PROMOTING EASE OF FLYING

114.   SHRI PRAMOD TIWARI

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

(a) whether Government has held series of consultations with all stakeholders to promote "ease of flying", in light of the flight disruptions caused by fog;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) key initiatives taken so far to streamline the travel experience, reduce delays, smoothen journey during peak travel times affected by weather conditions;

(d) the present status of implementation of the Advanced Weather Observation System at fog affected airports; and

(e) the steps being taken for deployment of CATII/CATIII-Compliant crew and aircraft to

carry out low visibility operations efficiently?

ANSWER

Minister of CIVIL AVIATION   (Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu)

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

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (E) IN RESPECT OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 114 FOR REPLY ON 10.03.2025 REGARDING "PROMOTING EASE OF FLYING" BY SHRI PRAMOD TIWARI

(a) to (e): The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has conducted a series of regular consultations with airlines, airport operators, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), Airports Authority of India (AAI), Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), and Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) to ensure preparedness for the upcoming fog season. The Ministry took following initiatives to streamline the travel experience, reduce delays, during peak travel times affected by weather disruptions such as fog:

(i) Airlines were instructed to proactively communicate with passengers about potential delays/cancellations due to visibility issues and to ensure that correct passenger contact information is recorded during ticket booking.

(ii) DGCA sensitized Online Travel Agents (OTAs) for better and clear communication with passengers who are booked with them for smoother experience and convenience.

(iii) Airlines were instructed to cancel flights and provide assistance as per extant DGCA guidelines if the delay is exceeding 180 minutes.

(iv) DGCA, in close coordination with airlines, ensured the deployment of an adequate number of CAT II/CAT III-compliant crew and aircraft to carry out Low Visibility Operations efficiently during the fog period at all affected airports.

(v) Delhi Airport installed LED screens at prominent locations to provide real- time updates on visibility conditions.

(vi) Three out of four runways at the Delhi airport have activated CAT III ILS systems, including the important Runway 10/28.
(vii) Airlines were also advised for thinning of scheduling of flights during peak fog hours window to ensure smooth operations and safety.

(viii) Airlines were advised to ensure full staffing at check-in counters during peak hours to minimize inconvenience to passengers.

(ix) The new Aviation Security (AVSEC) circular allows smooth re-entry of Passengers stranded inside the aircraft due to weather/technical delays minimising inconvenience to passengers and facilitates smoother re-boarding when flight resumes.

The Automated Weather Observing Systems (AWOS) have been installed at seven airports namely Jaipur, Patna, Kolkata, Mumbai, Guwahati, Lucknow, Varanasi.

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

Before the onset of fog, every year DGCA holds meetings with aviation stakeholders such as airline operators, aerodrome operators and Indian meteorological department to check preparedness for conduct of Low visibility operation. Further, all the airlines have been directed to bring changes in their flight schedules in order to eliminate CAT II/CAT III non-compliant aircraft from operating during the fog period. Airlines are also directed to ensure scheduling of CAT II/CAT III qualified crew.

The following actions are taken before onset of fog period:

(i) Special audits of CAT II/III ILS facilities to ensure uninterrupted Air navigation Services (ANS) during for season.

(ii) Inspections to ensure that critical/sensitive areas are secured appropriately at aerodromes.