

DGCA suspends flying training at Redbird academy

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 26 October, 2023



Pune: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) ordered suspension of flight training operations of Redbird Flight Training Academy at all its six bases in the country and Sri Lanka after preliminary findings indicate gaps in maintenance and operational practices, officials said.

The DGCA announced special maintenance audit and proficiency checks for trainers and examiners of the academy before permitting resumption of operations.

Redbird, in its response to DGCA action, stated it will adhere to the order and will not resume operations till investigation is over.

The action by apex aviation regulator comes in the wake of two incidents of crash landings of Redbirds Aircraft in Pune district in four days - Thursday and Sunday.

“These occurrences indicate gap in maintenance and operational elements. DGCA has suspended the operations of Redbird Flight Training Academy..,” order by aviation regulator stated.

The Delhi-based flying institute has been in operation since 2017 and has base locations of the academy at Baramati in Pune district, Lilabari in Assam, Gulbarga and Belgaum in Karnataka, Seoni in Madhya Pradesh and Colombo (Sri Lanka).

The institute has 42 aircraft across India. At its Baramati centre, Redbird has 18 aircraft of which 12 are Tecnam while six are Cessna-172.

Karan Mann, president, Redbird Flight Training Academy, said that following the two incidents, the academy has also instituted an internal audit to probe into the circumstances which led to the incidents.

“Besides an external audit by a civil aviation experts committee at the directions of the DGCA, there will be an internal audit too. All the company aircraft are thoroughly inspected for compliances,” Mann said.

The Academy, according to Mann, has 100,000 hours of training for flying experience. “The Academy currently holds a world record of not having any fatality during the occurrences,” Mann claimed.

Mann said the aviation academy offers a comprehensive range of courses by its own flight training organisation that uses classrooms, simulators, single and multi-engine aircraft. Courses like commercial pilot licence, private pilot licence, conversion flying and flight instructor are offered by the academy.

The DGCA in its order stated first incident on October 19 involved Tecnam P2008JC (single engine) aircraft VT-RBC which took off from runway 11 at Baramati with sole occupant on board. “During the initial climb at around 100ft, the crew experienced engine related snagging and loss of power. Crew decided to discontinue the sortie and crash landed just outside the fence towards the north of the field. This sortie was undertaken to assess the snag (abnormal noise and brake issue) observed in the previous sortie. However, he did not notify/record the snag for appropriate action by the AME,” DGCA stated.

Due to the impact, the post-crash landing aircraft sustained substantial

damage. The crew has suffered minor injuries, DGCA stated.

In the second accident on October 22 involving Tecnam P2008JC (single engine) aircraft VT-RBT, aircraft with two occupants including instructor and a trainee were carrying out general flying training sortie at Baramati.

“While climbing to a cleared altitude of 2,500 ft, the aircraft experienced loss of power. The instructor discontinued the sortie and carried out the forced landing in a field at around 2 nautical miles (NM) from the airport. After impact, the aircraft turned upside down and there was damage to the landing gear, propeller, wings and fuselage. There are no injuries to any of the occupants,” DGCA stated.

- -B