

Spurt in snags: DGCA begins 2 month long special audit

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Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has started a two month long special audit of airlines following this month's spot checks that revealed that inadequate and unqualified engineering personnel are certifying carriers' planes before their departure, officials reported.

The spot checks were carried out by the aviation regulator as a result of many technical malfunctions in Indian carriers' planes in these last 45 days.

"It is also seen that airlines are resorting to frequent one-off authorisation to Category A certifying staff at transit stations which is not in line with existing regulatory provisions," the DGCA mentioned.

As per the DGCA order dated July 18, the subject of the aforementioned special audit would include facilities such as hangars and stores, equipment utilised by airline employees, airlines' quality assurance system, aircraft grounded for lack of spare parts, and airlines' maintenance control

centre.

The special audit will also pay particular attention to the availability of sufficient, suitably qualified and experienced manpower, duty time restrictions, the availability of current maintenance data for all types of aircraft, the sufficiency of aircraft turnaround time during transit, and multiple MEL releases (an aircraft is allowed to fly with certain inoperative equipment or instruments for a specific period of time, until the repairs are done).

Earlier, various technical malfunctions in Indian carriers' planes were reported, here are some that led to this decision:

Air India's Dubai-Kochi flight was diverted to Mumbai on July 21 after the pilot-in-command reported a loss in cabin pressure.

On July 21, Go First's Mumbai-Leh and Srinagar-Delhi flights faced engine snags.

A Go First flight heading from Delhi to Guwahati on July 20 was diverted to Jaipur after the A320neo aircraft's windshield cracked mid-air.

On July 17, IndiGo's Sharjah-Hyderabad flight was diverted to Karachi as a precautionary measure after pilots observed a defect in one engine.

On the night of July 16, the Calicut-Dubai flight of the Air India Express was diverted to Muscat after a burning smell was observed in the cabin mid-air.

A live bird was found in the cockpit of the Air India Express Bahrain-Kochi flight on July 15.

SpiceJet NSE -1.14 pc is also under the scanner. On July 6, the DGCA issued a show-cause notice to SpiceJet following at least eight incidents of technical malfunction in its aircraft since June 19.