

Expansion of runway at Varanasi Airport

2578. SHRI PRAMOD TIWARI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has received any proposal from the Airport Authority of India (AAI) regarding expansion and facelift of the Varanasi Airport including expansion of runway, if so, the details thereof and the present status of the proposal;

(b) whether the AAI has been able to get 593.77 acres of land required for the expansion of the Airport and runway; and

(c) whether the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), working on converting the existing Varanasi-Lucknow highway into four-lane high-speed highway, has not succeeded in re-alignment of the upgraded highway in order to make room for runway expansion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (DR MAHESH SHARMA): (a) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has projected 593.77 acres of land requirement to the State Govt, of Uttar Pradesh for expansion and facelift of Varanasi Airport including extension of runway to cater for Cat. "E" aircraft, construction of new ATC Tower cum Technical Block, provision of Cat.IIIB Instrument Landing System, expansion of apron, Terminal Building etc. in a phased manner.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir. Alignment of Varanasi-Lucknow section of NH-56 for 4-laning under NHDP Phase-IV had already been finalised and re-alignment of this stretch was not found feasible by NHAI due to heavy habitation in the surrounding area of the proposed site.

Selection of Tier-II/III cities in Tamil Nadu under Regional and Remote Area Connectivity Programme

2579. DR. R LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has not chosen any tier II and III city from State of Tamil Nadu under Regional and Remote Area Air Connectivity Programme, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) whether Government will come forward hereafter to choose any Tier II and Tier III city to be developed as no-frills/low cost airports, and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (DR MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Regional connectivity is the priority of the Government. The Draft Civil Aviation Policy-2015 released in October, 2015 envisages implementation of Regional connectivity scheme at affordable fares to cater to the middle class income bracket by revival of unserved city pairs by way of concessions, cost effective security & safety solutions and Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for airline operators. However, as per approved winter schedule - 2015, Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Trichy and Tuticorin in the State of Tamil Nadu have air connectivity.

Cargo terminal at Raipur Airport

†2580. DR. BHUSHAN LAL JANGDE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating on the fact that industries would benefit by converting the old terminal of the Raipur Airport of Chhattisgarh, into cargo terminal; and

(b) whether the Government also proposes to start air services by developing commercial airport at Raigarh, because Raigarh is developed as industrial centre in Chhattisgarh and has lots of potential for air traffic?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (DR MAHESH SHARMA): (a) The existing old/redundant passenger Terminal at Raipur Airport has been converted into a Common User Domestic Cargo Terminal (CUDCT) for promoting air cargo growth in the region. Air Cargo Terminals including international and domestic cargo facilities at the airports of Airports Authority of India and Joint Venture airports are developed by the respective airport operators from time to time based on their assessment of existing market conditions and future potential for such facilities.

(b) The Government has not received any proposal from Government of Chhattisgarh for setting up of airport at Raigarh as per the format of Greenfield Airport Policy. However, Airports Authority of India (AAI) and Government of Chhattisgarh (GoCG) had signed an agreement on 23.7.2013 for construction of Kondatarai (Raigarh) Airport in "Chhattisgarh. As per the MoU, the State Government is yet to provide the requisite land and the funds to AAI.

Solar powered airports

2581. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken cognisance of the fact that the Cochin

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.