

Parl panel to review disinvestment of Air India, Pawan Hans tomorrow

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Disinvestment of national carrier Air India and Pawan Hans Limited would come under view of a Parliamentary panel on Tuesday. While a group of Ministers, headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, is looking into various aspects of the proposed disinvestment of Air India, the Government has already decided to sell its entire 51 per cent stake in Pawan Hans Ltd (PHL), in which the rest 49 per cent holding is with the ONGC.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture will hear the views of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), Air India and Pawan Hans on the disinvestment of Air India and Pawan Hans on August 8, as per the panel's

schedule.

The 31-member panel is headed by Trinamool Congress member Mukul Roy and has 21 MPs from the Lok Sabha. The members include those from the Congress, BJP, BJD, SP, CPI(M) and TDP.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) had on October 27 last year given its in-principle approval for strategic disinvestment of profit-making Pawan Hans.

On June 28, the CCAE gave its in-principle approval for considering strategic disinvestment of Air India and five of its subsidiaries. The employees' unions at both Air India and Pawan Hans are opposed to the privatisation of the two Government-run entities.

Air Corporation Employees Union (ACEU), which is a grouping of Air India's non-technical staff and comprises nearly 8,000 of the total 21,137 employees, has termed the decision as 'arbitrary'.

Air India, which has a debt burden of more than ₹52,000 crore, is staying afloat on taxpayers money. The previous UPA government had extended bailout package worth little over ₹30,000 crore to the national carrier for a 10-year period starting from 2012.