

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No scheduled operator including private scheduled operator is operating flights to the following states:—

- (i) Arunachal Pradesh
- (ii) Himachal Pradesh
- (iii) Sikkim
- (iv) Uttaranchal

(b) and (c) Government is encouraging regional connectivity by giving various incentives to airlines such as exempting all aircraft of less than 80 seat capacity in scheduled services from payment of landing charges, notifying sale of ATF to turbo-prop aircraft as 'declared goods' under Central Sales Tax Act etc.

(d) 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. As such, the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of Route Dispersal Guidelines issued by the Government.

Deficiency in service of IA and AI

1323. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the quality of service and performance of Indian Airlines/Air India are on the decline as compared to those of private airways;

(b) if so, whether is it due to human failure or system failure;

(c) whether Government have taken cognizance of the deficiency/inadequacy; and

(d) if so, what corrective measures have been taken to match the performance with private airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Constant efforts are made by the PSU airlines to improve and upgrade their services to the satisfaction of the customers. Some of these steps include (i) Dry lease of aircrafts to meet the present shortage of capacity (ii) Code Share agreement and joint ventures with other airlines to expand market reach (iii) Introduction of customer friendly schedules, focus on on-time performance (iv) Computerisation of Reservations and check-in procedures (v) Special attention given to unaccompanied minors, aged passengers, wheel chair cases etc. (vi) Setting up of Task Forces and Committees to look into aspects of improving services (vii) Holding of customer relation skill programme for the staff to enhance their awareness of customer need.

Development of airports in Madhya Pradesh

†1324. SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the names of airports for which land has been provided by Madhya Pradesh Government to Airports Authority of India;

(b) whether the development works have been completed there; and

(c) if not, the present status of the development work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) State Government of Madhya Pradesh has provided land for development of the Khajuraho airport (355 acres), Jabalpur (37 acres) and Indore (25 acres).

(b) and (c) The development work i.e., extension of runway of Jabalpur and Indore have already been completed. Runway extension work at Khajuraho was scheduled to be completed in June, 2004. However, the progress at Khajuraho is delayed on account of the action to be undertaken on the part of the State Government for diversion of canals, construction of approach link roads and cutting of hillocks etc.

White paper on Open Air Policy

1325. SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating "Open Air Policy" in the globalisation scenario;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.