

Biman's B777 grounded in Italy finally returns home

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 22 January, 2024



Dhaka: Biman Bangladesh Airlines' Boeing 777-3E9ER aircraft which had been grounded in Italy for five-months finally returned to Dhaka on January 20. The aircraft, registered as S2-AFO, was grounded for a D-check over alleged mismanagement by the Engineering and Material Management Directorate.

The newly appointed Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Muhammad Faruk Khan urgently asked Biman high officials for an update on the matter on January 18, after which the latter appeared at the ministry and informed the minister about the "D-check" issue. Then, the Minister instructed them to take effective measures to return the aircraft following completion of the essential tasks, further mentioned reports.

Finally, the aircraft returned to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital at 12:00 pm on January 20, added reports.

D-checks are comprehensive inspections and repairs of an entire aircraft in line with a maintenance programme provided by the manufacturer. The package is prepared by a maintenance organisation and approved by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

As per reports, there are some specific job cards for inspection, repair and replacement in a D-check work package. Going against it, the Engineering Directorate of Biman Bangladesh Airlines and the Italian company Atitech signed a D-check completion agreement following a tender float.

As per the agreed schedule, the B777 flew on August 14, 2023 to Atitech's hangar in Italy for 60 days for fuel tank and body repairs as well as engine hardcover strength recovery. 45 days were reserved for a D-check and the rest for total aircraft exterior painting. The 60-day period ended on November 1, 2023.

The additional grounding of the plane since November 2023 till January 2024 caused Biman financial losses of about BDT 2 crore per day, said reports. Biman operates Boeing 777s on profitable Middle East routes which are vital revenue earners. Each of these aircraft could carry over 800 passengers and transport 100 tonnes of cargo on a round trip.

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