

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has a Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) Section 3, Series M, Part IV, which provides for compensation and facilities to the passengers in case of denied boarding, cancellations and delays. The CAR is available on DGCA website www.dgca.nic.in. All the airlines are required to provide compensation and facilities to the affected passengers in accordance applicable provisions of the CAR.

Discriminatory treatment at USA and UK airports

790. SHRI ISHWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken cognizance of incidents at overseas airports including United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK) involving discriminatory treatment being meted out to VIP visitors from India;

(b) whether recently, Indian dignitaries in transit were denied access to the VIP lounges at the UK airports;

(c) whether Government is mulling adoption of a quid-pro-quo policy at Indian airports for foreign dignitaries in regard to free access to VIP lounges; and

(d) whether presently India has been following a one-size-fits-all protocol for foreign dignitaries at Indian airports under a standard operating procedure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) India offers use of its VIP/Ceremonial Lounge "A" at Terminal III of IGI airport, New Delhi to Heads of States, Vice President and Head of Government level dignitaries while Ceremonial Lounge "B" is offered to Cabinet Minister and above level dignitaries. There is no charge for these lounges in India as these are given to entitled categories of foreign dignitaries as a courtesy. Reciprocity is the guiding principle applied for use of lounges at airports and it is expected that countries whose VIPs avail of cost-free facilities/protocols in India must reciprocate similarly.

Merger of IA and AI

791. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what led Government to merge Air India (AI) and Indian Airlines (IA) in 2007;

(b) whether this move has given any dividend to the national exchequer;

(c) if not, whether Government is having any agenda to privatize these two airlines; and

(d) by when Government is going to restore *status-quo ante*?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) With the opening up of the aviation sector, the declining market, operating and financial performance of the airline posed a serious threat to the future survival of the two airlines on a stand alone basis with to the two airlines competing with each other on same routes. It was thus felt that in an increasing consolidating global aviation environment, where critical mass/size is a key success factor, combining the two State owned airlines into a single merged entity would equip them to survive and prosper amidst fierce global and domestic competition as it, and would also provide an opportunity to leverage and synergise their combined asset and capital base to build a stronger sustainable business. This was first discussed in a Committee of Secretaries, whose recommendations were then taken up by a GoM before approval of the Cabinet.

(b) The new company formed after merger of Air India and Indian Airlines viz. National Aviation Company of India Limited had incurred losses in the last three years due to high fuel prices, prevalent economic recession, severely low yields and load factors and hence no dividend has been declared.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) No such proposal is under consideration of the Government.

Vacant posts in BCAS

792. SHRI BHARATKUMAR RAUT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) is functioning headless and the sensitive posts including Commissioner have remained vacant for last several months;

(b) if so, the details of vacant posts in the BCAS, grade-wise;

(c) whether it is also a fact that in the absence of these officers, tasks like holding mock exercise to test the efficacy of contingency plans and operational preparedness of various agencies are not undertaken regularly;

(d) what are the reasons that security of aircrafts are left unaware; and

(e) the action Government proposes to fill these sensitive vacancies urgently in view of several mishaps taken place at various airports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir. BCAS is having its regular Commissioner and Additional Commissioner.