EMPLOYEES OF GROUND HANDLER FIRM THREATEN FAST-UNTO-DEATH

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At least 1,800 employees of Cambata Aviation Private Limited (CAPL), the country's oldest private ground handler, have threatened a fast-unto-death on Monday at Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (CSIA), Mumbai, demanding payment of pending salaries and policy clearance.

This comes after the workers were almost rendered jobless, following the lack of business with the company. On August 9, the company's Chief Operating Officer A P Casserly wrote to employees to not report to work, after it lost all the airline ground handling contracts to rivals Celebi and Bird Worldwide Flight Service (BWFS).

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Last week, the workers complained against being denied entry inside the air-side premise by security forces after relevant orders from the management. “We have been demanding the payment of salaries, provident funds and policy clearance from the company for many months but the demands were not met. Last week, they even denied us entry inside the premise which indicates we no longer work. We have thus decided to protest and raise our voice,” said Anita C, a Cambata worker.

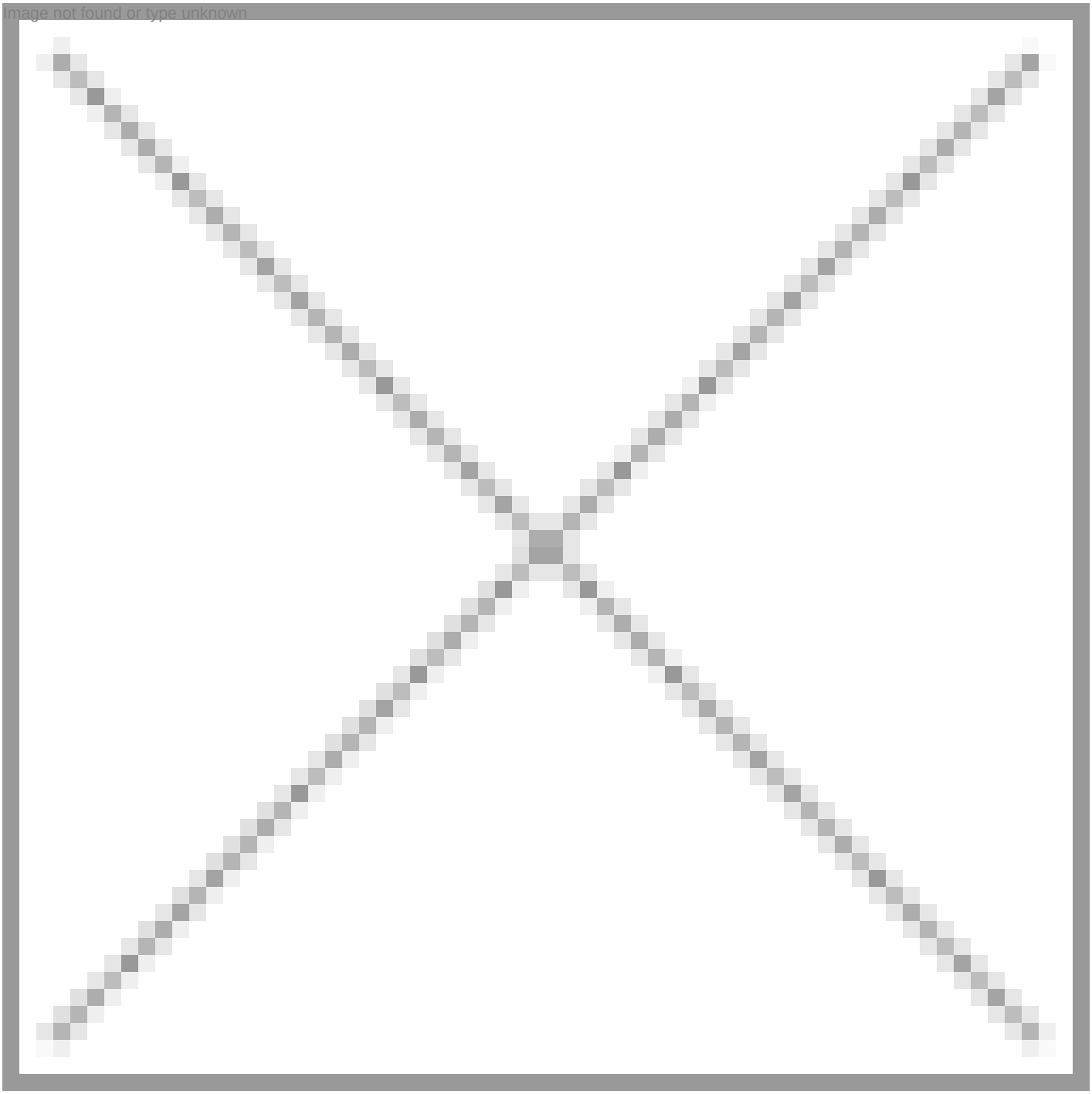
In a letter to the airport authorities and the state government officials, the Cambata workers have demanded a proper response from the Cambata officials. “What aggravates the situation is receiving no proper response from any official of Cambata on the issue. Since the past few months, non-availability of salaries has drawn a condition of starvation upon us. We demand quick redressal of our demands,” the letter read.

“We have been in talks with the workers for the past so many years.The company has lost business and we have no clients left. I had asked them to not come to work. All we are trying now is to clear our past dues,” said Casserly.

The company incorporated in 1954 have been involved in sensitive ground operations, such as baggage handling and aircraft door checks at the New Delhi and Mumbai airports for the past 35 years. Presently, handling staff from Air India, Celebi and BWFS have taken over Cambata’s business at CSIA.

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