

AI Express issues termination letters to 25 crew members

- A Monitor Desk Report

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New Delhi: Air India Express has terminated at least 25 cabin crew members, a day after hundreds of employees called in sick and failed to report to work, leading to disruptions to flight operations.

According to sources within the airline, the management on Wednesday terminated cabin crew members who took sick leave between Tuesday and Wednesday due to their unprofessional behaviour, which resulted in inconvenience to thousands of passengers.

The mass sick leave was considered a pre-meditated and concerted abstention from work without any justifiable reason, violating Air India Express Limited employee service rules.

The decision to terminate the employees was made as their actions violated the conditions outlined in their employment contracts, leading

to their immediate termination.

The disruption caused by the mass sick leave affected more than 95 flights of Air India Express between Tuesday evening and Wednesday, impacting over 10,000 passengers.

The disruption in flight operations stemmed from the delay and cancellation of over 90 international and domestic flights due to cabin crew members reporting sick. In response to this, Air India Express CEO, Alope Singh, announced plans to reduce flight operations in the coming days.

Singh said that since Tuesday evening, "More than 100 cabin crew members have reported sick prior to their rostered flight duty, at the last minute, severely disrupting our operations. Because this action was mostly by colleagues assigned L1 roles, the impact was significant, disrupting 90+ flights even though other colleagues reported for duty."

He emphasized that the behaviour of a few does not represent the dedication of the majority of the airline's cabin crew, who continue to serve guests with dedication and pride.

"This action is certainly not representative of the 2,000-odd cabin crew members in the company who continue to respond to the call of duty and serve our guests with dedication and pride. I am thankful to all who are standing by the airline in this hour of crisis," he said in a statement.

Singh invited staff for discussions to address any concerns they may have and assured that all communication channels are open.

The cancellations and delays prompted the Ministry of Civil Aviation to seek a detailed report from Air India Express. The ministry urged the airline to promptly resolve the issues and ensure that passengers are provided with facilities as per DGCA norms.

Sources within the ministry revealed that cancellations and delays began on Tuesday night, continuing into Wednesday morning, which led to flight operations being curtailed due to a sudden shortage of crew members. Some senior crew members allegedly switched off their mobile phones just before flight operations, citing health issues.

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