

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Joint Exercise between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) has been planned at Air Force Station, Kalaikunda, in January 2006. The duration of the planned Joint Exercise between the IAF and the RSAF is three weeks. The IAF will be providing logistic and administrative support on payment basis to the RSAF detachment.

(c) and (d) The visiting Aircrew will be operating F-16 aircraft. These aircraft were operated by RSAF at Gwalior during the Joint Exercise in 2004. Recently the United States Air Force (USAF) operated F-16 aircraft in Kalaikunda in November 2005, as well.

#### **Abandonment of HS-748 Avro Aircrafts**

2323. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has sought logistic support and lease of PC-3 Maritime Patrol Aircraft from the US in order to phase out the soviet Built IL-38s which are at their fag end of fatigue and operational service life;

(b) whether India has abandoned the prestigious HS-748 Avro aircrafts in the wake of serious setback resulting from a crash of Avro near Arakkonam in Tamil Nadu in 1999; and

(c) if not, whether DRDO is still working on an indigenous Airborne Early Warning System?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The United States has indicated the availability of two PC-3 Maritime Patrol aircraft on lease. However, no formal offer has been received in this regard. There is no proposal to replace IL-38 aircraft of Navy.

(b) and (c) Based on the experience gained and technology developed on the previous programme on Avro Aircraft, a new programme for development of Airborne Early Warning and Control system was approved by the Government in October, 2004.