

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SPACE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4144
ANSWERED ON:19.12.2012
SHORTAGE OF AIRCRAFT AND PILOTS IN ISRO
Ramasubbu Shri S.

Will the Minister of SPACE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is shortage of aircraft and pilots in Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO);
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the extent to which ISRO's present and future projects are likely to be affected on account of this;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any steps to bridge this shortage; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PG & PENSIONS AND IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY):

(a) National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) has two King Air B-200 aircraft for collection of scientific and high resolution aerial data using airborne sensors. One aircraft (VT-EQK) was procured in 1988 and the other aircraft (VT-EBB) was procured in 1997. Currently, one aircraft (VT-EQK) is undergoing scheduled maintenance of propeller, engine, under carriage overhaul and mandatory empennage kit installation. Subsequently, this aircraft will undergo avionics upgrade to improve the availability of the aircraft. Due to this, in the coming 6 to 8 months aerial services will be supported with only one aircraft (VT-EBB). There was shortage of pilots during the year 2006, when NRSC pilots resigned during the boom in aviation sector and also there was scarcity of pilots in the private market. With institutional arrangement by ISRO with

Indian Air Force (IAF), NRSC got pilots on deputation in 2007. Currently, NRSC has three pilots and the fourth replacement pilot is to be deputed by IAF.

(b) As on date, about 20,500 sq.km. survey for Close contour mapping of flood plains and 2,400 sq.km. for Coastal Digital Elevation Model generation is pending. After avionics upgrade and augmentation of airborne sensors, which is underway, no likely affect is foreseen on future projects of ISRO. However, at times, utilisation of the aircraft could be lower due to non availability of clear cloud free conditions over the target area and unseasonal weather patterns.

(c) Yes, Madam.

(d) The steps taken by ISRO to bridge the shortage include:-

i. ISRO has made institutional arrangement with Indian Air Force (IAF) for deputation of pilots. The deputation period is also increased from one to three years. Currently, NRSC has three pilots and the fourth

replacement pilot is to be deputed by IAF. These pilots are on rotation basis from IAF.

ii. Avionics upgrade of the older aircraft is taken up to reduce down time due to avionics system. The same will be carried out on the second aircraft subsequently.

iii. Long term maintenance contracts are executed with the aircraft maintenance agencies and most of the major scheduled maintenance activities of the aircraft are enforced to be carried out at NRSC hangar instead of mobilizing the aircraft to Mumbai to reduce time delays.