

Minister of Odisha to introduce direct international flight between Bhubaneswar and Dubai to meet the growing demand of people of Odisha for international travel and in the absence of direct flights from Odisha to Dubai and Middle East countries, the passengers face immense difficulty to go to the desired destinations;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI): (a) to (c) Indian carriers are free to mount services from any point in India including Bhubaneswar International Airport to international destinations available under bilateral agreements including Dubai, whereas foreign airlines can operate only to/from designated points of call available under respective bilateral agreements. Bhubaneswar is already available as a point of call for designated carriers of SAARC (except Afghanistan and Pakistan) and ASEAN countries with unlimited frequency/capacity entitlements. It is, therefore, upon the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and their commercial viability and the Government does not interfere in their operational plan.

In order to pursue the matter, a meeting was convened under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha, in which the officials of Ministry of Civil Aviation and various Indian and foreign airlines participated.

International service from Kannur International Airport

1459. SHRI K.K. RAGESH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Centre Government is considering to allow foreign airlines to operate from the Kannur International Airport;

(b) if so, progress of the steps taken in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI): (a) to (c) Grant of additional points of call to foreign carriers is based on the principles of reciprocity and balance of benefits. There is already an imbalance in this regard in favour of foreign airlines in a large number of Air Services

Agreements. As per current practice, the points other than metros are not being granted to foreign countries so that the hubs may be created within India and not outside of India. However, Indian carriers are free to mount services from any point in India including Kannur International Airport to international destinations available under bilateral agreements. Since operationalization of Kannur International Airport in December 2018, Indian carriers have started operating 56 flights per week to different international destinations.

Outstanding dues from private airline companies

1460. SHRIMATI JHARNA DAS BAIDYA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has any plans to announce any bail out package for the loss making private airlines companies; and
- (b) the total dues payable by the private airlines companies to Government and other agencies with respect to fuel, taxes, airport fees and all other charges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI): (a) Each airline prepares its business plan on the basis of its own market assessment and liabilities. Mobilizing financial resources and ensuring efficient operations as per business plans, are the responsibility of the airline. Government is conscious of financial difficulties faced by the airline companies. Accordingly, the Government has constantly been responding to industry conditions and undertaking specific measures to facilitate and enable growth of the sector. The major steps taken by this Ministry to help civil aviation sector include:—

- (i) Provide airport infrastructure through Airports Authority of India and the private operators.
- (ii) Provide an efficient Air Navigation System in the country.
- (iii) Regulate the aviation industry through Directorate General of Civil Aviation to ensure safety standards.
- (iv) Coordinate with all stakeholders to resolve their issues through regular interactions.
- (v) Provide Viability Gap Funding and other concessions to selected airline operators under Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) - UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) as per the scheme document.