

in the production of locomotives to a total of hundred locomotives per annum. These 1014 posts that have been elaborated upon in the reply, form a part of these. And the process is underway of filling these 1045 posts. Sir, there is no ban on filling of vacancies due to retirement, death, resignation, etc.

**Maintenance facilities in India
Airlines and Air India**

*353. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN† :
SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE
PATIL :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether Indian Airlines and Air India have adequate facilities for proper maintenance of their aircrafts; and

(b) if not, the problems faced by these airlines with regard to aircraft maintenance ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL) :

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Apparently most of the mishaps and technical snags in the Indian Airlines and Air India are caused due to over-utilisation of the aircraft. Frequently used 737 boeing has the maximum flying hours, 2800 to 2900 flying hours, a year. All our aircraft are exceeding the limits. Even the Chairman of the Indian Airlines, Mr. Rahul Bajaj has admitted that there is an excessive over-utilisation of our fleets which is to be rectified.

That being so, may I know from the hon. Minister what positive steps have been taken by the Ministry to prevent over-utilisation of the aircraft and also I would like to know what steps have been taken by the Ministry to have daily maintenance for the fleets ?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, it is a fact that we have only a few aircraft with us and we are using them to the maximum extent possible. But it is not a fact that

accidents have occurred because of the technical defects. For the information of the hon. Members of this House, I would like to say that Technical Despatch Reliability of Indian Airlines is 98.51 per cent. That means if 100 flights take place, 98.51 flights have gone without any defects, without any difficulty because of the technical defects. The defects have been to the extent of only 1.48 per cent. So, this goes to show that the maintenance done in the Indian Airlines is up to the expectation, more than up to the mark which is accepted internationally.

Now, we are trying to acquire aircrafts, trying to purchase the aircrafts. We have already contracted to get some aircraft and other aircraft we are trying to purchase. We are trying to get aircraft on lease also and if we induct these aircraft it would be possible for us to provide some cushion and to see that the strain which is there on the machine and men working there is reduced.

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : But what is the cause of the accident ? We should admit that Indian Airlines is having recurring accidents in the recent past. I would like to know from the Hon Minister what was the outcome of the enquiries instituted to look into the latest three accidents involving Boeing 737 ?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, they did not occur because of the maintenance difficulties.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : Sir, the Hon. Minister has said that we compare very favourably with the rest of the world so far as the maintenance is concerned. But our experience is otherwise. I think everyone will agree that on a number of occasions we have to live the plane or could not take the journey because the plane was grounded because of the technical difficulty. In fact, I was to come from Calcutta yesterday, we boarded the plane and then we were told that the plane was grounded. Therefore, I would like to know what is the demand at the present moment and what is the gap between the demand and the number of planes we require. I would like to know what is the perspective plan of the Indian Airlines to meet this demand because the projected growth rate of passengers is more than 10 per cent at the present moment.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, we have a plan and the plan can be explained to the hon. members, but it will take some time. At present we are trying to acquire 12 aircraft and again we will acquire more aircraft and the total number will come upto 30. With these, we would be able to meet some of our demands. For the interim period, we are trying to take the aircraft on lease to meet our requirements. Of course, the demand of the passengers is going up. We shall have to find funds and also resources to meet this demand. It is expected of these Airlines to earn the money by themselves and they have to stand on their own. We are not helping them with budgetary support. We are asking them to earn and provide for more aircraft.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Is the Minister aware of the fact that on a number of occasions it is announced that due to mechanical defects, the aircraft will be delayed for some time? It is also a fact that when some of the aircraft are held up due to mechanical defects, the entire circuit is disturbed because we have got a close circuit? I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has seen a very interesting cartoon by Lakshman in which it is said :

"The Indian Airlines regrets to announce a slight delay in the departure of Flight No. 186 due to mechanical defects. All the passengers are required to go back to the lounge. They will be served breakfast at 8.30 AM, lunch at one o'clock and dinner at 8 PM."

It is not the saddest commentary on the working of the aircraft because of these mechanical defects?

MR. SPEAKER : But how efficiently, they announce the lunch and dinner;

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : I have been telling that we have a limited number of aircrafts and if a slight difficulty occurs any where at any place at initial stages of the flight then the consequential delays also occur lateron. That is our difficulty. I do not say that the passengers or the people who are travelling by our airlines are not put to any inconvenience. We are sorry that at times they are put to inconvenience. And we will be only happy to provide them

with the facilities which they really need. Those facilities should be provided. We are also explaining our difficulties to them. Well, this Houle would 'certainly not like me to go by cartoons. Prof. Dandavate can go by cartoons.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : That is a cartoon on you !

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Sir, the safety of the aircraft depends on proper maintenance. The maintenance engineers have to check up every aircraft and give an 'Okay certificate' before every flight. But it is widely alleged that these maintenance engineers are not properly checking the aircraft. It seems they are signing the certificates without filling up the necessary forms and leaving bunches of those signed forms in the offices. I can supply some photocopies of such signed certificates without filling up the forms. I want to know whether it is a fact and if so whether it will not lead to safety problems. Will the hon. Minister inquire into these things and place the information before this House?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : We have a procedure and that procedure is strictly followed. Anything of the nature that the hon. member has explained on the floor of the House has not come to our notice. If it is brought to our notice, it can certainly be looked into.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Now, it has been brought.

Waiting Facility for Relatives at Srinagar Airport

*358. **PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ :** Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the relatives and friends who accompany the passengers are not allowed to enter the airport building at Srinagar;

(b) whether there is no protection available to these people against rain or sun outside the airport building; and

(c) if so, the measures Government propose to take to provide suitable facility to such people?