

Air India Express crew allege workplace harassment

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 11 November, 2023



New Delhi: Tata-owned Air India Express (AIX) senior and experienced Cabin crew have expressed serious reservations about the management's actions, citing violations of the company's code of conduct guidelines.

They have accused the management of subjecting them to mental harassment and abruptly reducing their contracts.

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The cabin crew union has drafted a letter to Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, exclusively obtained by The New Indian, outlining their concerns. The letter highlights that the crew members were subjected to a scrutiny process labeled as an 'assessment.'

Subsequently, their contracts were downsized from a duration of five years to one year, a move that employees claim is supported by referencing rules that, as per their assertion, "do not exist."

Members of the AIX union have formally approached the Regional Labour Commissioner Office in Delhi, raising concerns about the management's perceived indifference and alleged unethical practices.

The Labour Commissioner's office has issued a notice to the AIX management, seeking an explanation in response to a complaint filed under sections 7(A) and 33(A) that the management is accused of violating.

According to the complaint, the management has compelled two cabin crew members to share a single room, contravening both the rules set by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and a policy established over 19 years ago.

The complainant contends that this arrangement compromises passenger safety, as the differing schedules of the crew members prevent them from accessing their rooms.

Consequently, the company is seen as jeopardizing passenger safety due to the crew members not being able to fulfill the mandated 12 hours of uninterrupted sleep stipulated by the DGCA.

When an employee, citing alleged mental harassment, decided to address the issue with the Chief Human Relations Manager, Anjali Chatterjee, the response received was dismissive.

Chatterjee reportedly remarked that the employees were replaceable, highlighting the ongoing recruitment of 150 new cabin crew members.

As outlined in the employees' complaint, the contracts of four cabin crew members were not recommended for renewal. The letter suggests that this decision was made following an assessment program for contract renewal that did not adhere to all the parameters stipulated by the management.

Furthermore, the letter accuses Megha Singhania, a member of the assessment team, of engaging in harassment and torture. Singhania is alleged to have made derogatory comments about the complexion and accent of the crew members, questioning the ability of female crew members to fulfill their roles as mothers upon returning from maternity leave.

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