

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:8
ANSWERED ON:24.02.2000
AVERSION OF MID AIR CRASH
SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI;SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV (PATIL)

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the Press report published in `The Hindustan Times` New Delhi dated February 3, 2000 under the caption `Mid-air Crash averted on R-Day`;
- (b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein;
- (c) the precautionary steps taken by the Government to avoid chances of such incidents in future; and
- (d) the outcome of the enquiry held, if any, and the follow-up action taken thereon ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE
(SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (b) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 8 FOR 24.2.2000.

On 26th January 2000, as part of the Republic Day Parade flypast, a formation of three TU-142 Maircraft of Navy was required to follow a composite IL-76, AN-32 and Dornier aircraft formation.Both formations were to fly together with the TU aircraft formation trailing 32 seconds behind the IL-76 formation. However, as informed by Navy, due to constraints of maneuvering such large aircraft in formation, the Naval aircraft formation took off from its launch base in Arakonam (in Tamil Nadu) and arrived at the orbit point of departure (over Jhajjar in Haryana) a fraction of a minute early. In order to offset the effect of leaving early, the TU formation reduced speed to the minimum acceptable limit. But this itself was not found adequate and therefore the TU formation correctly gained height to create vertical separation between the two formations. Though the two formations were in close proximity of each other, both were well aware of the air situation and at no stage was there a danger of a mid-air collision. Suitable assistance was also provided to the two formations on the Radio-Telephone (RT) by Flypast control to control the situation.

Formation flypasts involve movement of a large number of aircraft in close proximity and is always conducted in good visibility. Rules for formation flypasts are well laid out. As aircraft in formation fly past through traversal of a similar course observe height separation, the risk of accidents particularly due to relative speed between them, is extremely low. To further ensure safety, visual contact is always maintained while keeping vertical/lateral separation. Measures are taken to abort the flypast if visual contact cannot be maintained or if there is likelihood of compromise of flight safety. However, as a precautionary measure, the Captain of the TU-142 lead aircraft has been thoroughly briefed.

Since flight safety was not compromised and adequate action to ensure safety had been taken, a full fledged inquiry was not considered necessary. However, investigations revealed that since the TU-142 formation was about one minute early to set out from its departure point, it had to gain height to create vertical separation between it and the IL-76 formation. Necessary fine-tuning would be done in the composition and planning of flypasts in future to cater for such contingencies.