

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
CIVIL AVIATION  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1947

ANSWERED ON:05.12.2012

AI FLIGHTS TO GULF REGION

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

- (a) the details of Air India flights operating from Kerala cancelled/delayed during each of the last six months, sectorwise;
- (b) whether the Government has received any complaints/representations in this regard;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto along with the loss of revenue incurred during the said period;
- (d) whether the Government/Air India has entered into any weekly seat sharing agreement with Gulf countries;
- (e) if so, the details thereof, countrywise;
- (f) whether any study has been carried out in regard to actual demand and shortage of seats in this sector; and (g) if so, the details and outcome thereof along with the steps taken by the Government to start more services in this sector?

**Answer**

Minister of State in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL)

(a): During the period June-November, 2012, out of 5984 flights operated, 91 flights were cancelled and 1131 flights were delayed beyond 15 minutes.

(b) and (c): Yes, Madam. References have been received from Prime Minister's Office/MPs/Non-Resident Keralites regarding frequent cancellation of flights/restoration of flights from Kerala to Gulf which were affected/ withdrawn due to the agitation of a section of its pilots from 7th May to 3rd July, 2012. Pilot's strike had also impacted Air India Express flights.

On Kerala-Gulf route, Air India operated 42 flights out of 45 scheduled flights for summer schedule. 3 weekly services on Calicut-Riyadh route operated with B747 aircraft were withdrawn. However, passengers were accommodated on services operated out of Cochin. The two weekly services with B747 aircraft on Riyadh-Trivandrum- Cochin-Riyadh route were restructured to operate Riyadh-Cochin-Riyadh and passengers were accommodated on services operated out of Cochin. The agitation was called off on 3rd July, 2012. However, pilots were available for operational duties in phases. The services on Calicut-Riyadh route were restored from 9th August, 2012.

AI was again constrained to withdraw flights on Cochin-Riyadh and vv from 19.9.2012 to 26.10.2012 due to the requirement of the aircraft for Haj operations. Passengers were accommodated on services operated out of other cities. Air India Express(AIE) was also forced to curtail some of its services on Kerala-Gulf sector due to pilots agitation. AIE had 77 flights per week on Kerala-Gulf route which were reduced by 20 per cent due to strike. However, in peak season from 1.8.2012 to 16.9.2012, AIE operated 81 additional flights. AIE had restored the complete summer schedule subsequently. Due to the exigency of Haj operations, AIE was required to release 2 aircraft which necessitated cancellation of 15 flights from Kerala to Gulf between 17.9.2012 and 28.9.2012. AIE restored its entire schedule from Kerala to Gulf from 29.9.2012. In all cases of flights cancellation, the passengers of cancelled flights were accommodated on other AIAIE flights or given full refund as per their choice.

Air Management took various steps to maintain connectivity to the destinations served with the help of its executive pilots and narrow body aircraft so as to reduce the difficulties faced by the passenger.

In the current Winter Schedule, Air India Express has increased Kerala-Gulf operations to 88 flights per week. Kerala-Gulf is a strategic market for Air India and Air India Express. Consequently the flight schedules are finalized keeping in mind the responsibility towards travelling public by virtue of being a national carrier.

The loss suffered by Air India on account of pilot's strike was Rs.600 crores.

(d): No, Madam.

(e): Does not arise.

(f): No, Madam. There is no shortage of seats in the Gulf market.

(g): Does not arise.