

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. : 629
(To be answered on the 4th February 2021)**

EASING OF TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

629. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्री

be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether airlines are not refunding the amount paid for booking air tickets during lock down period during which flights were cancelled due to pandemic and other reasons;**
- (b) if so, the action taken for ensuring the refund of aforesaid amount paid for booking air tickets;**
- (c) whether restrictions imposed caused difficulties to the passengers who booked tickets for their journey abroad;**
- (d) if so, the details thereof including the action taken for easing the restrictions considering expiry of VISA period of Indians working abroad;**
- (e) whether the Government proposes to give permission for chartered flights to foreign countries considering the expiry of period of VISA of Indian citizen working abroad;**
- (f) if so, the details thereof; and**
- (g) whether the Government proposes to arrange chartered flights for Indian citizen to reach their place of employment in foreign countries and if so, the details thereof?**

ANSWER

Minister of State (IC) in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)

(Shri Hardeep Singh Puri)

(a) and (b): Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued circular dated 07/10/2020, pursuant to the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India's order in the case of Pravasi Legal Cell vs Union Of India directing the airlines to issue refund as per directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court.

(c): Restrictions have been imposed on international flights because of COVID-19 pandemic. This has caused difficulties to the passengers. However, international travel is being catered to by the flights under Vande Bharat Mission and Air Bubble arrangements.

(d) to (g): All efforts have been made to provide maximum connectivity to Indian expatriates desirous to fly back to their respective countries of employment. India has formalized Air Bubble agreements with 24 countries. These Air Bubble agreements provide access directly or through transit facility to more than 100 countries. Despite the entry restrictions, strict health protocols enforced by significant number of foreign countries and limitations on the number of flights, most countries are accessible through these Air Bubble agreements. In addition to the connectivity provided by Air Bubble agreements, the Vande Bharat Mission flights also carry passengers to other foreign countries with whom direct Air Bubble arrangement does not exist. Formalisation of new Air Bubble arrangements is an ongoing process and the Government is taking all necessary steps to facilitate movement of passengers.
