

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
Rajya Sabha
STARRED QUESTION NO. : 218
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 16th December 2024
VARIANTS OF BOEING 737 UNDER SCANNER

218. SHRI A. D. SINGH

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

(a) whether certain variants of Boeing 737 have been put under scanner and grounded;

(b) if so, the details and the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of aircrafts of different airlines which are under investigation;

(d) the manner in which this investigation is going to affect the country's aviation industry;

(e) the role of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in this investigation; and

(f) whether this may lead to rise in the price of airfares?

ANSWER

Minister of CIVIL AVIATION (Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu)

(a) to (f) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (F) IN RESPECT OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUES. NO. 218 FOR REPLY ON 16.12.2024 REGARDING "VARIANTS OF BOEING 737 UNDER SCANNER" BY SHRI A. D. SINGH

(a) & (b) Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 -9 Max aircraft was involved in an incident of mid-cabin door plug during in-flight departure on 5th January 2024, which resulted in rapid decompression of the airplane.

Based on this incidence, FAA has currently ordered grounding of Boeing 737-9 Max aircraft fitted with mid-exit door plug only.

No such incident has been reported by Indian airlines.

FAA on 21.1.2024 has also asked operators of B737-900ER with mid-exit door plugs to carry out visual inspection and report any anomalies. The B737-900ER with mid-exit door plugs have an identical door plug design to the 737-9 MAX.

Spicejet has three B737-900ER in its fleet of which only one aircraft is operating and two are under maintenance. None of the Spicejet aircrafts has mid-exit door plugs. However, as a precautionary measure, on the directions of DGCA, the mid-exit doors of the one operational B737-900ER aircraft have been inspected visually and for operations with satisfactory results.

Further, DGCA has contacted European regulator EASA in the matter who have informed that they are currently following FAA's

Order in respect of B737-9 Max aircraft. FAA/EASA has also informed that no action is currently being contemplated on B737-8200 aircraft.

Akasa Air fleet also includes one B737-8200 aircraft inducted in August 2023 which has a mid-cabin door at the same location as the Alaska airline mid-cabin door plug.

As a precautionary measure, DGCA on 06.01.2024 directed all Indian operators with Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft to check the operation and proper closing of all over wing emergency exits by 07.01.2024 which were satisfactorily completed (Air India Express, Spicejet and Akasa).

An operational check of these mid-cabin doors was completed satisfactorily on 08.01.2024. DGCA also conducted an inspection of the aircraft on 12.01.2024 which was also satisfactory.

(c) & (d) Currently no Boeing 737 aircraft of any Indian airline is under investigation.

(e) Whenever any accident is met by any aircraft during the course of operation, then AAIB (Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau) takes over the investigation to determine the root cause of accident and later the investigation report is handed over to DGCA for taking necessary action so that future occurrences of accident can be minimized. As per Rule 3 of Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2017 the sole objective of the investigations carried out by AAIB is prevention of accidents and incidents.

(f) A rise in airfare due to this is not expected.