

Production of civilian airplanes

324. SHRI MD. NADIMUL HAQUE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the country is capable of producing commercially viable passenger airplanes for civilians at present;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including latest available data on production plants and units produced;
- (c) if not, what plans are being implemented, if any, for production of these airplanes;
- (d) whether the Ministry has data of number of foreign aircrafts imported by Air India over the last three years and costs incurred on the same, and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI): (a) to (c) The existing aviation and aerospace manufacturing eco-system in India has enabled the development and manufacturing of commercially viable passenger airplanes for civilian use. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) had produced over 80 AVRO (HS-748) aircraft with a seating capacity of 36 passengers for commuter operations. Presently, HAL is manufacturing the 19-seater Dorniel-228 aircraft for providing regional air connectivity. Certificate of Airworthiness for two of these aircraft has been received by HAL from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

Separately, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has developed the experimental version of SARAS, which is a multi-role civilian aircraft in the 14-seater aircraft capacity.

In a meeting of the Committee of Secretaries held on 18 May 2018, it was decided to encourage the development of the Regional Transport Aircraft (RTA) in India through the formation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) with the participation of HAL, National Aerospace Laboratories and Aeronautical Development Agency. In pursuance of the decisions of this meeting, a Committee was constituted with these entities for creation

of the SPV for development of the RTA in India. Further, a Committee of Experts was constituted on the manufacture of aircraft, helicopters and associated equipment in India for the civil aviation sector.

(d) and (e) As per data furnished by Air India, it had imported 9 aircraft at a cost of USD 1.19 billion since 1 January 2016.

Steps to cut operational cost of domestic airlines

325. SHRI MAHESH PODDAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that domestic airlines in the country are facing difficulty in making profit due to certain policies like excise duty on jet fuel but do not get credit for this in final tax liability on air fare charged to flyer in the form of GST;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government is taking any favourable steps to remove these bottlenecks and help domestic airlines to cut their operational cost; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI): (a) to (b) Due to the rising prices of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF), depreciation of the Indian rupee against the U.S. Dollar, the global economic slowdown and lower yields due to higher competition among Indian airline operators, the gap between revenue and expenses has widened which has adversely affected their profitability.

(c) and (d) The Government has constantly been responding to industry conditions and undertaking specific measures to facilitate and enable growth of the sector. Steps also include reduction of Central Excise Duty applicable on ATF from 14% to 11% *w.e.f.* 11 October, 2018 and rationalization of various Goods and Service Tax (GST) provisions with a view to improve the overall performance of the civil aviation sector.

Delayed flights of Air India

326. DR. ASHOK BAJPAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that number of delayed flights in Air India are higher than any other air operator in the country;