

## PCAA suffered Rs 8.5 billion loss due to air space closure: Minister

Federal Minister for Aviation Ghulam Sarwar Khan has said that Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority has suffered a loss of Rs 8.5 billion, owing to air space restrictions since February 2019 in the wake of aftermaths of Indian transgress; but this closure hit Indian Aviation drastically hard as compare to Pakistan; he apprised the loss margin of India is almost double. "But at this juncture of time, détente and harmony is required from both sides", he remarked.

Speaking at a press conference held today (Thursday) at CAA Headquarters he clarified that the plan of restructuring of CAA is purely on technical grounds and would infuse new momentum in the organization. The recent bifurcation of CAA functions into regulatory roles vis-à-vis commercial/service provider roles is simply to optimize the efficiency and performance. He ruled out any downsizing/rightsizing in PCAA due to bifurcation as it would spur growth in national aviation and fetch far-reaching benefits.

Mentioning the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan, he said that it is our priority to revamp the PIA and increase its fleet to 45 by phasing-in of 14 new aircraft on gradual basis by the year 2025.

He further said that, earlier owing to open sky policies our domestic airlines would not have space to expand their operations. Therefore, now open sky policy has been switched over to fair sky policy which offers equal opportunity to domestic air operators to grow their business.

"In this regard all of the Air Services Agreements (ASAs) with various countries will be reviewed in the interest of Pakistan", he added.

In pursuing New Aviation Policy 2019 (NAP 2019) he acknowledged that security agencies would be equipped with latest security equipment and scanners to meet the international security standards.

Minister also expressed his pleasure on the resumption of British Airways flights and said that many other international airlines are also approaching to start their operations in Pakistan. In this regard initial security surveys / inspections are underway by various international airlines.

Responding to a question, he clarified that there is no plan to shift the headquarters of CAA, PIA or ASF to Islamabad. However, he argued that approximately 60% of aviation related activities have already been shifted to northern part of Pakistan, accordingly more manpower may be deployed at the capital city.

In response to another question he made clear that no airport of Pakistan is being handed over to Qatar, and whatever has been reported on this matter was speculations only.

Replying to question regarding the waiving-of housing and landing charges on aircraft he said that it aims to ease-out the operational cost of airlines and to promote healthy competition.

Spokesperson

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority

