

Trivandrum there is a huge traffic as also cargo traffic.

SHRI A. P. SHARMA: It is not correct to say that there is a huge traffic. As a matter of fact, the traffic may not justify a direct link. But, still, in consideration of the wishes of the people of Kerala and also in view of the representation made by Kerala Government, we have considered that with the augmentation of the fleet from next month, it may be possible for us to provide a direct flight between Delhi and Trivandrum and back to Delhi.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: Is the decision taken by Government to have direct flights from Delhi to Trivandrum and back and so on a part of the policy of the Government's wanting to link Delhi with the State Capitals? If it is so, then what about the assurance given by the former Minister, Shri J. B. Patnaik to link State Capitals directly? So far, Delhi is not linked with all State Capitals.

SHRI A. P. SHARMA: I quite agree with the hon. Member. It will be our endeavour again to see that with the augmentation of the fleet to see that most of the capitals, if not, all the capitals, are connected with Delhi.

SHRI MUNDACKAL GEORGE JOSEPH: We have to wait at Madras or at Bangalore long. Can't you change the timing in such a way so that we can reach there on the evening. At least early in the morning we may be able to go to our places. As it is we have to halt at Madras, Bombay or Bangalore. If the adjustment of time is made, then we would be able to go to Cochin or Trivandrum in the early morning straightway.

SHRI A. P. SHARMA: Sir, the hon. Member will not find this difficulty after we re-schedule the timings between Delhi and Trivandrum and Bombay and Delhi.

Reported Flight of Fokker-28 Aircraft over Chittagong Hill Tracts

*82. **SHRI SUNIL MAITRA:** Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that on 9th May, 1980 a Fokker-28 aircraft with 39 passengers aboard after taking off from Agartala Airport on its way to Calcutta got lost and was seen flying over Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh; and

(b) if so, what was the nature of the mechanical fault that led to such a situation and the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR): (a) and (b). Preliminary reports indicate that Indian Airlines F-27 aircraft VT-EBJ operating scheduled flight IC-238 took off from Agartala at 2100 hrs, deviated from the normal route due to bad weather and landed at Calcutta at 2345 hrs. on May 8, 1980.

The matter is under investigation by the Director General of Civil Aviation.

SHRI SUNIL MAITRA: Sir, according to the *Calcutta Statesman* of May 10, a F-27 aircraft after taking off from Agartala airport had lost its way due to navigational fault. A British Airways aircraft coming to Calcutta after receiving the alert from the flight information centre could establish contact with F-27 aircraft and led it safely to the Calcutta airport. Now, this news has been attributed by the *Statesman* to the British Airways sources and the *Statesman* says that the British Airways have issued a statement to that effect. Will the Government call for a copy of the statement and ascertain whether the version given by the Minister here is correct or the version given in the between Delhi and Trivandrum and Airways is correct. If the version of

the British Airways is correct that it lost way due to navigational fault then is it because of the old-age of the aircraft, and would the Government propose immediately to replace these aircrafts, the over-riding consideration being the safety of the passengers and the crew that fly such aircraft?

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: Sir, investigations into this matter are in progress. It is only when we get the investigation report that we will come to know the details as to when the British aircraft informed the Indian Airlines pilot. But the fact is that weather was very bad in one of the air pockets. In fact, when the pilot took off he wanted to avoid one air pocket from the main normal route which came in the way. Incidentally, it so happened when he was trying to avoid it and going to Calcutta to reach in proper time he found another air pocket. That is why he was delayed. But, Sir, it will be the investigation report which will be able to give us the actual details. But I would like to inform the House that later on the aircraft was checked and it was found to be air-worthy. There was nothing wrong with the aircraft.

SHRI SUNIL MAITRA: I would like to know are these F-27 aircrafts equipped with flight data recorders. From the flight data recorder all these things can be verified. Secondly, if flight data recorder are not there, then what safety measures does the Government contemplate to take? Further are these aircrafts equipped with back-up system, that is, in case of failure of one system the other system takes over?

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: Sir, we are awaiting the investigation report. The preliminary enquiries reveal that the aircraft had to make alteration in the direction of the flight of the aircraft so as to avoid turbulent weather. (*Interruption*). I

know, I am coming to that. When you are saying, well, Calcutta radar could not guide the aircraft.

SHRI SUNIL MAITRA: I did not say that. What I asked was whether the aircraft was fitted with Flight data recorder or not. You can say yes or no. It is called F.D.R.

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: That will be known when the detailed report is given.

MR. SPEAKER: Have you followed him?

SHRI SUNIL MAITRA: The question is fitted with flight data recorder or not.

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: We will find out (*Interruption*) We will try to find out the details.

AN HON. MEMBER: What is the point in saying, find out?

SHRI SUNIL MAITRA: Probably he does not know what a flight-data recorder is.

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: Flight data recorder is available. It is not that it is not there. Detailed investigation will reveal that.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: He says 'flight recorder is available'. The hon. Member's question was: was it fitted in this plane or not. That may be available in France or England and so on. That is a different matter. His question was whether it was fitted in this plane or not.

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: It is available in the plane.

MR. SPEAKER: His question is simple. He wants to know whether this plane was fitted with that device or not.

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: It is fitted with that device.

SHRI SUNIL MAITRA: F-27 aircrafts are not fitted with that device. He should check up with his officials and tell us. First he should check up and then say it.

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT AND TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION: (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): Sir, it is mentioned here that the Calcutta radar could not guide the aircraft. Now, we do find, Sir, that these aircrafts are fitted with radars. But we will...

MR. SPEAKER: No radar. He says, flight recording recorder, black-box. That is there to record the flight. Was it there?

SHRI A. P. SHARMA: It is fitted, Sir.

SHRI SPEAKER: That is it. Next question, Shri Pradhani.

Import of Coal

*83. **SHRI K. PRADHANI:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Government have decided to import coal from foreign countries; and

(b) if so, how much and what are the details regarding the requirements for country's public sector steel plants this year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) While no final decision has been taken the import of a portion of the requirement of coking Coal for steel plants during 1980-81 is under the consideration of Government.

(b) The total requirement of coking coal for the steel plants including TISCO during 1980-81 is:

	In million tonnes
(i) SAIL Steel Plants	14.136
(ii) TISCO	2.890
Total	17.026

SHRI K. PRADHANI: Mr. Speaker, may I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that during last year, from April to December, 1979, there was short supply of coal to the steel plants of the order of 10,000 tonnes a day. If so, what was the shortfall in the production of steel due to short supply of coal?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The shortfall in the production of steel is mainly because of two counts. One is, non-availability of coking coal. The second is power. But in regard to the shortfall in coking coal, we could augment our supply by importing some coking coal. Thereby the shortfall in the indigenous production was met to some extent. It is just not possible to identify and say on what counts, whether on account of coking coal, or on account of non-availability of power, what percentage of production went down and all that.

SHRI K. PRADHANI: May I know whether the coal proposed to be imported is of a better quality? what is the delivery price the coal proposed to be imported?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The whole object is to have coking coal of lower ash content. It is in the order of 8 to 10 per cent. As it is known to the hon. Members, the indigenous coking coal is having ash content to the extent of 21 to 26 per cent and what we are importing would have 8 to 10 per cent of ash content. This imported coking coal is blended with the indigenous coking coal so that the overall ash content is reduced.