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Management and Security at Airports in India

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Abstract

An airport includes an area used or intended for airport buildings and facilities (landing or takeoff) of aircrafts, seaplanes, heliports etc. Airport basically consists of landing area which comprises of an accessibly open space and an operationally active surface such as runway for planes to takeoff. It also includes adjacent utility buildings i.e. control towers, hangars and terminals. Larger airports may have airport aprons, taxiway bridges, air traffic control centers, passenger facilities such as restaurants, lounges and emergency services. An airport solely serving helicopters is called a heliport and for seaplanes is called a seaplane base. Airports can be classified into three categories namely civil airports (open to general public), defense airport (exclusively for defense purpose), and private airport (for private and restricted use only, not open to general public). In order to protect and maintain such facilities, security is provided at overall airport facilities including the passengers, staff etc. In this paper discussion is made regarding security of all airports in India, major incidents occurred over period of time, and how a single organization was handed over the onus of security system of overall airports in India.

Key Words: Airport, runways, takeoff, heliport.

Introduction

An airport is an aerodrome with extended facilities, mostly for commercial air transport. Airport consists of multiple facilities such as the terminal building, apron/ramp, runway, ATC tower, cargo building etc, which are to be protected and secured from unlawful interferences. When the first airport was established in India in 1928 (Juhu aerodrome) in Mumbai, the security functioning was handed over to the local state police, the state police was responsible for all the security functioning of the airports. The security at airports back then was not very rigid, the passengers and general public could easily move to and fro at airports because the civil aviation was not much at risk in India until 1971 when the first hijacking took place. General public had easy access to the terminal building and also the airside which made the perpetrators to easily plan and attack the airports as well as the aircrafts quiet easily. There are a total of 486 airports/airstrips/flying schools and

military bases in the country out of which 123 are scheduled for commercial flights, 34 international airports and 103 domestic airports, among them 137 airports are managed by Airports Authority of India who are responsible for creating, maintaining, upgrading, and managing civil aviation infrastructure in India. Airports are basically categorized on the basis of threat and risks, a total of 98 airports were under the purview of it by the intelligence inputs, as a result of which 26 airports deemed as hyper sensitive, 56 airports as sensitive, and 16 as normal. After the IC-814 incident in 1999 the central industrial security force took charge of the Jaipur airport for the first in India but the decision to deploy them at all airports was still pending and it stayed quiet low for about 2 years until the 9/11 US attacks in 2001, after that the CISF provides cover to a total of 64 international and domestic airports in India and rest are managed by the local state police with the help of para-military forces.

In India the safety patterns are looked after by the DGCA (directorate general of civil aviation), they are the statutory body and their prime onus lies in investigating aviation accidents and incidents, maintaining all regulations related to aviation and are responsible for issuance of licenses for various pilots in India. The security aspects in all the Indian airports are looked up by the BCAS(bureau of civil aviation security), it is the regulatory authority for civil aviation responsible for framing, implementation, of security programmes, security audits, trainings etc. it is headed by the DG BCAS(director general bureau of civil aviation security) who is the appropriate authority responsible for development, implementation and maintenance of national civil aviation security program, also deals with implementation of annexure 17 to Chicago convention of ICAO (international civil aviation organization), security: safeguarding civil aviation against the acts of unlawful interference. The BCAS ensures that the aviation security standards follow national and international obligations/treaties on air safety to which India is a signatory. There are a few Acts and Rules formulated and to be implemented by all the agencies and actors falling under the aviation sector across India: (i) The Aircraft Act, 1934 and The Aircraft Rules, 1937, both are entitled to regulate the manufacture, possession, use, operation, sale, import and export of Aircraft. They set the parameters for determining air worthiness, maintenance of Aircraft, conditions for flying and safety, registration of Aircraft and investigations. (ii) The Airport Authority of India act, 1994- responsible for development, finance, operation, and maintenance of all government airports in India. (iii) Aircraft (security) rules 2011- deals with air safety and security regulations for aerodromes and aircrafts.

Violation of any acts/rules are punishable resulting in fine or imprisonment. Crimes that generally fall under the purview of the law of the land are dealt by the local state police authorities.

Incidents of Hijacking in India:

The first major incident of hijack at Indian airport occurred on 30 January 1971, Indian airline flight IC-422 flying from Srinagar to Jammu was hijacked and forced to land in Lahore by JKLF (Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front), the passengers and crew were released but the aircraft was blown up.

The second incident of hijack took place on September 10th, 1976, Indian airlines flight IC-491 flying from Delhi to Jaipur was hijacked and taken to Lahore by 6 hijackers of national liberation front.

The third incident on September 29 1981, Air India flight from New Delhi to Srinagar was forced to land in Pakistan.

The fourth major incident which shook the entire nation and changed the course of security in India was the hijack of Indian airlines flight IC-814 which is also known as Kandahar incident, the flight was hijacked by 5 harakat ul-mujahidin members from Kathmandu and was taken to Amritsar-Lahore-Dubai-Kandahar. These incidents forced the government to adapt stringent security measures for the safety of public,

Some Major Introductions after the Incidents:

- Deployment of CISF at airports for security.
- Frisking of passengers and checking of hand baggage.
- Escorting of passengers to the aircraft.
- Apron and perimeter security.
- Installations of electronic devices such as, DFMD(door frame metal detector), HHMD(hand held metal detector),X-BIS(x-ray baggage inspection system), CCTV(closed circuit television).
- Secondary checks etc.

Incidents of Sabotage in India:

The first was the Meenambakkam bomb blast in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, on August 9th, 1984 an aircraft was blown up and around 33 passengers were killed and about 27 injured, TEA (Tamil Eelam Army) was suspected behind this horrifying incident.

Another was the Kanishka tragedy where the air India flight flying from Montreal-London-Delhi was blown up and crashed into the Atlantic ocean on 23rd June, 1985. These incidents raised the security standards pertaining to the aircrafts such as, screening and protection of hold luggage until loaded in the aircraft, anti sabotage checks of aircrafts, guarding of aircrafts, and access control of aircraft.

Evolution of Security System:

The IC-814 incident in 1999 made the government to revive the security structure prevailing that time and planned to bring in a single organization for security of Indian airports. The security of airports was handed over to central industrial security force in phased manner and the first induction of CISF was on February 3 2000 where they took up the security of Jaipur airport in Rajasthan, and the deployment of CISF at different airports accelerated after the 9/11 attacks in USA.

The CISF are termed as APSU/ASG (airport security unit/aviation security group) by the bureau of civil aviation security, they are solely responsible for the security of Indian airports right from checking passengers tickets, ID cards, to frisking of passengers and checking their hand luggage, security of ATC tower, terminal as well as cargo building.

Other agencies/organizations responsible for security at the airports:

POLICE- The local state police deals with the perpetrators in and around the airport premises.

IMMIGRATION- police officials are designated into the immigration department for thorough checking of passports and visas.

CUSTOMS- they deal with the illegal transportation of goods.

AIRLINE SECURITY- concerned with the security of respective airlines.

The CISF are equipped with various electronic devices for the security of airports such as, door frame metal detectors, hand held metal detectors, CCTV, explosive vapor detector, explosive trace detector, sniper dogs, body scanners (at few airports), and x-ray baggage inspection system. These devices are used to detect articles, dangerous articles/substances, explosives (IED,IID), weapons, which pose a threat to the civil aviation and its facilities and are also prohibited from being carried.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Electronic Devices.

DFMD:

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Helps in identifying metals	Proper distance to be maintained between passengers or else can give false alarm
Gives an idea of the location of metallic item present on the body	Doesn't detect replicas made of other materials
Faster way to check passengers	Detects metallic items in specific range only.

HHMD:

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Detects metals both ferrous and non ferrous	Cannot detect non metallic items
Easy to use	Cannot detect plastic explosives
Touch free checks for passengers	May give false alarm

EXPLOSIVE DETECTION EQUIPMENT(ETD/EVD):

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Detects small amount of explosive	Does not detect all explosives
Portable	Expensive
Less interpretation of results required	Training required

X-BIS:

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Time saving	Not 100% full proof
Does not cause any hazard to food or drugs	Training required
Convenience to passengers	Bigger consignments cannot be checked
Less manpower required	Regular maintenance and calibration required
Baggage can be checked for IED/weapon/dangerous goods without opening it.	Complex items hard to interpret.

X-BIS works on the principle of Atomic numbers and based on the atomic numbers it showcases four colors for the identification of items present in the baggage

Atomic number	color	Description
1-10	orange	All organic materials(food, water, paper)
11-18	Green	Inorganic materials(salt, chlorine)
19-75	Blue	Heavy metals(steel, copper, silver)
>75	Opaque	Dense objects(lead, platinum)

To access these devices, the ASG as well as airline security undergoes training conducted by the bureau of civil aviation security and they have to clear the respective examination to avail the license of screener. The license provided to the security personnel stands valid upto two years and they have to reappear for training simultaneously after the expiry of the license.

Conclusion

The present day security system at Indian airports has made look flying quiet safe compared to earlier, no such incidence of hijack or sabotage took place after the deployment of ASG and use of advanced equipment's. Though the system has drastically changed past two decades, it still lacks interms of manpower and in adopting new machineries, the technology used today stands old and needs to be advanced such as the use of body scanners which gives a clear picture of a human being as he/she passes by, though its quiet expensive but we expect it to be in operation in years to come.

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