

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Let us take it up from the beginning the day after tomorrow.

**Shri Bharucha** to raise the half-an-hour discussion.

#### \*SANTA CRUZ AIRPORT

17 hrs.

**Shri Naushir Bharucha** (East Khandedh): Sir, with your permission, I desire to raise a half-an-hour discussion on the developmet and modernisation of the Santa Cruz airport, Bombay. On the 19th March, 1958, I asked a question in this House whether the Government are aware that there are several planning defects in the construction of the new Santa Cruz airport, whether any experts were consulted and the reply was that Government's attention has been drawn to certain criticisms in the press and whatever available advice was in the country, was taken by the Government.

17-01 hrs.

[**SHRI C. R. PATTABHIRAMAN** in the Chair]

The position is hardly satisfactory because Santa Cruz airport is intended to be an international airport. There are many defects in it which require to be brought to the notice of the Government. In the first place, we are told that the runway is not long enough and in the near future, when newer, faster and heavier aircraft would be landing at Bombay, probably there will not be sufficient landing and take-off facilities. In the construction of a modern airport which has been modernised at a great cost, this appears to be a big defect. This was not modernised only for the existing aircraft. When I asked the question whether it is a fact that no proper facilities for take-offs and landings exist, the answer was, proper facilities for take-offs and landings are available to cater to the needs of existing air traffic. I think, in the near future, particularly by 1960, there will be landing at Bombay airport bigger, heavier and faster aircraft and

provision is required to be made for that purpose.

Another thing we are told and I speak from the complaints made in the newspaper *Times of India* of March 7, 1958. It is said that the runway begins close to the terminal building, that there is a common taxi track from the main instrumental runway for incoming and outgoing planes, with no provisions for holding points anywhere in the airport for outgoing planes and that there is a subsidiary runway, but this has not been certified for heavier traffic. Apart from these major defects, there are other equally important defects, namely, that at the old hangar, maintenance facilities were available near at hand, but now we find that maintenance facilities are nearly a mile away, making it extremely difficult for quick and speedy on-the-spot repairs of aircraft.

From the passengers' point of view, we have been told that the apron at which embarkation and disembarkation takes place is farther away and during the monsoon, there is no protection whatsoever. The lounges are too small. No thought appears to have been given to the fact that in a busy airport like Santa Cruz, several airliners converge and they may turn out passengers in larger numbers. There are only seven retiring rooms for an airport which is supposed to be an international airport. Today I presume there are about 60 passengers in one air-liner. Occasions may come when we may have on hand as many as 200, with a good many clamouring for accommodation in retiring rooms. We are told that there is no possibility of extension of retiring rooms in the future. Even the air-conditioned restaurant is without the air-conditioning plant.

What is more, the airline operators have not got even sufficient accommodation. They are usually given certain booths. There are only eight booths for all the airline operators in the world. Out of these, four are given to Air India International, two to

[Shri Naushir Bharucha]

B.O.A.C., one to the T.W.A. and one for Pakistan airline. What is going to happen to the future airlines which may decide to pass through Bombay, one does not know. It is said that even the designers, planners and modernisers of the airport forgot that there has to be something like a Customs enclosure for an international airport. Something was hastily added to the existing building as an after-thought. There is no scope for expanding that.

Now, the questions that arise and which I would like the hon. Minister to reply to are: First, who was responsible for such glaring defects in Planning? Secondly, if experts were consulted, what was the amount of consultation fees paid to them for giving such valuable advice for constructing and modernising such a defective airport? Thirdly, how much has been spent for modernising this Santa Cruz airport? Fourthly, what does the Government propose to do to remedy these defects. I think, perhaps, an enquiry into the whole affair is necessary. It is characteristic of democracy that it is very difficult to pin-point responsibility of individuals. While lakhs and lakhs may have been spent on so-called modernisation, what has been produced is an airport without any convenience of a modern airport. I therefore hope that the Government will reply to all the points that I have raised and tell the House as to what is proposed to be done for removing these defects.

**Shri Joachim Alva (Kanara) rose—**

**Mr. Chairman:** In these matters, I take it that Members are all anxious to hear the hon. Minister also. It is usual for other signatories to ask questions. If he wants to speak, he may do so briefly.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** In the first and foremost place, I want to know what sort of collaboration took place between the Indian Air Force and the Civil Aviation department. We are now trying to plan everything regarding aviation on the basis of perfect co-ordination between the I.A.F. and the

Civil Aviation department. If there is no co-ordination between these two Ministries, our Air Force may not be able to avail itself of these airports in times of emergency. So, I want to know whether the I.A.F. was ever consulted in regard to the structure of the Santa Cruz airport or whether any collaboration was sought from the I.A.F. for executing the work of that airport, were any other facilities asked for or not?

Secondly, I want to know what sort of control was exercised by the Civil Aviation department in the execution of this work. If this airport work was executed by the P.W.D. and if the work was imperfectly done, the Civil Aviation Department or the Communications Ministry owed a duty to the Parliament and to the country in regard to the irregularities and imperfect construction work. I want the Minister to frankly answer as to whose fault it was: whether it was due to any kind of negligence on the part of his own Ministry or whether we can lay the blame on the head of the P.W.D. which generally makes several mistakes in structures, etc.

Thirdly, did the top officials of the Civil Aviation Department, whether even the Minister go and examine this structure before it was finally passed, because, after all is said and done, Bombay is an international airport and everybody owes a solemn duty towards the serious undertakings of the Government of India? We cannot play ducks and drakes with any major airport in the country. We remember what a heavy toll we paid in July, 1948 when the K.L.M. disaster took place in Bombay, when a precious load of 40 men, about thirty to forty men and women, some very outstanding journalists accidentally went from Delhi to Bombay instead of flying straight from Delhi and the aircraft crashed on the Santa Cruz port hill. As a result of that disaster, lighting arrangements and other requisite equipment had to be fitted in, with red danger signals hoisted on that hill now. There,

nature's stern warning was given to us so that we may put our things right. Even after this warning, we seem to have bungled in the construction of the airport. We do not avail ourselves of even stern warnings of nature, let alone the mildest press criticism pointing out some of the defects in an international airport like Bombay. We should take a warning from these disasters so that we may put our aviation whether civil or military in perfect order.

I want to know whether the gentlemen or people who were in charge of the construction of the airport, or even one of them by any chance saw or visited an international airport nearby, namely, Damascus or Beirut which are noted to be great international airports, which are only lesser just more than 12 hours distance from us. Our people could have seen how they are built up and what are the modern amenities there. All the great international airliners with jets and other planes fly over them and they are reported to be in perfect condition as regards safety and security. I will not say about London or New York or the airport at Orly in Paris. They are very big airports. Half a dozen people from our building side, and from the Civil Aviation side could have gone there and inspected them all. We spend crores of rupees in making purchases of aeroplanes. We are making wrong calculations in the purchase of our planes. In this morning's papers, there is the story of how a few million rupees have been wrongly spent in air purchases. And it would have been very little indeed if we had spent a few thousands of rupees, say, Rs. 30,000 or even Rs. 40,000 on the visit of half a dozen men who could have gone and visited Damascus, Beirut, Paris, New York and London airports and given us the best kind of advice in regard to the building of this airport.

There is another point which is very important. The warning about the imperfections in the Bombay airport is a clear warning that we have to

put our house regarding Delhi and Calcutta airports in order. We have to build a perfect, fool-proof airport at Delhi. Otherwise, it will be a shame for India which is already one of the most important capitals of the world and it should not be said that it is lacking in a real international airport.

In the answer given to the Question on the 19th March, 1958, the answer to part (c) of the question is imperfect. It reads:

"Proper facilities for take-offs and landings are available to cater to the needs of existing air traffic."

What is the idea of saying 'existing traffic'? If we do not plan with the idea of putting things ahead five or ten or fifteen years hence, then what will happen? And again, where is all the money to come from? From whose pocket is it to come? By 1960, the Boeing jets will arrive . . .

**Mr. Chairman:** Are we not concerning ourselves with only the Santa Cruz airport?

**Shri Joachim Alva:** I am just going to ask one or two questions.

By 1960, the Boeing jets will arrive. And how is the airport built at Bombay going to cope with them? My hon. friend Shri Naushir Bharucha pointed out a number of mistakes. So, how are these Boeings going to land at Bombay? What sort of runways are going to be built? And what sort of amenities are going to be provided? Unless we put the whole system in perfect fool-proof, we shall be up against innumerable difficulties, and our air traffic may be jammed, and all the benefits which we secure from air traffic may not come to us, and hence there may be a veritable loss in our earnings.

I shall make just one more point and then I shall sit down. It is time that we know in what way the Communications Ministry is drawing up plans for the future. Hon. Member Shri Naushir Bharucha has pointed

[Shri Joachim Alva]

out that there are so many defects, in regard to customs enclosures, booking offices for the airlines, etc. We should have been able not only to provide for the present needs but we should have provided for extra or additional space for any airlines that may come up in the next five or ten or fifteen years. Whatever we build should be good for a century. That was the basis on which the port rulers built. We have got the grand Victoria Terminus, in Bombay the like of which has perhaps not been built for the last three hundred years. The annexe building now built next to it is of ordinary mortar and brick. It does give the impression of stability, nay, durability even for the next fifty years. Then, if you go next door, you have got the Bombay Municipal annexe, recently built and that annexe is built of solid brick and mortar; and perhaps a lot of money may have been spent on it. But they are things which give you security of a lasting nature to last for one, two or three centuries.

These are the type of structures, we must build up and keep a stern, alert, nay, merciless eye on faulty, rickety structures. And Government owe a duty to the public of India that whatever they build—let them come and ask for any amount of money, and it will be sanctioned, but—should last for a century at least.

**The Minister of Transport and Communications (Shri S. K. Patil):** I am very grateful indeed to my hon. friends from East Khandesh and North Kanara for raising the discussion on this very important issue . . .

**Shri Naushir Bharucha:** The hon. Minister is from Bombay. Let him not forget it.

**Shri S. K. Patil:** . . . because this gives me an opportunity of removing some misimpressions and also admitting at the same time some of the mistakes that have been committed. There is no harm in admitting those mistakes, because that is the way that in future mistakes could be avoided.

My hon. friend Shri Naushir Bharucha—I shall drop the words 'East Khandesh'—referred to the several defects, which are defects, and I shall explain how they could be remedied or what is to be done. But if his conception of an airport in the modern times is an ideal airport, I wonder which airport in the world today is an ideal airport. I am not merely saying so. The House should have an impression or an idea of what a modern airport is going to be.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** That is very poor consolation to us.

**Shri S. K. Patil:** My hon. friend will have a lot of consolation when I go on. He should have patience for some time. He has referred to some airports. Many of us have seen those airports. And when we compare them with our airport, we have to admit how our airport at Santa Cruz and for that matter the other airports that will now be developed compare well with some of the best world's airports that are there.

I have not got much time, but within the time that I have got at my disposal, I must give them an idea as to how the Santa Cruz airport has been built, and whether any serious mistakes have been committed, and how in future this airport can be developed so that it can serve the purpose of what is known as the jet age.

The very conception of airport everywhere in the world has undergone a revolution during the last five or ten years with the coming of some of these modern aircraft. 15 years ago, Boeing was not conceived, Comet was not conceived and even airports like La Guardia, to which my hon. friend made a reference, and Idlefield were not built up for the jet age, because nobody thought that the jet age was coming and what type of runway or machinery or other scientific equipment had to be provided. Therefore, we find that in America in spite of the fact that La Guardia

was by far the perfect airport then, yet they had to go in for the Idlefield because the jet age could not really depend upon the La Guardia airport as it was. Even if he talks of London, Heathrow, and Paris, even Tynne or Damascus or Cairo or Khartoum—which has got an airport better than most others—these airports also were not conceived in the language of the jet aeroplane. The result was that such a revolutionary change has come upon the very conception of an airport, that whatever you do, your airport is not going to be an ideal one. You cannot have an airport where the runway may perhaps go for several miles. We are almost coming to 2½ miles. It is the longest that we can go. We cannot have an airport where perhaps half the distance between, say Bombay and Delhi, would be covered by the airport because faster aircrafts are coming.

Therefore, even the aircraft industry is undergoing a revolution to see that there must not be an aircraft which ultimately requires such a long length of runway that it would be impossible to have in a big city.

Having said this, I shall tell you about the Santa Cruz airport. I have admitted in the beginning that the conception of the jet age and its requirements were not there when the idea of this Santa Cruz airport was conceived. After all, in a city like Bombay or Calcutta or Delhi, you cannot have such large space as to have 3 or 4 miles for an airport—sometimes it comes to about 4 or 5 square miles of land. It is impossible to get it. There are airports in the world where you have got to go sometimes 55 miles. In Buffalo City, it is 31 miles; in West Germany, it is 50 miles distance to catch an aeroplane, because they have not that space in big cities. I am merely saying this to show that limiting factors are there and they have got to be recognised. It is no use our simply desiring. Desire may be anything, but surely desire must have some relation to the feasibility of an airport in the vicinity of a big capital city like Bombay or Delhi or Calcutta.

Now, we are trying to modernise the Santa Cruz airport in Bombay, which we have built. May I assure my hon. friends and through them, all hon. Members of this House, that the Santa Cruz airport has the strongest and the longest runway of any airport in India, either military or civil? Of course, that does not mean much, as I am only speaking of India. The runway which was originally 8,200 feet, which was good enough for these Vikings, Viscounts, Constellations and Super-Constellations, is not good enough for the new planes. Therefore, just now we have extended it to 10,500 ft. nearly two miles—and we, at an expense of about Rs. 4 crores extending the runway to something like 12,000 ft. It is almost impossible to go beyond that because either you touch some mountain or some other thing or some other city comes or a railway line intervenes. I am pointing out the limitations under which we are functioning. When you come to 12,000 ft., it is something longer than which the world has not got today. Therefore, that will be the ideal for the time being and if any plane requires a runway longer than 12,000 ft., it would be something which would be really impossible to manipulate in the modern world, especially in the cities.

As regards this extension we are undertaking of the runway in Santa Cruz, a small rivulet will have to be crossed, many bridges will have to be constructed and many other things have got to be done. But ultimately, as I said, it will be the longest and the strongest. What is required for the jet plane is not merely length, but even the strength of the runway, because they are faster moving and they are heavier machines. All that is being done so that when the Boeing will come in 1960, we shall be ready for its reception. There will be no difficulty whatsoever because no Government can take the risk of facing a position whereby after having paid Rs. 3 crores for a single plane, their airport should not be ready for its reception. That kind of mistake is not going to happen. Along with these

[Shri S. K. Patil]

runways, there are many other things to which reference has not been made but which I would tell them in order to give them a complete and comprehensive idea as to what a modern airport is and how it is going to be equipped. We have half equipped it in the manner which I am suggesting today.

This airport is equipped with the most modern system of 3-element High Intensity runway and approach lighting system to be found anywhere in the East. Possibly some of the airports such as Amsterdam or Washington or New York may be slightly better, but east of Suez you have not got an airport with all these system of modernisation. Good as it is, it is to be further improved at a cost of Rs. 18 lakhs.

This airport is being equipped with the latest Radar Ground Controlled Approach System at a cost of Rs. 51 lakhs. That is very vital and very essential in any bad climate and is a normal precaution in big airports. An order for it has been placed several years ago and but for the delay in the delivery of the equipment it would have been in commission long before the Boeing arrives. It is also equipped with the latest type of Instrument Landing System. The plane must also have an instrument landing system and then both co-operate and then it happens. I do not think the Viscounts have it but I am not talking about Viscounts. But when these big planes equipped with these come, they are equipped with this instrument landing system and therefore we are having this airport as well as Dum Dum and soon Delhi also, equipped with the instrument landing system so that any aircraft would be able to cope with any climate. The Direction Finding Equipment of the latest type consists of visual automatic VHF Marconi AD-200 Direction Finder. Within a matter of weeks the very latest type of track guidance system working in the VHF band known as VOR (Very High Frequency)—what is known generally in

a layman's language as Omni directional range—is expected to be in commission. Santa Cruz will be the first airport in India to be so equipped. In addition, it is equipped with a High Power Radio Beacon, besides sundry other facilities such as Radio Markers, Locator Beacons and so on. So that—every type of modern equipment that is necessary for an airport will be installed here when it is completed. In that respect no under-planning or bad planning has been done. Further expansion is under way to provide additional aeronautical telecommunication facilities and communication channels. It is also becoming important. These are the new things coming into the world. It is not that everybody knew it ten years back and it could have been foreseen. With every year that goes, the modern technology is improving in a colossal manner and surely by the time we have finished it in one or two years' time something else may come and we may have again to go in for them and the hon. Members who have spoken will not find fault because technology is making progress in this world.

Now, they have referred to some of those other aspects such as the bad location of the workshop for repairs, etc. I could tell them one thing. They say: "Look here. Is it not possible? Do not they do in Cairo or Bairut or Damascus?" I can tell them something about Beirut. That airport has been built at a cost of about Rs. 12 crores. Now we are talking of Rs. 66 lakhs spent on this building and another Rs. 18 lakhs and another Rs. 51 lakhs altogether making about a crore and a quarter. I am not going to suggest that we are going to do any miracle in a crore and a quarter. I am only giving some idea. Beirut airport carries a passenger load of not more than 50 per cent of the Santa Cruz airport. For that capacity, it has taken them about ten times more than Santa Cruz. Therefore, you can imagine what tremendous amount of money one has got to spend in order to modernise an airport in the world

of today. Any modern airport means an expenditure of at least from Rs. 10 to Rs. 100 crores. It is quite easy to say: "Come to this House and ask for money, I am going to give you." I am going to come and ask that money. I am quite sure that my hon. friends who have spoken and the other friends who are listening will be glad enough to say that in order to keep ourselves abreast of the technological progress that is being made in this world, money has got to be given and money will be given. I can talk about Idlefield Airport to which reference has been made. Idlefield came into being because La Guardia was not sufficient to keep with the jet age. That is possible there because they have got enough land. For that they have got a land measuring 10 to 12 square miles. That is a place of plenty of land. America has land *per capita* five times more than what we have got. Therefore, what is possible there is not possible here because we have not got the abundance of land.

**Shri Joachim Alva:** Had the Civil Aviation authorities the foresight.

**Shri S. K. Patil:** Surely they had the foresight, the monopoly of which is not only given to the hon. Member; it is a commodity which others also can share sometimes with the hon. Member. Even that airport, Idlefield, to which he made a reference, it is being built unit by unit, one single unit of modernisation has cost 30 million dollars or Rs. 15 crores and they have got seven units like that. That means the mere modernisation of the best airport in the world, Idlefield in New York, is going to cost somewhere about Rs. 105 crores in Indian money. I am merely saying this so that the House should have a complete idea as to what this modernisation means. We have got to do it. Even if we have not got Rs. 105 crores at our disposal, surely with the money that is at our disposal we must try to do the best. That is exactly what is happening.

When the Khartoum Airport was built, I am told that the United King-

dom Government gave Rs. 7 crores because it was impossible for the Sudanese Government to build an international airport of that description. This is going to happen, and we shall have to spend more money; but we have got to use discretion.

Sometimes it is said: "Why not do it?" My friend said that we should consult the defence department and others. They were surely consulted; within the range of this administration whatever mutual consultation is possible between department and department is being done. But I should like to tell you that this country cannot afford any luxury at this moment. What will happen after 20 or 50 years I am not going to say. Just at this time when every rupee of yours is so very important—and remember, in this business more than half of it is the foreign exchange component; it is not that the internal money that you are going to spend—one civil airport and another military airport is out of question. We can't spend Rs. 20 crores here and Rs. 20 crores there. If that is the conception of the hon. Members, the sooner they get their minds disabused of it the better. In a country like this, howsoever good the proposal may be, it is impossible to have it.

That does not mean that I am impairing defence or any other thing. What I am claiming is that we must make the best of the opportunities that we have got just now and share it between civil and defence so that ultimately we shall produce something. When we have plenty of money and something has got to be done, either the defence will have a separate airport or we shall have a separate airport. That applies to this capital city of Delhi. That airport is not a civil airport. That does not belong to us; that belongs to the Defence. But supposing either the Defence have a separate airport or we have a separate airport, that means another Rs. 10 crores on modernisation. Then it is not a question of having modernisation in one, it will be in two. We will have to duplicate the machinery, foreign exchange component, etc. All these things will have

[Shri S. K. Patil]

to put off for some time so that we do not spend the money recklessly especially when we have not got it.

Having said that, Sir, I come to certain things that have been said here. It was said that the repairing workshop is at a distance. I am now coming to the defects in the working of it. No doubt, the original plan was not correct, they saw only ten years ahead and they should have seen some 25 years ahead.

Mr. Chairman: May I just interrupt the hon. Minister? I find that I am hidebound. This is a half-an-hour discussion.

Shri S. K. Patil: I will just finish in five minutes. What I am saying is, with regard to these arrangements that we have made a longer view could have been taken and it was not taken. Some more places could have been built in the same building costing Rs. 66 lakhs. Those are the defects. We are going into them. I do not say they are not defects or that they should be excused about it. These are serious defects, some of them, and they will be made good.

The other difficulty pointed out was that the workshop is at a distance and therefore it would cause inconvenience, and that it is not so in many of the airports. It is not the ideal situation that we have got. If for everything there must be a room that will mean a longer airport. If the workshop is at a little distance from the place where the passengers really come and congregate, then surely it

is not bad, because there is less of noise and so on and so forth.

As you put a time-limit, I have not got a longer time to explain all things. But I can assure the House that in spite of the difficulties, my hon. friend would be convinced. But everybody else has got to be convinced. Therefore, whatever the defects might be, I can promise that at the end of all these, Santa Cruz airport will not only be the best airport in India but it will be the best airport east of Suez, anywhere in the East. It is so today to an extent.

Shrimati Benu Chakravartty  
(Basirhat): Calcutta?

Shri S. K. Patil: Yes, Calcutta. Calcutta airport is really more crowded than even Bombay airport. Improvement has got to be done. Therefore, it is not two, but three—Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi. They will be equipped and equipped in time so that whenever Boeing or Jet planes have got to be received they will be prepared to receive them with open arms and there should be no difficulty whatsoever to be afraid of that all these things have not been foreseen and provided for.

Mr. Chairman: The House stands adjourned till 11 o'clock on Monday.

17-31 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 28th April, 1958.