

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION**

Rajya Sabha

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. : 180

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 5th February 2024

STEPS TO ENHANCE THE SAFETY OF ALL AIRCRAFTS

180. SHRI JAGGESH

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

(a) whether Government is aware of the recent incident related to emergency landing of an Alaska Airlines' Boeing 737-9 Max plane after an exit door and an adjacent unoccupied seat blew out mid-air;

(b) whether Government has taken immediate steps to evaluate the safety of Boeing 737.Max series aircrafts that are being operated by scheduled Indian carriers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, and steps taken to further enhance the safety of all aircrafts being operated by scheduled Indian carriers?

ANSWER

**Minister of State in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION
(GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD))**

(a) Yes Sir, The Government is aware of the recent incident of 5th January 2024 involving Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9 aircraft in which the mid-cabin door plug broke off in-flight which resulted in rapid decompression of the airplane.

(b) & (c) Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on 6.1.2024 ordered grounding of Boeing 737-9 Max aircraft fitted with mid-exit door plug until inspections and applicable corrective actions, using a method approved by the FAA, have been performed. A total of 182 airplane are effected by the order. No Indian registered airplane were affected by the Order.

Immediately after the Alaska Airlines incident, as a precautionary measure, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on 6.1.2024 directed all Indian operators (Air India Express, Spicejet and Akasa) with Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft to check the operation and proper closing of all over wing emergency exits by 7.1.2024 which were satisfactorily completed.

The Akasa fleet also includes one B737-8200 aircraft inducted in August 2023 which has a mid-cabin door at the same location as the Alaska airline mid-cabin door plug. An operational check of these mid-cabin doors was completed satisfactorily on 8.1.2024. DGCA also conducted an inspection of the aircraft on 12.1.2024 which was also satisfactory.

FAA on 21.1.2024 also asked operators of B737-900ER with mid-exit door plugs to carry out visual inspection and report any anomalies. The 3 737-900ER with mid-exit door plugs have an identical door plug design to the 737-9 MAX. Spicejet has three B737-900ER in its fleet of which only one aircraft is operating. None of the Spicejet has mid-exit door plugs. However, as a precautionary measure, on the directions of DGCA, the mid-exit doors of the one operational B737-900ER aircraft have been inspected visually and for operations with satisfactory results.
