



FEDERATION OF INDIAN PILOTS

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27th January 2023

To
Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia
Hon'ble Minister of Civil Aviation
Ministry of Civil Aviation,
Rajiv Gandhi Bhavan,
Safdarjung Airport,
New Delhi – 110 003

Sub: Detrimental impact of Pilots' Licence Renewal Medical Examinations (LRME) and Assessments conducted by IAF-Regarding

Sir,

We are writing to express our concerns about the current practice of requiring civilian pilots to undergo periodic pilot License Renewal Medical Examinations(LRME) at a handful of Indian Air Force Boarding centers across India and being assessed by armed forces doctors at the DGCA. We believe that this is inconsistent with international best practices and detrimental to the industry. Furthermore, valuable resources and time would be saved by the Indian Air Force by not having to divert their facilities and medical personnel for such a non-military purpose.

Internationally, such medical examinations are typically carried out by private institutions and qualified civilian medical examiners. In developed countries like the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, the medical examination of a commercial pilot is conducted by a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved Aviation Medical Examiner (AME) or Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) approved Medical Examiner, who are all certified civilian doctors. Similarly, in Europe, pilots are examined by the Aeromedical Centers (AMC) approved by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). In Australia, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) has a network of approved medical examiners and in Japan, the Japan Civil Aviation Bureau (JCAB) approves the medical examiners.

Furthermore, the policies and standards for these tests are laid down by civilian authorities in consonance with ICAO standards, and are not the same as those used by the Armed Forces.

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Due to their primary role as defence establishments, these IAF boarding centers (such as IAM Bangalore) accord defence service personnel priority over civilians and as a result, the medical examinations are often unnecessarily delayed and prolonged. Moreover, some military doctors in these boarding centers do not understand civilian requirements and the practical aspects of commercial operations and therefore, pilots are often evaluated to the same demanding standards as required of mission ready fighter pilots. This invariably results in such doctors referring commercial pilots for extensive and unnecessary secondary medical tests through external agencies that are often cumbersome and expensive.

A medically grounded commercial pilot not only suffers huge financial losses but is an expensive drain on human resources and detrimental to the civil aviation industry as a whole. This can cause disruptions in flight schedules and lead to a shortage of pilots, resulting in increased fixed costs for operators and insurance providers which are passed on to customers with a consequently negative impact on customer services. It also puts a strain on the other pilots who have to fill in for their grounded colleagues, leading to fatigue and potential safety hazards.

We request your kind intervention in the matter and most respectfully urge you to direct your ministry to effect necessary changes in policy, as it would be more appropriate for civilian pilots to be medically evaluated and assessed by accredited civilian medical institutions and specialists. This would also provide a more appropriate environment that respects the dignity and rights of civilian pilots, whilst simultaneously safeguarding the interests of the armed forces, public and the civil aviation industry at large.

Warm regards

Capt. Surinder Mehta
President, FIP

cc: Chief of Air Staff, IAF
cc: Defence Secretary
cc: Secretary, MoCA
cc: DGMS(Air)

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