

SHRI S. R. BOMMAI (Karnataka): Sir, I strongly support the feelings expressed by Shri Gurudas Das Gupta. Being the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Science and Technology, it is my duty to express my views on this subject, whether it is pollution in Calcutta or any other city. Pollution, anywhere in this country, should be prevented. If it cannot be prevented, it should, at least, be reduced. Keeping that in mind, so far as Calcutta is concerned, I appeal to the Government to take immediate steps. The Government should also take necessary steps in regard to other cities.

Agitation by cotton farmers due to non-payment of dues by Cotton corporation of India

डॉ. वाई. लक्ष्मी प्रसाद (आंध्र प्रदेश) : धन्यवाद सभापति महोदय, आंध्र प्रदेश से संबंधित एक विशेष विषय की ओर सदन का ध्यान आकर्षित करने का आपने जो मौका दिया है उसके लिए मैं आपका तहेदिल से आभार व्यक्त करता हूँ। पिछले तीन सालों से आंध्र प्रदेश में किसान जिस प्रकार से आत्महत्याएं कर रहे हैं उसे हम सब देख रहे हैं। आज के विशेष विषय में कौटन कार्पोरेशन ऑफ इण्डिया को किसानों को जो पैसा चुकाना है उसे न चुकाने को लेकर करीब आठ महीने से किसानों का जो आंदोलन चल रहा है।

Some 250 cotton farmers were arrested by the Dachepalli police on 6.12.1999 when they were staging a rasta roko on the Naguleru bridge on the Guntur-Hyderabad state highway demanding immediate clearance of dues from the Cotton Corporation of India. As many as 1500 farmers launched a 24-hour rasta roko agitation at Dachepalli on 6.12.1999. They squatted on the bridge and the highway, and blocked the traffic by 50 bullockcarts.

Sir, the farmers had been on a warpath for the past eight months protesting against the inordinate delay by the CCI in clearing the dues of 247 farmers who had sold cotton at the Dachepalli market yard in March this year. As every attempt at finding a solution to the problem proved futile, the farmers decided to intensify the struggle and accordingly began a 24-hour rasta roko agitation in support of their demands. All the political parties are extending their support to the strike of the farmers.

Sir, the Cotton Corporation of India had promised to take a decision on the issue at its Board meeting on December 1, but the meeting was put off to December 7. The restive farmers decided to intensify the struggle. They had set a deadline of December 5 for settlement of the issue, but things did not move further.

Sir, I therefore, request the Union Government to look into the matter and settle the dues of cotton farmers of Andhra Pradesh at the earliest.

DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR (Andhra Pradesh) : Sir, I want to say one thing in this regard. Our Chief Minister, Shri Chandrababu Naidu is taking all steps to clear the dues of cotton farmers. He has represented umpteen times the case of these farmers to the CCI and the officials of the Ministry of Textiles. The State Government is taking all precautionary steps in this regard.

DR. Y. RADHAKRISHNA MURTY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with this.

SHRI N.R. DASARI (Andhra Pradesh) : Sir, I also associate myself with it. Frequent MIG-21 Crashes

SHRI SURESH KALMADI (Maharashtra) : Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of the House the spate of aircrashes which took place in the last one year. There have been 28 military aircrashes, and the latest one was the MIG-21 in Tezpur, the day before yesterday. Sir, aircrashes are due to two reasons - one is pilot error and the other is due to technical problem. On both these counts, the country's Air Force is doing very badly. Technically, the MIG-21 is over 20 years old, and it needed to be phased out or updated. Both these things are not being done by the Government for various reasons. As far as the problem of pilot error is concerned, there is a tremendous gap in the Air Force, right from a normal trainer, they are going on the sophisticated jets, but there is no advance jet trainer in the country. This particular MIG-21 was being used as a trainer, and this aircraft crashed.

Sir, for the last so many years, in this House, we have been talking about the purchase of an advance jet trainer, but that has not been done. There is need for immediate going in for an advance jet trainer; otherwise, these crashes which have been going on for the last many years will

continue to take place. I don't know as to why there is so much indecision on the part of the Government to go in for an advance jet trainer.

Also, Sir, the development of the Light Combat Aircraft has now taken 10 - 15 years, and because of that, there has been no replacement of the MIG aircraft. The Light Combat Aircraft has not seen the light of the day. We have already spent about Rs. 3,000 crores on the development of the Light Combat Aircraft. Sir, we are trying to make the most sophisticated aircraft in the world, when our HAL just does not have the technology. I think, it is high time that the LCA programme was scrapped, and a realistic view taken in this regard. I request that MIG-21 be upgraded immediately. What is immediately required is, the advance jet trainer. The Government must go in for it considering that the backbone of the Indian Air Force are the MIG aircraft which constitute 75 - 80 per cent of the total number of aircraft of the Air Force. It is high time that we went in for an advance jet trainer.

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, my friend, Mr. Suresh Kalmadi has only given a half-truth. Have you seen the discussion which took place in Lok Sabha on 16th December? The half-truth he said was, the Government has not taken any view on phasing out MiG-21. On 16th December, in Lok Sabha, there was a reply: "Presently, the Air Force pilots are being given advance training on MiG-21 aircraft which are old and which are in the process of being phased out." This has already been discussed and they are already in the process of phasing out.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: The decision has been taken, but out of 125 MiGs have to be replaced, only two MiGs have been replaced so far.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): One person is saying one half-truth, the other is saying another half. Is the fact a complete truth, Sir? ...*(Interruptions)*... We do not know what the exact truth is. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I do not know why everybody gets up. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, while associating myself with him, I share his concern on air accidents which take place. Sir,

the most important point, which I would like to mention here, is, in our Rajya Sabha, on 15th December, there was an Unstarred Question No. 1396, which speaks of air crashes in Indian Air Force. It states: "The main reasons of the accidents were technical defects, human error and bird hits. It is not possible to compare the accident rate of IAF with those of other countries." But what is important is the attention of the Government. Through you, Sir, I would like to plead. A high powered committee on fighter aircraft accidents made certain recommendations. These recommendations should be looked into. Only 55 recommendations have been implemented. Mr. Chairman, Sir, there were 84 recommendations and these recommendations were submitted to the Government in September, 1997. Two years have passed and in such a sensitive matter, as air crashes, that too MiG air crashes, no full attempt has been made by the Defence Ministry. Who is responsible? I do not know.

Regarding the LCA project, which has been mentioned, Sir, the improved version of the MiG was supposed to bridge the gap between phasing out of the MiGs and induction of the LCA. The LCA is going to be inducted in 2005. This is a long gap. Sir, this long gap is going to be filled by MiG 21 which was to be upgraded. Two MiG aircraft have been sent to Russia for upgradation. These aircraft have not yet been updated.

Sir, the other point is, 123 MiGs are lying for upgradation. They are not fully functional. That is the tragedy. Sir, I request the Government, through you, Sir, to make a statement as to what is happening to the MiGs. The MiG is our backbone. The MiG, whether MiG 29 or 27 or any version, is to be strengthened. We are solely dependent on MiGs. Sukhoi is coming. But, then, Sir, without MiG, the Air Force is feeling depleted. Through these crashes, we are losing our most efficient young pilots. I do not know why the Government is not taking full care to see to it that these accidents are minimised. This is very important.

**Gujarat Government's Apprehension of communal flare-up as per
"The Hindu" Report of 10th December, 1999**

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी (पश्चिमी बंगाल) : माननीय सभापति जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार का और सदन का ध्यान गुजरात की ओर आकर्षित करवाना चाहती हूँ। सभापति महोदय, एक बार फिर गुजरात के डांग में ईसाई अल्पसंख्यकों के खिलाफ भयंकर उत्तेजना और