

[8 August, 2006]

RAJYA SABHA

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The proposal for merger of the two airlines is under active consideration of the Government. Further, the Committee on merger of Air India and Indian Airlines constituted by Air India Board has appointed M/s. Accenture India Private Limited as Consultant.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. The name of the company remains Indian Airlines Limited. The brand name used for publicity/advertising has been changed to Indian. The new branding has only been done on the aircraft livery keeping in mind induction of a newer/more modern fleet of aircraft and increasing competition.

(e) Approximately Rs. 3.25 crores has been spent on re-branding as a part of budgeted advertising/promotion/publicity expenditure which is an ongoing exercise. Further, no additional expenditure is being incurred on the painting of aircraft in the new colours as this is being done only when the aircraft is due for its normal repainting.

Task force on river linking

†*224. SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Task Force constituted for river linking has been dissolved;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of recommendations made by the Task Force?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Task Force submitted Action Plan I and Action Plan II in April, 2003 and 2004 respectively and thus completed its assigned functions.

(c) Recommendations of Task Force:

(i) Task Force got prepared Terms of Reference (ToR) for preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPR) through M/s. Engineers India Ltd. (EIL) for providing guidance on norms of appraisal of individual projects.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(ii) On the issue of suitable mechanism for bringing about speedy consensus amongst the States, Task Force has suggested meeting at the highest level to agree after the technical-level discussions with emphasis that outstanding issues should be such that they can be addressed in Detailed Project Report stage.

(iii) The Task Force has stated that the peninsular links are the right component to begin with. To priority links identified by Task Force on Interlinking of Rivers are under:

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| a) | Ken-Betwa link | UP&MP |
| b) | Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal link | MP & Rajasthan |

(iv) On the basis of report from IIM-Ahmedabad, a two tier institutional/organizational set up has been suggested for the implementation of the programme on Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) along with a Council—National River Water Development Council (NRWDC)" to act as the apex body of the proposed setup. The National Authority for Interlinking of Rivers (NAILR) is proposed as the first tier of the proposed two tier organizational structure and the regional or branch offices or subsidiaries would act as "Link Instrument" and are proposed as the second tier of the organizational setup.

(v) Task Force on Interlinking of Rivers consulted ICICI for funding options. ICICI has proposed that funding should be partly through public, public-private and private inputs. The exact requirement on realistic basis will be available only after the preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) of all the links.

Based on NWDA studies, National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has estimated that the cost of ILR project would be Rs. 4,44,331.20 crore which is 21 -22% lower than the rough estimate of Rs. 5.60 lakh crore. NCAER is of the view that the programme would take nearly 35-40 years. However, with use of modern construction and Remote Sensing techniques, the programme at best could be completed in 25 years.

(vi) A Working Group on International dimensions constituted by Task Force on ILR has also suggested that at the present juncture, it is too early, to pursue the matter further at high political levels with the Nepal government. Regarding Bangladesh, it has been suggested that Dhaka will continue to raise the ILR issue in Joint River Commission and possibly

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in other bilateral fora. India should respond by reiterating the line taken in the JRC, i.e. ILR is a concept, not a single project.

Selection of Independent Directors

*225. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of vacancies of Independent Directors existing at present, PSE-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that such positions have remained vacant for years, if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that absence of required number of Independent Directors on the Boards have precluded the PSEs from exercising the autonomy offered to them under the policy;

(d) whether it is also a fact that there have been cases when the Independent Directors have been reappointed for another term, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) what steps are being taken to streamline the procedure to ensure timely selection of Independent Directors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRY, MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) As per available information, the details of vacancies of Independent Directors in various Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) under the Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises are given in the Statement (*See* below). The updated position of vacancies in CPSEs under other Administrative Ministries is being collected.

(b) The requisite number of Independent Directors are not in position in some CPSEs for quite some time. The reasons for this include delay in receiving reference from the administrative Ministries/Departments, time taken to process the proposals and delay in obtaining the approval of the competent authority by the administrative Ministries/Departments on the recommendations made by the Search Committee/Public Enterprises Selection Board, etc.