

Regular maintenance of airports

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, I draw the attention of this august House to a recent incident when a major accident was somehow averted by a Pilot of Jet Airways while landing at Netaji Subhash Bose Airport, Kolkata. It is reported that the pilot found a big hole on the same runway where the plane was supposed to land. So, he flew over the airport for half-an-hour till he was allowed to land on a safe place, and, thus, owing to cautiousness of the Pilot, a major accident could be avoided.

Incidentally, I recall the horrific air crash of Mangalore that took place on this day in 2010 when the Air India Express flight from Dubai to Mangalore overshot the runway, leading instant death of 158 out of 176 passengers who were on board. Though this accident took place on 22nd May, 2010, the families of ill-fated cabin crews are yet to receive compensation declared by the then Minister of Civil Aviation.

While paying my heartfelt homage to those unfortunate passengers, Pilot and crews, I urge upon the Minister of Civil Aviation to keep a vigil on the maintenance works of runways by the Airport Authorities in all the airports to ensure safe take-off and landing.

DR. BARUN MUKHERJI (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with it.

Murder of Shri S.P. Mahantesh, a whistle blower

SHRI K.N. BALAGOPAL (Kerala): Sir, my Zero Hour Mention is related to the murder of a whistleblower in Bangalore day-before-yesterday.

Sir, on Sunday morning, in Bangalore city, Shri S.P. Mahantesh, an auditor and whistleblower on irregular land allotments in the State died due to the heinous attack by some unknown criminals.

Known as an honest officer in a Department subjected to allegations of corruption and land scams, Mahantesh, a Karnataka Administrative Service Officer and Deputy Director of Cooperative Audit, was a crucial source for some of the stories that the newspapers published in recent months on irregularities in Housing Societies.

He facilitated the release of a copy of the audit report of the controversial BEML Employees Cooperative Society, which is accused of making improper land allotment to several influential persons.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): You cannot make allegations. Don't make any allegation. Otherwise, I will have to get it removed from the records. I am cautioning you.

SHRI K.N. BALAGOPAL: Sir, I am not making any allegation. I am not naming anyone.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): I am only cautioning you.

SHRI K.N. BALAGOPAL: Sir, I am only referring to the BEML and Tatra issues. The issue of land allotment by BEML came up in a big way in connection with the Tatra issue, which we discussed recently.

Sir, the murder of RTI activists and whistleblowers is a regular phenomenon in our country. More than a dozen activists were murdered in the last one year. We have pathetically failed to protect them. The State Governments have also failed to protect the whistleblowers. But, Sir, the matter of Shri S.P. Mahantesh is different. He had raised an issue which is being discussed in the country very seriously, and which is related to the issues of Tatra trucks, BEML, and related matters. When such a murder has taken place, I think it is the responsibility of the Central Government to prove that the murder by some mafia or goons is not related to some allegations which came up earlier in connection with the Tatra and BEML issues.

Therefore, Sir, I urge upon the Government to make very serious efforts and take steps to inquire into the matter and book the culprits.

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir? I too associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T. (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I too associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN (West Bengal): Sir, I too associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI P. RAJEEVE (Kerala): Sir, I too associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRIMATI JHARNA DAS BAIDYA (Tripura): Sir, I too associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

DR. BARUN MUKHERJI (West Bengal): Sir, I too associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.