

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION**

Rajya Sabha

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. : 168

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 5th February 2024

CHAOS IN DELHI AIRPORT DURING FOGGY CONDITIONS

168. SHRI JAWHAR SIRCAR

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

(a) whether it is a fact that despite the Ministry's December orders and 'War Room' strategy, Delhi Airport failed to tackle massive flight delays, cancellations and chaos caused by fog, in January 2024;

(b) the reasons for Government not able to compel airlines to train adequate number of pilots to upgrade to auto land and not increasing superior CAT-III landing systems, to ensure ground-based radio navigation;

(c) as fogs are chronic, the reasons for Delhi Airport not dedicating more low-visibility taxiways with fewer turnings, like in Taipei's Taoyuan; and

(d) the reasons for airports and airlines not making satisfactory contingency arrangements for passenger amenities during fog delays?

ANSWER

**Minister of State in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION
(GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD))**

(a) The reason for cancellation & delays have primarily been due to the unprecedented Fog situation at airports situated in northern India during December 2023 & January 2024. The visibility dropped to zero metres at various airports, affecting aircraft operations.

The situation was further affected due to non-availability of Runway 28/10 at Delhi airport. Such cancellations and delays have been caused by circumstances that are beyond the control of the airlines.

While there were delays and cancellations, Delhi airport was well prepared and had taken various measures to be prepared and respond to the delays due to fog, including:

(i) Additional 130-140 manpower deployed at the airport during fog season to handle impact of NOTAM during specific hours.

(ii) At Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), there is a well staffed medical center.

(iii) There are additional 700+ seats available across the 3 terminals.

(iv) Delhi Airport has ensured that passengers of any delayed flights are offered food & beverages, as per advise of various airlines. The existing F & B operators at all terminals have capacity to serve food requirements adequately for this.

(b) Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR), Section 8, Series C, Part I, on "All Weather Operations (AWO)" which stipulates the requirement of crew to undergo CAT II/CAT III training.

In Delhi, ILS CAT-III is already operational at 04 runway ends. ILS CAT- I is operational at 03 runway ends and not feasible to upgrade to ILS CAT-III on these runway ends due to limitations of obstacle free zone and land constraints for basic strip and approach light systems.

Provision of CAT-III ILS is made at RWY 29R and new ILS has been installed and flight calibrated for ILS CAT-III.

(c) All taxiways at Delhi airport are certified for CAT-III operations. Further, Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) has published taxi

routes to be used during Low Visibility Procedure so that Taxiing aircraft will be taxied in/out on a designated taxi routes which are fully compliant for CAT III operations.

(d) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has issued fog preparedness manual to handle such situations and DGCA has issued CAR Section 3, Series M, Part IV titled 'Facilities to be provided to passengers by airlines due to denied boarding, cancellation of flights and delays in flights' in order to reduce inconvenience to the affected passenger due to delay in flight.

Under the provision of aforementioned CAR, the airline has to provide meals and refreshments/hotel accommodation/ alternate flight/ full refund to the passenger who has checked in on time depending on the expected delay beyond of its original announced scheduled time of departure.

Airlines shall not be obliged to compensate in cases where the delay is caused by a force majeure event i.e. extraordinary circumstance(s) beyond the control of the airline.
