

[16 May, 2006]

RAJYA SABHA

(d) the steps Government propose to take to make use of all bilateral pacts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Out of 101 bilateral air services agreements signed with foreign countries, 55 bilateral agreements are operational. Of these, 66 foreign airlines of 52 countries are operating scheduled services to/from India. In addition, Air India is providing unilateral operation to Tanzania and Indonesia and Indian Airlines to Maldives.

(b) Out of the 55 operational bilaterals, carriers of both countries are offering services in 25 cases.

(c) The reasons for a number of bilateral pacts lying unused is because of lack of point to point traffic demand between India and such countries.

(d) The Government has offered the bilateral traffic rights to all eligible Indian scheduled carriers for operation of flights. However, the actual operation of any airlines including Indian scheduled carriers is always guided by its commercial judgement.

#### **Air service agreement with Pakistan**

3183. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Pakistan has revived the air service operation between the two countries;

(b) if so, whether Pakistan has agreed for Indian Airlines operation in that country;

(c) whether Pakistan had pointed out that they have no problem in having an Open sky policy between India and Pakistan;

(d) whether Pakistan has also agreed to allow all the Indian Airlines to fly over Pakistan;

(e) if so, what are the main agreements reached in this regard; and

(f) to what extent it has been helpful for both the countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) and (f) As per the agreement reached, both countries agreed to open their respective airspaces for overflights for the airlines of both countries. The designated airlines of both sides are now entitled to operate 5, 3, and 4 services/week on Karachi-Mumbai, Karachi-Delhi and Lahore-Delhi v.v. routes respectively. The agreement helped both PIA and Indian Airlines to start operations between the two countries.

#### **New International Airport at Ludhiana**

3184. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:

SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to have a Greenfield International Airport at Ludhiana;

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to develop/upgrade certain infrastructure necessary for the Airport;

(c) whether any request has been received from the State Government of Punjab to allow International flights from Halwara Air Force Station; and

(d) the action taken by Government in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) There is a proposal from the State Government of Punjab to construct an international airport at Halwara airbase of Indian Air Force (IAF) near Ludhiana. The State Government has appointed a Consultant to conduct a pre-feasibility study of the project. Ministry of Defence has already conveyed their no objection to the proposal. Airports Authority of India (AAI) is likely to depute a team of officials for survey of the proposed site.

#### **Upgradation of Patna and Gaya Airports**

3185. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to encourage pilgrim tourism during this year of 2550th anniversary of Lord Buddha's Mahaparinirvana from the countries with large Buddhist population;