

Need to increase the retirement age for commercial pilots, especially in domestic sector in the country.-laid

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY (SARAN): There is a need to increase the mandatory retirement age for commercial pilots in India from 65 to 67 years, particularly in the domestic sector, which covers 90% of the total traffic. Indian aviation is witnessing an unprecedented boom, with airlines ordering over 3,000 new aircraft in next decade, leading to a significant increase in pilot requirements. Facing similar capacity crunches, Japan and Argentina recently raised their pilot retirement ages to 68 years, and countries like Australia, New Zealand, and Canada have abolished maximum age limits entirely for domestic operations. They prioritize rigorous bi-annual medical, cognitive, and simulator assessments over an arbitrary chronological number. While a First Officer can be trained relatively quickly, developing a Captain, Trainer and Instructor requires thousands of flight hours. Raising the retirement age keeps experienced pilots in command longer, giving younger pilots more time to safely upgrade. Economically, this extension also drastically reduces Indian airlines' reliance on expensive foreign expatriate pilots. The adoption of a similar health-based extension framework can meet growing passenger demand and maintain a pool of trained pilots, while ensuring passenger safety. Hence, I propose to extend the professional flying age for Captains in India to a minimum of two years.