

**Delay in inauguration of Chennai and Kolkata airports**

1092. SHRI S. THANGAVELU: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the modernized airports of Chennai and Kolkata are ready for inauguration after a long delay;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government took over a year to accord permission for procurement of aero-bridges from a Chinese firm and the vacation of land, required for Chennai airport was delayed by the Army; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL): (a) and (b) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has completed the work on the construction of new terminal buildings at Chennai and Kolkata airports. These airports will be commissioned after pre — commissioning trials.

(c) and (d) The process of security clearance of the firms short listed for procurement of aerobridges took some time due to the sensitive nature of the security concerns. The process of exchange of land measuring 19.24 acres at Chennai airport belonging to Defence and required for the modernization work also added to the delay in completion of Chennai airport because land could be exchanged only after identification and exchange of land of equal value.

**Fine on Air India by US transportation department**

1093. SHRIMATI NAZNIN FARUQUE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the US department of transportation imposed a fine of Rs. 43 lakh on the Air India for not posting information regarding customer service and tarmac delay contingency plans on its website and for not adequately informing passengers about its optional charges; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A fine of USD 80,000 was imposed

on Air India failing to post customer service and tarmac delay contingency plans on its website. An amount of USD 40,000 has been deposited as fine and the balance of USD 40,000 will be waived-off in case Air India does not violate in the next 12 months.

**Affordable air service for Southern States**

1094. SHRI AAYANUR MANJUNATHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by Government to provide affordable air service to the Southern States of the country, especially Karnataka, in view of a good number of heritage sites in this part of the country;

(b) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government to address the competition from the private sector aviation industry; and

(c) the measures being taken to improve the efficiency of the aviation sector to meet the global standards?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL): (a) Operations in domestic sector have been deregulated and flights are being operated by airlines concerned on the basis of commercial viability, subject to adherence of Route Dispersal Guidelines. Government has laid down Route Dispersal Guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country. It is, however, up to the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability while complying with Route Dispersal Guidelines.

(b) In order to improve operating and financial performance of Air India, the Government has approved Turn Around Plan/Financial Restructuring Plan in April, 2012. Besides the plan, Air India has taken various steps which include complete route rationalization of erstwhile Air India and Indian Airlines routes, rationalization of certain loss making routes, phasing out of old fleet and consequential reduction of maintenance and engineering costs, return of leased aircraft at the end of their tenure or prematurely, freezing of employment in non-operational areas etc.

(c) Civil Aviation is a dynamic sector which requires continuous adjustments according to global and domestic needs. The Government has constantly been