

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH)

: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) For operation of regular Boeing services to Cochin and Trivandrum, Indian Airlines consider that it is necessary to lengthen and strengthen the runway at Cochin and to provide a very high frequency Omni Range (VOR) at Cochin and an Instrument Landing System (ILS) at Trivandrum. The feasibility of lengthening the runway at Cochin and providing additional navigational aids at Cochin and Trivandrum is being examined by the Civil Aviation Department.

INVESTMENT BY L.I.C. IN SMALL SCALE SECTOR

55. SHRI R. KHAITAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are examining any specific proposal for investing L.I.C. funds in the small scale industry by purchasing their shares ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA) : (a) and (b) As was explained in reply given to the Hon'ble Member's Starred Question No. 165 on the 17th November 1970, there has never been any bar on the L.I.C. investing in the shares of the small scale sector provided they satisfy the criteria laid down in section 27A of the Insurance Act as made applicable to the L.I.C. One of the important statutory stipulations is that they should be shares of listed public limited companies and such companies are rarely met with in the small scale industries sector, the majority of units in that sector being either proprietary or partnership concerns or undertakings run by private limited companies. L.I.C. therefore has to content itself with making its contribution to the growth of small scale industry in an indirect manner viz, by loan assistance to industrial estates, purchase of bonds issued by State Financial Corporations, assistance to State Electricity Boards for power development and support to the market borrowing of State Governments.

NATIONAL PLAN FOR TOURISM

56. SHRI SUNDAR MANI PATEL :
SHRI LOKANATH MISRA :

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

(a) whether the Travel Agency Association recently urged the Government of India to draw a national plan for tourism in consultation with the trade industry ; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government of India thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH) :
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The suggestion is being examined.

SHORTAGE OF SMALL COINS

57. SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP
SINHA: SHRI KRISHAN
KANT : DR. SALIGRAM : SHRI
DEVADUTT PURI: SHRI ARJUN
ARORA : SHRI MAN SINGH
VARMA :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the acute shortage of small coins in the country and the extreme difficulties being experienced by all sections of the community on this account ;

(b) whether Government are also aware that due to this shortage consumers are forced to accept 5 per cent to 10 per cent less in a rupee ;

(c) whether it is a fact that small coins are being used for the manufacture of domestic utensils thus adding to the shortage of coins in circulation ; and

(d) if so, what steps Government have taken or propose to take to step up production of small coins to meet the requirements of the country as a whole and also to stop melting of coins for manufacture of domestic utensils ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA) : (a) Yes, Sir, but the position has started improving.

(b) Government do not have authentic and reliable information of such cases.

(c) The major cause of the shortage appears to be some marginal diversion of cupro nickel coins of 2 paise and 5 paise denominations from circulation to other purposes. Coins of these denominations are being produced in aluminium magnesium alloy from 1965/1966 onwards ;

(d) Government have already taken steps to increase the production of small coins. The average monthly production of coins in the three Mints taken together has been stepped up from about 290 lakh pieces in the first half of 1970-71 to about 670 lakh pieces per month in the second half of 1970-71. Steps are being taken to increase this further to over 1500 lakh pieces per month during 1971-72. Melting of coins is not illegal as the law stands at present, and even if the law were changed, implementation of it would not be easy. Government are convinced that occasional shortages would be more effectively tackled by increased production on a sustained basis rather than by resort to legal restrictions. ^

HIJACKING OF AN INDIAN PLANE

58. SHRI BALACHANDRA MENON :
DR. BHAI MAHAVIR :

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

(a) the circumstances under which the Indian Fokker Friendship plane was hijacked to Pakistan and blown up there ;

(b) the reasons for not taking definite security measures in spite of being forewarned in this regard ;

(c) the steps taken against the officers responsible for such negligence ; and

(d) the steps taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents in future ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH):

(a) On the afternoon of 30th January 1971, Indian Airlines Fokker Friendship aircraft VT-DMA which was operating scheduled service 422-A from Siinagar to Jammu was hijacked to Pakistan by two persons one of whom entered the cockpit and threatened the pilot with a revolver and the other the passengers with a hand-grenade. The aircraft was forced to land at Lahore international airport at 1325 hours 1ST with 28 passengers, including the two hijackers and 4 crew members on board. The aircraft was also carrying considerable quantities of baggage, cargo and mail.

On the 1st February 1971, the passengers and the crew were permitted to leave Lahore and brought by bus late in the afternoon to the Hussainiwala border. The aircraft was set on fire and destroyed at the Lahore airport at 2030 hours 1ST on 2nd February 1971 within sight and control of Pakistani police, and civil and military authorities in full view of the press and specially covered by the Lahore TV station.

(b) and (c) Government have set up a high level official committee to examine various aspects of the matter.

(d) A number of stringent security measures have been enforced, including frisking of passengers and search of hand baggage.

v59. [Transferred to the 2nd April, 1971]

DISAPPEARANCE OF INDIAN SHIP "MAHAJAC-MITRA"

"60. SHRI SUNDAR MANI PATEL: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether any enquiry has so far been conducted into the disappearance of the Indian ship 'Mahajagmitra' which had left Calcutta port on the 11th November, 1970, if so, the result thereof ;

(b) whether any effort has been made to ascertain whether the cargo ship found grounded at about the same time near Bhola Islands