

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I Security Scenario on Indian Railways

Incidents of sabotage on the Indian Railways (IR) have increased in frequency and intensity in the last five years. This along with frequent disruptions in rail traffic during agitations has seriously affected the public's faith in the Railway system to provide basic security to its passengers. The rail network spread over 64015 route kilometres with 7030 stations traverses both dense urban areas and sparsely populated rural areas and forest which are difficult to secure. The expenditure per passenger on security worked out to only `2.86 approximately for 2009-10.

Traditionally, the Railway Protection Force has been responsible for the security of railway assets and the state government for the enforcement of law and order. They are responsible for the security of passengers and their belongings as also that of trains, tracks, bridges and railway premises against sabotage. The state government is represented by the Government Railway Police in stations and trains and by the state police outside the station premises. The security of passengers and passenger area was also entrusted to the Railway Protection Force in 2003 through an amendment. The main purpose behind the amendment of the RPF Act was to supplement the efforts of the state governments for ensuring security of passengers.

II Why did we take up this Audit?

The terrorist attack at Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminal (Mumbai CST) in November 2008 and a couple of major incidents of sabotage in the recent past including the derailment of the Jnaneswari Express in May 2010 (which resulted in the death of 150 passengers) highlight the problems of railway security. The number of accidents on Indian Railways attributed to sabotage increased from six in 2005-06 to fourteen in 2009-10. In view of the increased security threat, Audit felt it necessary to assess the security concerns of Indian Railways.

Security Management in Indian Railways was earlier reviewed by Audit and results included in Paragraph 2.2 of Report No.9 of 2000 (Railways) of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India. In this report, Audit had highlighted the need to evolve a unified overseeing arrangement which is absent as RPF, an armed force under the control of the Railways was mainly concerned with protection of railway properties. On the other hand the State Government is responsible for maintaining law and order. The Report emphasised that the system of coordination that existed on paper between RPF and GRP at the operating level and between the Railway Administration and state governments at headquarters level has been weak in implementation. The current Report reveals that many of the issues pointed in the earlier Audit Report still persist.

III Current Report

This Performance Audit was aimed at evaluating the existing system for securing passengers and Railway property viz. tracks, bridges as well as other fixed structures including office buildings, stations etc. This Performance Audit also analyses the strategy to control crimes at railway stations and in running trains. It also assesses the preparedness of the Indian Railways to handle the enhanced threat environment.

This Performance Audit revealed that co-ordination between the RPF and the State Government is inadequate leading to large gaps in the security system of the Railways. The issue of inter-agency coordination had also been highlighted in earlier Audit Report on Security management.

There is a distinct lack of security consciousness on the part of the Railway Administration, despite recommendations of the High Level Committee on Composite Security Plan. Adequate efforts have not been made to control access to railway stations and to decongest even sensitive high risk station, unnecessarily increasing the security risk as in almost all the 74 stations test checked entry into the station premises was unrestricted because of multiple entry/exit points. The Integrated Security System (ISS) formulated in July 2008 still remains to be implemented in any of the zones (March 2011). Progress on installation of state of the art electronic surveillance system viz Door Frame Metal Detectors (DFMDs) and baggage scanners, has been slow and not up to international standards. Majority of trains were run without escort and in a number of cases the escort party was unarmed.

Crime against passengers has increased by 15 per cent during the last five years. Further, registration of crime committed on moving trains is plagued by number of problems. FIR forms were still not available with coach attendants, conductors and guards of several trains. Further, non registration of cases received from other State GRPs, general reluctance to take up investigations and considerable overlap of functions existing between the RPF and the State Government agencies handling Railway security has made it difficult to complete the legal formalities besides adding to victim's problems

Indian Railways has also failed to formulate any composite plan in consultation with the State Governments for ensuring security of its assets. Crime rate witnessed a distinct rise in the last five years. Deployment of RPF at Railway Stations, trains and Goods shed/Yards has not been modified despite a considerable increase in crime rate at these places.

Railway tracks are one of the most important Railway assets and their security is of prime importance for securing rail traffic. Security of tracks and bridges is the responsibility of State Governments. As a precautionary measure the Railway Administration carries out patrolling of track in sabotage prone areas. However, patrolling of track was being carried out sporadically on the basis of threat perception and availability of manpower. The State Police have been frequently unsuccessful in preventing large scale disruption to rail

traffic during the periods of agitation by specific groups like the Gujjar agitation and the recent Jat agitation.

Security related crisis on the railways call for better co-ordinating arrangement with other agencies for their expertise to deal with disaster like situation. Control rooms with communication facilities remained to be provided (June 2010) in all divisions of three zones (NR, ER and WR).

There was shortage of manpower to the extent of 13.16 per cent in security forces. The IR failed to redeploy man power prioritizing core operations which could have reduced the requirement of additional manpower. Both the IR and the State Governments did not respond promptly in filling up the existing vacancies for meeting the challenge of increased security threat. Railways were reluctant to outsource security even in non core areas to private agencies. The existing training facilities were frequently underutilized.

This Performance Audit revealed the low priority attached to security by IR as per passenger expenditure on security is only ` 2.86.

IV Major Audit Findings

➤ Audit conducted across the zones indicated that the issues regarding inter-agency co-ordination (between the RPF and the GRP and /or state police) pointed out by audit in its earlier Audit Report are still persisting, despite remedial action taken by the Railways. The increase in the number of accidents due to sabotage and the recent successful Rail Roko agitations indicate the need for greater cooperation and coordination between the IR and the State Governments.

(Para 2.3.1)

➤ There were large gaps in the security system formulated for ensuring passenger security at stations. The Integrated Security System (ISS) formulated in July 2008 for ensuring passenger security at stations had large gaps. Boundary walls/fencing of railway stations and provision of adequate lighting at stations was excluded from its purview. The ISS was to be implemented on 137 station by March 2010 but still remains to be implemented in any of the zones (March 2011).

(Paras 3.2.1, 3.2.3 and 3.2.5)

➤ In the context of enlarging dimensions of terrorist threat to IR's network, Security management on the IR requires a paradigm shift in attitude. No effort has been made to control access to stations. The unauthorised and/ or multiple entry /exit points on railway stations have not been closed. Thus, railway stations remain easily accessible to passengers and non-passengers alike. Even sensitive high risk stations, have not been decongested, unnecessarily increasing security risk. A test check in audit revealed that 30 per cent of the authorised entry points on the 74 stations checked in Audit were not guarded by security personnel. Further, installation of state of the art electronic surveillance system had been slow and not up to international standards. DFMDs and baggage scanners had not been installed at a

large number of exit/entry points at even the high risk stations checked by audit.

(Para 3.2)

- *For protection of railway passengers the IR provides escorts to various trains. However, train escort was provided to only thirty-two per cent of the train services provided per day. A test check by audit revealed that a number of prestigious trains like the Mumbai Rajdhani etc. and even some trains passing through naxalite affected/dacoity prone areas were unescorted. Audit observed that even the escorted trains ran unprotected at several intervals. No norms /guidelines were framed regarding the size of the escort party, whether it should be armed and which trains were to be escorted. The local Railway Administration decided the trains to be escorted based on manpower availability, threat perception, and importance of the train.*

(Para 3.3.4)

- *The present mechanism for handling passenger related crime on a moving train is not effective as the jurisdiction of occurrence of the crime is not identifiable leading to problems in registering of cases. Despite orders of 1997, FIR forms are still not available with coach attendants, conductors and guards of several trains.*

(Paras 3.3.2)

- *Study conducted across the zones indicated that total crime rate has more than doubled in the last five years. Railway Stations, trains and Goods shed/Yards were found to be most vulnerable to crime. However the Railway Administration failed to redeploy the RPF in accordance with the increase in crime rates.*

(Para 4.4.1)

- *Indian Railways has not formulated any composite plan in consultation with the state governments for ensuring safety and security of its assets especially tracks and bridges and Over Head Equipment (OHE). Instructions introducing patrolling in sabotage prone areas (February 2003) in co-ordination with the State Government were not being uniformly implemented. Further, the State Police have been frequently unsuccessful in preventing large scale disruption to rail traffic during periods of agitation. From April to December 2010, there have been 115 cases of 'rail roko' agitations, a few of which were spread over a period of three weeks leading to cancellation /diversion or rescheduling of several passenger and freight trains besides loss of revenue.*

(Paras 4.1.1 and 4.3)

- *Security related crisis on the railways calls for a better co-ordinating arrangement with other agencies for their expertise to handle disaster like situations. Audit scrutiny revealed that full scale disaster*

management exercise was not conducted in SER during 2008-10 except once each at Hatia- Muri section and Rourkela.

(Para 5.1)

- The shortage of staff in all categories of railway security forces declined from nineteen to eleven percent during the period 2005-10. However, shortages in the GRP increased from six to sixteen per cent during the same period. Though, the number of vacancies remained large, no effort was made to reorganise available manpower prioritizing core areas. The existing training facilities were frequently incomplete and consequently remained underutilized. Upgrading the training facilities was not given serious thought.

(Para 5.3.1 and 5.4.2)

V Gist of Recommendations

- Indian Railways needs to evolve mechanism for effective co-ordination between the agencies handling Railway Security viz Railway Protection Force, Government Railway Police and State police.
- Since the State Government is responsible for maintenance for law and order, an institutional mechanism needs to be evolved to ensure greater cooperation and coordination with the State Governments.
- Urgent steps need to be taken to decongest railway stations especially those in sabotage prone areas and large cities. Stations need to be properly secured by constructing boundary wall /fencing, and restricting unauthorised entry. IR needs to ensure time bound implementation of Integrated Security System (ISS)
- An effective arrangement needs to be worked out by the Railway Administration with the State Government Authorities regarding the following issues:-
 - For handling railway related crime an effective mechanism needs to be worked out especially where the jurisdiction of crime is not identifiable.
 - To ensure that a larger number of trains are escorted, better coordination between the RPF and GRP is required. Coordination between GRP authorities in neighbouring states also needs to be improved to ensure that trains run continuously with escort.
- It is essential that IR work out an arrangement with the State Government Authorities for adequate steps to intensify track patrolling and institutionalise the co-ordination mechanism with the State Government authorities to ensure security of passengers and running of trains in sabotage prone areas.
- The Indian Railways needs to integrate railway disaster management infrastructure with those of civil authorities, armed forces etc. The

current arrangement of co-ordination for rescue and relief operations with civil authorities need to be further strengthened. Better use needs to be made of infrastructure available with the armed forces like use of hover craft etc.

- *A paradigm shift in the approach towards security by IR is required. Simple low cost measures like closure of unauthorized entry/exit points need to be emphasized. Serious efforts are required to be made for securing entry /exit points and proper maintenance of the existing security equipments installed at the stations to ensure secured rail operations*