

Title: Need to ensure air safety in private helicopters and smaller aircrafts –Laid.

SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA (GUNA) : During the past two years, we have witnessed a series of over a dozen air-crashes involving private helicopters and small aircraft. Our country runs the risk of losing its carefully nurtured leadership who may well be flying on the wings of a prayer. This raises the question of flight safety regulations and errors on the part of pilots, machines or their maintenance.

A Committee was set up by to undertake a comprehensive review of the system and procedures for the maintenance and operation of small aircrafts under the Indian Airlines Chairman, Shri Sunil Arora. A sub-committee was then formed to oversee the implementation of the findings. The reality is that inquiry committees are constituted without any desirable effect and lives are continually lost. An autonomous investigative agency of accident/incident prevention such as the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), separate from any regulatory agency, is urgently needed if we are to make a paradigm shift toward safer air travel.

It is clear that most of these accidents take place due to adverse weather conditions, human errors, age of aircraft or technical snags. Meteorology weather reports are currently conveyed with a 2-3 hour time lag to pilots. A more efficient and real time dissemination of such information may make the crucial difference, especially in visual flight rated (VFR) aircrafts such as helicopters. The synchronous link between upgradation of technology and commensurate training for pilots, periodic training for adverse weather conditions and stringent controls and checks on maintenance according to the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) standards could lower the probability of such mishaps.

I would request the Hon. Minister of Civil Aviation to inform the House regarding the recommendations of these Committees and the status of their implementation.