

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 854
TO BE ANSWERED ON 7TH FEBRUARY, 2018**

TELECOM SERVICES IN FLIGHTS

854. SHRI CH. MALLA REDDY:
SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has recommended introducing mobile telephony and internet services for passengers during air travel in the country's air space through satellite and terrestrial network;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon;
- (c) whether the Government has recommended setting up of specific regulations in view of several instances of interference in communication between the air traffic control and pilot and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the Government has held any consultation with the Telecommunication Service Providers (TSPs) regarding the said matter and if so, the details thereof along with the details of assessment, if any, made pertaining to additional expenses and related matters?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)**

(a) to (d) After stakeholders' consultation, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) made recommendations on 'In-Flight Connectivity' as issued on 18th January, 2018 (Details of TRAI Recommendation as in the Press Release dated 19.01.2018 attached at **Annexure A**). Government is examining the said recommendations of TRAI.

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Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 08/2018)

For immediate release

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
TRAI releases Recommendations on 'In-Flight Connectivity'

New Delhi, 19th January 2018 - The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has on 18th January 2018 issued its Recommendation on '**In-Flight Connectivity**'.

2. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) through its letter dated 10th August 2017 had communicated that there is a proposal to introduce In-Flight Connectivity (IFC) for voice data and video service over Indian airspace for domestic, international and overflying aircraft in Indian Air Space. DoT had also requested TRAI to furnish its recommendations on licensing terms and conditions for provision of IFC for voice, data and video services and associated issues such as entry fee, license fee spectrum related issues including usage charges and method of allocation and other conditions.

3. In this regard, a Consultation Paper on 'In-Flight Connectivity' was released on 29th September 2017 seeking comments of stakeholders. An OHD on the issues concerned was held on 27th November 2017.

4. After analyzing the comments received from stakeholders during the consultation and the open house discussions, TRAI has finalized its recommendation on 'In-Flight Connectivity'. The highlights of the recommendation are as follows:

- a) Both, internet and MCA service should be permitted as In-Flight Connectivity (IFC) in the Indian airspace.
- b) The operation of MCA services should be permitted with minimum height restriction of 3000 meters in Indian airspace for its compatibility with terrestrial mobile networks.
- c) Internet Services through Wi-Fi onboard should be made available when electronic devices are permitted to use only in flight/airplane mode.
- d) A separate category of "IFC, service Provider" should be created to permit IFC service in Indian airspace. The IFC service provider should be required to get itself registered with the DoT and it need not necessarily, be in Indian entity.
- e) The IFC service provider be permitted to provide IFC, services, after entering into an arrangement with Unified Licensee having appropriate authorization.
- f) If IFC service provider partners with Unified Licensee having Internet service (Category 'A') authorization for the provision of Internet services onboard as part of IFC, then (i) If the licensee also has the Commercial VSAT CUG service authorization, it can provide the satellite links also. Alternatively (ii) Unified License with National Long Distance (NLD) service: authorization can provide the satellite links.

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- g) The regulatory requirements schedule be same for both Indian registered and foreign registered airline s for offering IFC services in Indian airspace.
- h) The deployment of a gateway in India provides an effective mechanism to lawfully intercept and monitor the in-cabin internet traffic while the aircraft is in Indian airspace. Therefore, the on board Internet traffic must be routed to a Satellite Gateway on Indian soil. Such an obligation should be imposed regardless of whether the satellite in question is an Indian satellite System or not.
- i) The IFC service provider should be permitted to use either INSAT systems (Indian Satellite, System or foreign satellite capacity leased through DoS or foreign satellites outside INSAT systems in the Indian airspace.
- j) To promote the adoption of IFC services in Indian airspace, the IFC service provider should be imposed a flat annual Licence Fee of token amount of Rs1. However, the same may be reviewed and amended at a later stage, if need be.
- k) Spectrum neutral approach should be adopted subject to the condition that the frequency bands have been harmonized and coordinated for their use at the ITU. It would facilitate the IFC services in all the bands L, Ku and Ka) in which IFC services are currently being provided.
- l) The framework recommended for IFC services in Indian airspace should be made 'applicable to all types of aircrafts such as commercial airlines. Business jets, executive aircrafts etc.

5. For any clarification/information, Shri S.T. Abbas, Advisor (Networks. Spectrum and Licensing) may b" contacted at Tel. No.+91-11-23210481 or e-mail advmn@traigov.in.

Sd/-
(S. K. Gupta)
Secretary, TRAI
