

Delhi-Bhopal-Nagpur flight of Indian Airlines

*107. SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been decided that the Indian Airlines Flight to and from Delhi-Bhopal-Nagpur will be flying straight to Delhi while returning from Nagpur; and

(b) if so, the reasons for not landing at Bhopal on return flight particularly when night landing facilities at Bhopal Airport exist?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b). Indian Airlines had plans to operate a service on the Delhi-Bhopal-Nagpur-Bhopal-Delhi sector with effect from 15.6.1987. Due to non-availability of the Abridged Visual Approach Slope Indicator (AVASI) at Bhopal, Indian Airlines is not landing at Bhopal on the return flight. As soon as AVASI is operational, Indian Airlines will stop at Bhopal on the return flight.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the flight was announced, O.K. tickets were issued, passengers reported at the airport and then without any announcement whatsoever, everything stands cancelled because of the non-availability of what they say some Abridged Visual Approach Slope Indicator. This shows the entire malfunctioning of the system. What to speak about the planning, was the Government not aware at the time of announcement of the flight that this Abridged Visual Approach Slope Indicator was not available at Bhopal? What are the reasons that it is not available? What is being done now to see that it is made available at the earliest and by what time will these flights be resumed?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, let us not blame the officers or anybody. It is not the

fault of the Indian Airlines or the National Airport Authority, it is because the CPWD Junior Engineers went on strike. They are the ones who have to energise this AVASI system. I would like to inform the hon. Member now that the High Intensity Runway Lights have been installed, the AVASI system has been completed, but this system cannot be energised till such time that the strike by the Junior Engineers of the CPWD is there. At present I feel that by 30th of this month the strike would be off and it takes just one hour for the National Airport Authority to synchronise and calibre the instruments and we will have the flights run at nights.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is trying to pass the buck. That is all. The fact is, and let the Government enquire into it, that this thing was not being properly maintained over there for a long time. The strike was known at the time when the flight was announced. It is now trying to pass the buck on the Junior Engineers and say that this thing is being done. At the same time, they are now installing the various things to which he has referred. Why these things were not installed at that time? Further, I would like to say that as far as Nagpur is concerned on this route, will the Government consider that we have a morning flight from Nagpur to Delhi and evening flight from Delhi to Nagpur, which is the general demand of all?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, with due respect to the Member of Parliament, we are not trying to pass the buck. I have just stated the fact. It is the discretion of the pilots who decide the safety of the flight and it is the pilots who objected to the flight that they will not like to fly at night till the AVASI system is put. After the pilots had objected to it, we had installed this system. Then we had a genuine problem because of the strike by the Junior Engineers of the CPWD for which we are not responsible. We hope that the Engineers, strike will be off by the end of this month and we will like to operate it ... (*Interruptions*). I will convey your request about the change of the flight.