

bay at these airports have been planned and the works are in progress. There is also a proposal for modification and expansion of Anna International Terminal at Chennai airport. The work at this airport is likely to be started by August, 2005 with a probable date of completion of September, 2006.

At Coimbatore airport extension of runway at other end has also been planned in due course subject to the transfer of land by State Government.

The estimated cost of projects at Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai and Trichy airports are Rs. 23.47 crore, Rs. 42.00 crore, Rs. 35.25 crore and Rs. 25.93 crore respectively.

Strengthening of AI and IA

4959. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Airlines and Air India are facing tough competition from the private airlines; and

(b) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken to strengthen these two airlines and to make them consumer friendly and affordable and also to improve their efficiency to international level in order to capture the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL FATEL): (a) In the domestic sector, Indian Airlines has been competing with private airlines for the past several years. In the international sector, Air India and Indian Airlines face greater competition from foreign airlines than our private airlines.

(b) Air India and Indian Airlines constantly endeavour to bring about qualitative and quantitative improvements in the service rendered to the passenger and add value to the product to remain competitive in the market. Some of the measures taken by the two airlines are (i) Fleet Augmentation/renewal; (ii) Focused attention on training to frontline staff particularly those who are in direct contact with the passengers; (iii) Inflight initiatives; (iv) Service upgrades on ground; (v) Improvement in Cabin ambience and dedicated Cabin cleaning; (vi) Joint frequent flyer programme of AI/IA in order to give a wider network to consumers and (vii) Introduction of attractive packages to make travel affordable.