

- (a) whether it is a fact that the several years ago the flight between Srinagar and Dubai had been inaugurated with great fan-fare;
- (b) whether it is also a fact that the flight was suspended soon thereafter; and
- (c) whether the Minister would give some cogent reasons for this inappropriate step?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL): (a) to (c) Air India Express started operations from Srinagar to Dubai from 14th February, 2009 to coincide with the inauguration of the new international terminal at Srinagar Airport, with one weekly flight to tap the tourist and ethnic market segments. It was discontinued from January, 2010 due to mounting losses and poor load factor even after operating for a period of about one year.

Airports as international hubs

1252. SHRI AJAY SANCHETI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering a policy to make some of our airports into international hubs;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of the airports identified for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL): (a) and (b) The Union Cabinet in its meeting held on 9th May, 2013 has decided to constitute a standing Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) to remove the bottlenecks and to provide the right coordination mechanism for the development of aviation hubs in India.

(c) Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Kolkata and Chennai International Airports have been identified for development as international hubs.

Permission to domestic airlines for international services

1253. SHRI A.W. RABI BERNARD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry had consultations with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) about allowing domestic airlines to international services without restrictions in fleet size and operational experience;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the move benefits Go Air and new entrants like Air Asia and Tata-Singapore Airlines (TATA-SIA) which have evinced interest in International operations out of India and also it would improve domestic carriers' aircraft utilization and permit them to compete aggressively with foreign airlines; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL): (a) to (d) No, Sir. Consultations have, however, been made with Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to explore possibility to relax eligibility criteria based on international practices.

Free ticket scam in DGCA

1254. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a free ticket scam in the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has recently been unearthed;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government has taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL): (a) to (c) No, Sir. DGCA Circular No. AIC 02/1978 authorizes the DGCA to direct the airlines to provide seats including Observer's seats free of charge (excluding taxes and other levies, which are paid by Government) to enable DGCA officers to discharge assigned official responsibilities. Hence there are no completely free tickets.

One case of irregularity regarding fraudulent claim and impersonation to misuse the aforementioned travel facility under the provisions of above said circular has been detected. The same has been reported to Delhi police for further investigation. Apart from that necessary departmental action has also been initiated.

New airports in the country

1255. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry has given its approval for establishment of new airports in the country;