

India meets int'l standards of aviation safety says FAA

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India has retained its Category 1 status under the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) international aviation safety programme, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said Wednesday (April 12) – a development that could come as a shot in the arm for Indian airlines with international expansion ambitions.

The FAA, which is part of the US Department of Transportation, had conducted an audit of the Indian regulator DGCA from 25 to 29 October, 2021, in the areas covering aircraft operations, airworthiness and personnel licensing under its International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) programme, DGCA said in a statement Wednesday.

Under the IASA, the FAA determines whether a country's oversight of its air carriers that operate or seek to operate in the US or codeshare with a US air carrier complies with safety standards established by the United Nations International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

A codeshare is a commercial arrangement between airlines whereby one sells seats on a flight operated by the other, with each airline using their own flight number.

FAA's IASA focuses on a country's – and not individual air carriers' – ability to adhere to the international safety standards and recommended practices.

Air carriers of Category 1 countries are permitted to operate/ expand their services to destinations in the US and codeshare with US air carriers.

The FAA audit was followed by final consultations on 25-26 April, 2022, and further review by the FAA in July 2022 and September 2022, the DGCA said.

“Based on the positive outcomes of the assessment and follow-ups, FAA has informed DGCA on 12 April, 2023, that India meets the international standards for aviation safety oversight of the Chicago Convention & its Annexes and continues to retain FAA IASA Category 1 status which was last assessed in July 2018,” the DGCA said, pointing out that the development comes at a time when Indian aviation is on a high growth trajectory and domestic air carriers have major capacity induction and expansion plans.

“India, in the recent ICAO audit in November 2022, has scored an Effective Implementation (EI) of 85.65 per cent from the previous EI of 69.95 per cent, thereby enhancing its global ranking significantly,” the DGCA said.

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