The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Tatarstan Airways To Be Grounded in the Aftermath of Fatal Crash

By The Moscow Times

December 05, 2013

The agency that monitors civil aviation has recommended grounding a local airline that operated the Boeing 737-500 that crashed last month killing all 50 on board.

Rosaviatsia said in a statement on its website late Wednesday that it found breaches of the rules in Tatarstan Airlines' personnel training and rest times for flight and cabin crew.

It has called for the airline's operating certificate to be withdrawn and said other airlines in the republic of Tatarstan will face snap inspections.

The Boeing 737 crashed on Nov. 17 at Kazan International Airport after the pilots apparently lost control of the aircraft while making a "go-round" following a missed approach to land, according to the Interstate Aviation Committee, or MAK, the Moscow-based investigation body conducting the crash investigation.

Tatarstan Airlines issued a statement Thursday saying the airline was operating as usual and that it has not been told to cease operations.

"Tatarstan Airlines officially confirms that all flights are continuing normally. Information from the federal agency [Rosaviatsia] about canceling the license is of a recommendatory nature. If an official decision is taken to suspend the airline's activity, information will be given promptly."

Since the Kazan disaster, several politicians have called for new legislation to ban local airlines from using aircraft more than 20 years old. A draft bill introducing that measure has been sent to parliament.

The aircraft that crashed at Kazan was more than 20 years old. Several other Soviet-built airliners that crashed in recent years were even older.

MAK has argued that the age of an aircraft has little direct relevance to its flight-worthiness, however.

"The main aspect for safety is the airworthiness of the aircraft and not its age," MAK said in a statement last month. "There is no direct relationship between accidents and aircraft age."

MAK said its statistics showed that the number of disasters worldwide involving aircraft with 50 or more seats was the same for both planes less than five years old and those built more than 30 years ago.

Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, a loose Moscow-led political alliance of former Soviet nations, had the worst overall air safety record in the world in 2011, according to International Air Transport Association data.

While many of Russia's largest carriers have improved their reputation over recent years, poor airplane maintenance and overworked pilots are factors that industry experts believe contribute to a high accident rate among regional carriers.

Only 25 airlines in Russia and the CIS have completed the IATA's safety audit. Tatarstan Airlines is one of them.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/12/05/tatarstan-airways-to-be-grounded-in-the-aftermath-of-fatal-crash-a30256