

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO : 7
(TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 4th December 2023)

CHARGES FOR INDIVIDUAL SEATS

7. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR GUPTA

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the Consumer Affairs Department has prompted Government to investigate the practice of certain airlines imposing charges for individual seats during the online check-in process; and

(b) if so, the measures being taken to ensure that passengers are accurately billed the appropriate fare at the time of booking, without any supplementary fees?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION

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

(a) Ministry of Consumer Affairs communicated if appropriate measures to safeguard consumer interests regarding the matter of web check-in could be addressed with the airlines.

(b) Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has brought out the Air Transport Circular 01 of 2021 titled "Unbundle of services and fees by scheduled airlines" and on the basis of this circular, airlines are free to charge for preferential seats.

However, the seat purchase during web check-in process is not mandatory. If the passenger doesn't wish to purchase a preferred seat, the passenger has an option to make a 'web check-in' through Auto-Assigned seat selection mode wherein the seat will be assigned free of cost few hours before departure. Additional charges are only applicable if the passenger opts to avail preferential seats during web check-in process or prior to check-in. This is also reflected on the respective airline's website.

As unbundling of services and charges thereto had the potential to make basic fare more affordable and provide the consumer an option of paying for the services which he/she wishes to avail, it was decided by the Government to allow some of the services to be unbundled and charged separately on opt-in basis.
