

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1076
ANSWERED ON:28.07.2003
LOSS DUE TO SARS
CHINTAMAN NAVSHA WANAGA

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether some flights had to be suspended due to outbreak of SARS in some countries;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the losses due to cancellation of the flights;
- (d) whether the flights have since been resumed to SARS affected countries; and
- (e) if so, the measures taken by the Government to safeguard the passenger and crew of the flight against SARS?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY)

- (a) and (b): Yes, Sir. Air India had to suspend flights to Hong Kong and curtail their operations to Singapore, Bangkok and Tokyo.
- (c): It is difficult to quantify the losses purely due to outbreak of SARS as simultaneously, there were hostilities in Iraq and refusal by pilots of Air India to operate which also resulted in cancellation of flights and losses.
- (d): Effective June 1, 2003 Air India resumed flights to Bangkok and Tokyo. As Hong Kong was the worst affected by SARS, the Hong Kong terminator flights have not been re-introduced till date, due to a subdued market. However, the two flights to Osaka via Hong Kong commenced effective July 11, 2003.
- (e): Air India's Management had taken all possible precautions in accordance with the guidelines issued by WHO and IATA. All the crew members have been provided with masks. Fumigation in the aircraft was being done as per the laid down guidelines. Special detergents were being provided for cleaning. Rigorous screening of passengers was being undertaken by the health authorities of the respective countries at Hong Kong and Singapore airport prior to departure to prevent spreading of this disease. Similarly, Indian Health Authorities undertook comprehensive screening of passengers arriving from all affected countries. Air India also made arrangements so that the crew did not have night halts in these cities. Several health advisories were issued to the cabin crew, cockpit crew, ground maintenance crew and all the employees about the disease itself, how to handle a suspected case of SARS on board, precautions to be taken while visiting SARS affected cities on duty, and on return.