection, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government of India that the desire of the West Bengal Government is to see that the Integrated Petrochemical Complex Project should be made a part of the Annual Plan of 1990-91. And may I know from the Government, at this stage, what are the remaining stages yet to be completed before the fulfilment of that specific objective as placed by the Government of West Bengal? Would the hon. Minister kindly enumerate those stages?

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: If it is a long list he can give it later.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Yes, it is a long list he can give it later.

SHRI M.S. GURUPADASWAMY: Sir, the first part of the question is about the products which are going to be taken up in Haldia. I have got a long list but the total number of items of manufacture involved in the Haldia project is eleven. If the hon. Member wants I can give the entire list to him.