

question of reviewing the whole thing is under consideration.

**Vayudoot Service to Kanchipuram,  
Tamil Nadu**

\*207. SHRI KANCI PANNEER SELVAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the places linked by Vayudoot services in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether Government propose to link Kanchipuram, the seat of Sankaracharya, with other airports in the State to patronise culture;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) Coimbatore, Madras, Tiruchirapalli and Neyveli are linked by Vayudoot in Tamil Nadu.

(b) to (d). Considering the proximity of Kanchipuram to Madras, there is no proposal under consideration at present to airlink Kanchipuram.

[*Translation*]

\*SHRI KANCI PANNEER SELVAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the purpose of starting vayudoot service was to airlink those trade and tourist important places which are not already air-lines by Indian Airlines. But, in 14 places where Vayudoot was first started, Indian Airlined were already in operation. In the next batch of 23 places where Vayudoot services were established, 18 places had already Indian Airlines link.

Sir, the hon. Minister has now stated that in Tamil Nadu Vayudoot services are in Madras, Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore and Neyveli. Madras, Tiruchirappalli and Coim-

batoore are already having Indian Airlines services. Therefore, exclusive Vayudoot service is available only in Neyveli. Sir, Kanchipuram is a place of trade, tourist and cultural importance. It is the seat of Kanchi Sankaracharya. I would like to know from the Minister the constraints that are in operation in putting Kanchipuram on the Vayudoot map.

[*English*]

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, I have already mentioned about the proximity of Kanchipuram to Madras... (*Interruptions*) The distance is only 76 kilometres, whereas according to the guidelines to the Vayudoot, the minimum distance between two airports—and this is when any proposal for the construction of a new airport is taken into consideration, then that distance should be not less than 180 kilometres, whereas the present distance between Kanchipuram and Madras is only 76 kilometres. But for the distance, I agree with the hon. Member that Kanchipuram is a place of national importance and, Sir, presently there is constraint on resources and non-availability of aircraft, that is why when I was reading out the reply I repeated "At present"—I have not ruled it out because I agree with the hon. Member that Kanchipuram is an important place and as soon as resources are available and aircraft is available, we will definitely consider the demand which has been made by the hon. Member.

Sir, regarding the other part of the question of the hon. Member, Vayudoot has identified the following places in Tamil Nadu for airlinking during the Eighth Plan period:—

Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Erode, Ramanathapuram, Chettinad, Vellore and Salem.

Sir, two airports are presently under construction at Salem which will be completed by the end of 1991 and Tuticorin which will be ready by December 1990 and they will be fit for the Dornier operation.

**SHRI KANCI PANNEER SELVAM:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, today also they have started a new Vayudoot service from Bombay to New Delhi. When there are several places not connected by air services, why this Government is keen on concentrating flights in one particular route? This will result in imbalance in development. Why this Government which is devoted to deploying 50 per cent of resources to rural areas is unconcerned about this?

Sir, the Minister has stated that in view of the proximity of Kanchipuram to Madras, presently there is no proposal to airlink Kanchipuram. Sir, there is heavy traffic congestion at Madras airport. At least to lighten this burden on Madras airport, will the Minister give an assurance that he will consider establishing Vayudoot service either at Kanchipuram or at Mahabalipuram which is a famous tourist centre?

**SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN:** Sir, I think I have already stated that I agree with the hon. Member that Kanchipuram is a place of national importance and as soon as we are able to find resources and availability of the aircraft is there, this proposal will be taken into consideration.

**DR. THAMBI DURAI:** The first part of the question is not answered. That is, why the Ministry is giving importance to operate Vayudoot between Bombay and New Delhi when there is a lot of demand for its operation to be taken in other small areas or rural areas of importance?

**SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN:** As the hon. Member is aware, the Airbus fleet has been grounded. Today for carrying passengers between these points which are heavy traffic routes... (*Interruptions*). Yes, AN-320 we have grounded, they have 40 Airbuses, not two or three.

So, Sir, these are heavy traffic routes. We are seeking the assistance of Air India, we have also asked Vayudoot, wherever they can operate. And, Sir, the airlinks provided in Tamil Nadu work out to 5.26 per cent

of the total area operations in the country—a figure which is not on the lower side.

**SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, in a vast country like India the small aircraft should be made more popular and I think it would also be economical to employ as many small aircraft like Vayudoot as possible. In public Sectors and in some private companies, it has become a hobby to have a small aircraft which costs a lot. The wives, children and friends of those big multi-nationals demand that the company must have a private plane for which the cost is enormous. I would, therefore, request the hon. Minister to have a dialogue with the Company Law Affairs Department and the Public Sector or the Private Sector to try to obtain resources from them to advance the purchasing of the small aircrafts for these Public Sectors and Private Sectors and replace them by fleets like Vayudoot. This will enable us to see, within two or three years in the air map of India, that at least 50 new centres are located.

**SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN:** Sir, the suggestion given by the hon. Member is very important. I am happy that the hon. Member appreciates the importance of running the feeder service. I had earlier stated that we have not been able to expand the capacity according to our requirement because of the constraint on resources. So, we will take into consideration the suggestion given by him. We need such support of the hon. Members of this House for attaining a position where we can expand the capacity.

[*Translation*]

**SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that Ranakapur and Dilwara temples in Rajasthan are famous throughout the world for their artistic and cultural value and known for its links with the jain philosophy. Thus these are places of historical importance. Every day thousands of people from all over the world visit Rankapur temple and Dilwara temple which are located in Pali district. The tourists experience a lot of difficulties for want of air service

to these places. I, therefore, would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will extend the Vayudoot service up to Falna which is located in between Ranakapur and Dilwara?

**SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN:** Sir, I will consider the request of the hon. Member for providing air link for the places in Rajasthan keeping in view their historical importance. We will also consider the suggestions made by him. But the present question is related to Tamil Nadu. As such, I am not in a position to give any information about it.

[English]

**Compensation to Victims of Island Express Accident in Qullon**

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\*208. **SHRI A. CHARLES:**  
**SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:**

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons killed in the accident of the Island Express in the Ashtamudi Lake in 1988;

(b) the number of claims made and the number of cases in which compensation has been awarded; and

(c) the details of the claims rejected/pending for decision and the reasons therefor?

**THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES):** (a) In this accident, 105 persons lost their lives.

(b) 311 claims were preferred and compensation has been awarded in 274 cases.

(c) No claims are pending. Of 37 dismissed cases, 17 were due to claimants not being dependants as per the provisions of Indian Railways Act, 1890 and balance 20

due to insufficient evidence and non-maintainability under the provisions of law.

**SHRI A. CHARLES:** Sir, I am not going to narrate the hardships being faced by the bereaved families. In the answer, under item (c), it is stated that out of 37 dismissed cases, 17 were due to claimants not being dependants as per the provisions of Indian Railways Act, 1890. I was physically present at the site when the Railway Minister came there and declared that an amount of Rs. One lakh will be given in each case to the dependants. Later on, these cases were rejected as per the provisions of Indian Railways Act, 1890. In the Railway Consultative Committee, I pointed out this and I wrote to the Minister also in this regard. There was a categorical statement that whatever be the provisions of the Act, these claims would be honoured. In the last Consultative Committee meeting, we were informed that the provisions of the Act were amended so as to enable these claims to be honoured. Then, I immediately asked whether the amendment will have a retrospective effect. The Minister stated that whatever be the position, whether it is retrospective or not, either as compensation or in any other name the amount will be given. In the last Session of Parliament, I raised this matter under rule 377 but it is unfair, I did not get any reply.

May I know from the hon. Minister whether he will use his good consciousness and see that compensation is given to all the 17 cases—after all Rs. 17 lakhs only would be involved—irrespective of the fact that whether they are deemed as dependants under the law or not.

**SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES:** Sir, in regard to 17 claimants who are not deemed as dependants under the provisions of law, there have been settlements in respect of most of these cases, with the concerned persons accepting ex-gratia payments that the Railways have paid. The only difference is, whereas the ex-gratia payment is not Rs. one lakh that was available under the Act... (Interruptions)