

(d) whether the Ministry has studied the possibility of upgrading the Madurai airport to an international airport;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL):

(a) The average daily air traffic in the A1 cities, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad was 71575, 70155, 28553, 22043 and 17844 passengers respectively during the year 2009-2010.

(b) The average daily passenger traffic at A cities Ahmedabad, Pune, Surat, Kanpur, Coimbatore are 9660, 6168, 88, 15 and 3039 passengers respectively during the year 2009-10. The air passenger traffic of A1 cities are not comparable with those of cities.

(c) The following measures have been taken by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to decongest air traffic at various airports:—

1. Performance Based Navigation [PBN] Procedures are already in place at Delhi, Mumbai Ahmedabad, Chennai and Hyderabad. 2. Cross Runway Operations at Mumbai and simultaneous use of two runways at Delhi has been implemented. 3 Rapid Exist Taxiways have been constructed at Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai to reduce runway occupancy time. 4 AAI has already undertaken the upgradation at 35 non-metro airports to handle increased air traffic at these airports. 5. Advanced Surface Movement Guidance and Control System [ASMGCS] along with Surface Movement Radar is operational at Delhi airport. 6. At the time of slot allocation during Winter and Summer Schedules, number of hourly movements is maintained in accordance with the runway capacity. 7. CAT-II ILS has been installed at Kolkata. 8. Improved ATC Procedures have been framed and Clearance Delivery Position have been established at Mumbai and Delhi airports. 9. At Delhi airport, a third runway has been made operational.

(d) to (f) There is possibility of international operations to Madurai Airport and accordingly AAI has undertaken construction of New Integrated Terminal Building Complex along with associated infrastructure to handle 500 domestic and 200 international passengers, at a time as per the norms.

FDI in domestic aviation sector

884. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering a proposal to allow foreign airlines to take up 26 per cent stake in domestic airlines;

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

(c) whether allowing 26 per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to foreign airlines is a security threat to national carriers; and

(d) if so, the reasons for allowing 26 per cent FDI to foreign airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL):

(a) to (d) The proposal to allow foreign airlines to invest in domestic airline is being examined.

Better infrastructure for air services in Himachal Pradesh

†885. SHRIMATI BIMLA KASHYAP SOOD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Shimla, Kullu, Kangra and Dharamshala districts in Himachal Pradesh, where lakhs of foreign tourists visit every year, have tremendous tourism potential;

(b) whether the airports in these places are equipped with the infrastructure for landing of only small aircrafts, having no night landing facility, thus affecting the tourism there;

(c) whether the lack of adequate air services and relatively higher air fare are also affecting the tourism there;

(d) if so, whether Government proposes to extend air strips, make available night landing facilities and provide better air services in the State; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Airports at Shimla, Kullu and Kangra are Visual Flight Rules (VFR) airports, to be used in fair weather conditions. However, Aeronautical Ground Lighting facilities have been provided at these airports for smooth operation.

(c) Government had laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country including North-East region. It is, however, upto the airlines to provide air services to specific places including airports in Himachal Pradesh depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability.

Airfares are not being regulated by the Government. Airlines are free to charge airfares as per market forces. Over the past few years airfares have varied in line with demand and market dynamics.

(d) and (e) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has plans for runway extension to the extent feasible at Shimla, Kullu and Kangra airports in Himachal Pradesh. However, night operation to Kullu, Kangra and Shimla airports are technically not feasible due to the difficult terrain.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.