

Fallout of Suspension of Indamer's DGCA Approval to repair aircraft – FAQ

MUMBAI:

After five people were killed in a plane crash in Ghatkopar in July 2018. The Indian civil aviation regulator, the the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), undertook an audit of Indamer Aviation Pvt Ltd, the company that had carried out repairs and maintenance of the ill-fated aircraft.

As feared, the audit unearthed a long list of malpractices at Indamer. Promptly, the DGCA ordered the [suspension](#) of aircraft maintenance and repair work carried out by Indamer at its Ahmedabad base, and partially curtailed the work it undertakes at its Mumbai base.

Restrictions imposed on Indamer are that it cannot sub-contract maintenance work and cannot carry out any maintenance and repair work at its Ahmedabad base.

The audit findings do not pertain to the King Air C-90 Ghatkopar crash.

But soon after the crash, the DGCA issued an order to audit Indamer, and the eight-day inspection carried out in July and September covered the work it undertook on other aircraft parked at its bases in Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Pune.

INDAMER, a hitherto DGCA approved Firm, used to maintain private aircraft owned by state governments and corporates.

Various FAQ spring up post Indamer's suspension.

1. What were the malpractices?

- carrying out major aircraft inspection checks without necessary tools and equipment,

-illegal cannibalisation of spare parts,

-use of locally-fabricated tools that haven't been subjected to appropriate inspection or certification to carry out critical inspection of B200 aircraft and AgustaA109 helicopters.

-inadequate facilities,

-lack of procedures, inadequate infrastructure, non-availability of required technical manpower,

-nonadherence to standard procedures wherein the organisation did not satisfactorily demonstrate compliance to the applicable regulations

These audit findings are more than sufficient grounds for an outright rejection of a new firm's application for an MRO to the DGCA.

2. What would be the immediate effect of the suspension?

The two King Air B200 aircraft, one belonging to the Gujarat government and the other to a construction major, currently being serviced by Indamer will stay grounded.

Indamer's customers will now have to look for another DGCA-approved maintenance and repair organisation (MRO) and transfer all aircraft documents and papers to the other company.

The process will take time till eternity. Other MROs are already overloaded with pending jobs. To carry out the jobs of Indamer requires Indamer like infrastructure which today has been rendered good-for-nothing. At present there is no other Indamer like MRO. To build another Indamer, is ruled out

because there are no willing investors. Till then all these Indamer's jobs would remain pending.

3. What will Indamer do now?

Indamer will have to put its house in order. It should attend to all those malpractices that have been found. Then, it can apply for a re-inspection. If everything is then found okay, the DGCA may consider to restore the approval. These require money and resources.

4. Where will the customers go?

Nowhere. They have no options but to wait for Indamer to get okay. The sooner it does, the better.

Overseas MROs – Costly proposition. Idea is beyond economical repairs.

Other MROs – They neither have spare time nor the required resources.

In-house MRO – Should have been done earlier. But it is now ruled out.

5. What is the moral of the story?

Aviation business, in general, does not have anything organic to make it a feasible proposition.

Man can not resist greed. His urge to earn a fast buck is the recipe of his disaster.

Even the Juhu airport-based Indamer, founded in 1939, who remained an MRO monarch had to resort to unfair means. It finally fell from grace in 2018. It left all its customers and its employees in the lurch. The employees – engineers, technicians, managers and clerks- would be worst affected, because a stint at Indamer will hereinafter be viewed highly negatively in aviation circles.

6. What are the Unanswered Ques?

- Why did not the DGCA routinely inspect Indamer?
- Why Indamer's customer were not more vigilant?
- Who shall be held accountable/answerable?

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