

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO : 2409
(TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 8th August 2022)

UPGRADATION OF MADURAI AIRPORT

2409. SHRI P. WILSON

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:-

- (a) the proposed strategy to ensure safety of flight passengers onboard Indian flights in light of rise in cases of malfunctions and engine problems;
- (b) whether Government has plans to include the Madurai airport as a point of call in the Bilateral Air Services Agreement (BASA) with other countries to facilitate operation of direct passenger and cargo flights by foreign airliners; and
- (c) whether Government has taken steps to expedite the airport runway expansion and declare the Madurai Airport as a 24/7 airport and International Airport and whether Government is planning to field a Permanent Plant Quarantine Officer at major airports including Madurai?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION

(GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD))

(a) Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has a laid down mechanism of conducting surveillance, spot checks, night surveillance etc. of the airlines/ organisations and personnel to ensure safety of passenger and aircraft. The observations/ findings made during surveillance, spot checks and night surveillance are provided to the airline for taking corrective action. The action taken to correct the observation are reviewed and the finding is closed. In case of violations, DGCA takes enforcement action against airline operators in accordance with laid down procedures given in Enforcement policy and Procedures Manual (EPM) which includes warning, suspension, cancellation of approval/ licence. The Government has recently held meetings and sensitized the scheduled airlines to give utmost importance to safety of operations. Various steps have been taken which inter-alia include:

- (i) Scheduled Airlines have been asked to increase their engineering related capabilities at all base stations and transit stations.
- (ii) Special audits and spot checks have been ordered by DGCA.
- (iii) Airlines have been asked to take appropriate mitigation action and greater internal surveillance to ensure safety of air operations.

(b) Madurai airport is a Customs airport and all the designated Indian carriers are free to mount operations from Madurai to foreign destinations under the ambit of bilateral Air Service Agreements (ASA) concluded by India with foreign countries as per mutually agreed capacity limits. In the case of foreign airlines, operations are governed by bilateral ASAs between India and the country of the foreign airline concerned. Any foreign airline can operate from a point in India if it is designated as a point of call in the ASA.

Currently, due to significant imbalance in the number of points of call in favour of foreign carriers, the Government of India does not grant any non-metro airport as a new point of call to any foreign carrier. Madurai is available as a point of call to the designated carriers of Sri Lanka for scheduled passenger services and to the carriers of more than 80 countries for scheduled cargo services.

(c) The work of Resurfacing of Existing Runway 09/27 for code-C type of Aircraft and associated works at Madurai Airport have been completed by Airports Authority of India (AAI) at a cost of Rs.26.2 crore in May, 2022. Airports Authority of India has requested 633.17 acre of land from State Government of Tamil Nadu for extension of Runway at Madurai airport from 2285m to 3810m for the operation of Code-E type of aircraft, Runway Strip, Apron, Parallel Taxi Track, Terminal Building, Cargo Terminal and city side development.

The watch hours of Madurai Airport at present are sufficient to cater to the current flight schedule requirement. The request for night flight operations is considered as and when a request is received from the airlines. Declaration of an airport as international airport depends upon traffic potential and demand from airlines for operation of international flights besides various other infrastructural requirements.

Plant quarantine officers are posted at major airports including Madurai airport.
