

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION**

Rajya Sabha

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. : 966

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 10th February 2021

DIRECT FLIGHT CONNECTING KOLKATA TO LONDON

966. SHRI DEREK O' BRIEN

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether Government has denied the availability of Air India flight connecting Kolkata to London, the details thereof ?**
- (b) whether the direct Air India flight which was to be awarded to Kolkata to London was given to another metropolitan city, the details thereof ? and**
- (c) whether Government does not consider it feasible to connect London to Kolkata as its only European destination, the detail thereof ?**

ANSWER

Minister of State (IC) in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION (Shri Hardeep Singh Puri)

(a) No, Sir.

(b) & (c): Under the ambit of bilateral Air Service Agreements, the airlines are free to select whatever markets and network they wish to service and operate. It is, therefore, upon the airlines to provide air services to specific places with whichever type of aircraft they decide, depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. In accordance with Air Services Agreements concluded by India with United Kingdom, designated carriers of India and United Kingdom are free to mount operations between Kolkata and the United Kingdom including London.

During COVID period till 23rd December 2020, 19 flights were operated by Air India on Kolkata - London route. The flights from UK to India were suspended temporarily from 23rd December till 31st December 2020 in view of reports of emergence of a new strain of COVID virus in the UK. This was further extended till 07th January 2021. Further, evaluating the situation, the Ministry of Civil Aviation in consultation with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW), decided to allow limited flight connectivity to/from UK

with effect from 08th January, 2021. The MoH&FW issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for Epidemiological Surveillance & Response dated 01.01.2021 initially allowing flight movement to/from UK in a calibrated manner to five international airports i.e. Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai only.
