

"Vayudoot" Air Service for Five North Bengal Districts

*87. SHRI SUBODH SEN :
SHRI ANANDA PATHAK :

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

(a) whether he is aware that of the five North Bengal Districts, namely Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, West Dinajpur and Malda only Darjeeling district is connected by air with Calcutta and Delhi through Bagdogra which is also far away from the district headquarters and that the headquarters of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Balurghat and Malda are connected with Calcutta by road and railways but till to date the communication facilities in this region are inadequate;

(b) whether he is aware that speedier communication for this area will not only help the people living in this area but will also be of great use to the administration, particularly at the time of crisis such as natural calamities;

(c) if so whether he is considering to introduce Vayudoot Air Service for this region connecting those districts headquarters with Calcutta on the one end and Gauhati on the other; and

(d) if not, the reasons?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI : A. P. SHARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Cooch-Bihar is included in the list of 14 stations already selected for operation of Vayudoot services in the North Eastern Region. A decision in principle has also been taken to extend 'Vayudoot' services to places other than those in the North Eastern Region. Various

aspects including selection of stations to be served by this service are receiving attention of the Government.

Retiring Age for Air Hostesses in Air India

*88. SHRI E. BALANANDAN :
Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) what is the retiring age fixed for the Air Hostesses in the Air India;

(b) what are, the criteria for fixing the age limit differently for males and females working in the airlines; and

(c) the reasons why pregnant women are asked to discontinue?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A. P. SHARMA) : (a) According to Air India Employees' Service Regulations, and Air Hostess has to retire (i) upon attaining the age of 35 years or (ii) on marriage if it takes place within 4 years of service or on first pregnancy, whichever occurs earlier.

(b) and (c) : Different criteria have been laid down in the case of Air Hostesses and stewards for retirement age since it is considered that age has a telling effect on the personality, smartness and agile physical condition of an airhostess after the age of 35 years. There are certain hazards attached to the flying career, especially in the modern jets, which fly at a very high altitude. The air hostess has to attend to emergencies at times, besides rendering service to the passengers which involves a lot of running about. Therefore, it is felt that an Air Hostess in a state of pregnancy cannot stand the strain. This apart weather turbulences are not an uncommon phenomena in flying which

is also a serious hazard to health in a state of pregnancy.

Some Air Hostesses have challenged the validity of the regulation fixing the retiring age at 35 years. The matter is before the Supreme Court of India and is sub judice.

Export of Betel Leaves

*89. SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) what is the present position of the export of betel leaves to different countries; and

(b) what are the proposals of the Central Government for the better-

ment of the present export position of the betel leaves ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN) : (a) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(b) As betel leaves are used mainly for chewing, the export demand has remained small. However, recently the Central Arecanut Marketing and Processing Cooperative Ltd., in association with the S.T.C., propose *inter-alia* to prepare a Market Survey Report covering the potential foreign markets and the varieties of betel leaves which are more popular etc. for promoting export of betel leaves.

Statement

Statement showing the quantity and value of Betel Leaves Exported from India to different Foreign Countries for the years 1978-79, 1979-80 and April—July, 1980

Description of the Commodity & country	1978-79		1979-80		April-July, 80	
	Qty. tonnes	Value Rs. 000	Qty. tonnes	Value Rs. 000	Qty. tonnes	Value Rs 000
BETEL LEAVES						
Bahrein IS.	24	2,29	25	2,26	8	67
Bangladesh	—	—	—	—	6	38
Canada	9	1,05	5	35	2	16
Hong Kong	5	1,15	—	—	—	—
Italy	3	34	—	—	—	—
Kenya	16	2,13	15	300	7	1,32
Kuwait	43	3,31	55	3,91	17	1,35
Nepal	28	1,36	26	2,03	3	17
Netherlands	6	1,02	—	—	—	—
Oman	112	9,72	101	8,25	20	1,58
Pakistan	975	97,68	—	—	—	—
Qatar	4	34	18	1,26	7	53
Reunion	—	4	—	—	—	—
Saudi Arab	62	5,66	74	6,09	32	2,61
Switzerland	1	15	—	—	—	—
Tanzania Rep.	—	5	—	—	—	—
U. A. E.	8	88	12	1,00	25	2,36
U. K.	51	4,99	70	6,93	19	2,04
U. S. A.	—	—	—	8	—	—
Ymn. Arab Rep.	—	3	1	9	—	7
Ymn. P.D. Rep.	—	—	—	—	—	4
Other countries	—	6	—	—	—	3
Total export	13,47	132,25	402	34,29	146	13,31

Source :—Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Calcutta—I