

# Govt. wants to keep look-out circular details under wraps

Several international travellers intercepted at airports

**VIJAITA SINGH**  
NEW DELHI

Wary of embarrassment he might face if stopped at the airport by immigration officials, a politician from Jammu and Kashmir has written to the authorities seeking to know if his name is on the “no-fly” list that bars him from travelling abroad.

Worried over his ailing sister in the U.K., the politician, who does not want to be identified, wanted to check all safety boxes before he takes the journey to Delhi to board the onward international flight.

“I do not want to be made into a spectacle at the Delhi airport, where the immigration authorities stop me and take me aside for questioning. It will be an embarrassment for the family,” he said.

In April, Aakar Patel, chair of the human rights organisation Amnesty International India, was stopped at the Bengaluru airport on the basis of a look-out circular (LOC) generated by the CBI. He said, “You don’t realise there is an LOC against you until forced away from the airport.”

The opaque system under which LOCs are issued is such that a person will not be able to know if such a circular exists against him or

**Obstacle course** | Several persons have approached courts after they were caught unawares at airports while trying to fly abroad due to the Look Out Circulars issued against them

## Who can generate LOCs?

Authorised officers, including an officer not below the rank of deputy secretary, district magistrates, superintendents of police and heads of Public Sector banks



## LEGAL TANGLE

**January 12:** Delhi High Court quashes the LOC issued by the Income Tax Department against a businessman

**April 5:** Punjab and Haryana

High Court quashes the LOC against Noor Paul

**April 16:** A Delhi court asks CBI to withdraw LOC against Aakar Patel, chair, Amnesty International India

**May 5:** Centre moves Supreme Court against the paragraph of the Punjab HC judgment that sought changes to the MHA guidelines

her till he/she reaches the airport.

## SPECIAL

A string of court orders recently have put the spotlight on the opaque and mechanical way in which the LOCs are generated, but the Union Home Ministry is in no mood to relent.

Under the existing guidelines, LOCs are initiated by a large number of agencies which includes the CBI, Enforcement Directorate, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Income Tax Department, State police forces and intelligence agencies. It should be done by an

officer not below the rank of a district magistrate or superintendent of police.

In 2018, after liquor baron Vijay Mallya fled to the U.K., the Home Ministry brought changes to the guidelines authorising chairman, managing director and chief executives of all public sector banks to generate LOCs.

The organisations have to provide details such as the First Information Report (FIR) number.

Court case number is to be mandatorily provided apart from the name, passport number and other details.