

Indian airlines hit by series of bomb threats

- A Monitor Desk Report

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New Delhi: In last 48 hours, a series of bomb threats aimed at multiple Indian flights resulted in significant disruptions.

The threats prompted emergency landings and extensive security checks. One notable incident involved an Air India flight from New Delhi to Chicago, which was diverted to Iqaluit Airport in Canada due to a hoax threat posted online.

A total of 10 flights were grounded or diverted as a result of the bomb threats, affecting services from airlines including IndiGo, SpiceJet, Akasa Air, Air India Express, and Alliance Air.

Besides, India's Bureau of Civil Aviation Security BCAS said that it is investigating the incidents and is working with cyber-security agencies, as well as police, to track down the person or people behind the suspect X handle whose identity is unknown.

News agency quoting official sources said an X handle issued threats on Tuesday (Oct 15) to four planes -- an Air India Express aircraft from Jaipur to Bengaluru via Ayodhya (IX765), a SpiceJet plane from Darbhanga to Mumbai (SG116), an Akasa Air plane from Siliguri to Bengaluru (QP 1373) and an Air India plane from Delhi to Chicago (AI 127).

The Air India Express aircraft underwent a security check at the Ayodhya airport. The SpiceJet and Akasa Air planes have landed, according to flight-tracking websites. The AI flight from Delhi to Chicago has been diverted to Canada for security checks. Precautionary measures are being taken in all the cases, aviation security sources told.

The X handle tagged the airline and police handles, claiming that bombs were placed on these planes, the sources said. Four different X handles had issued a similar threat to three international flights originating from Mumbai on Monday (Oct 14).

All the messages on Monday were declared hoax after security and intelligence agencies as well as airlines and airport operators carried out stipulated anti-terrorist security drills that are activated in case of bomb or hijack threats, the sources said.

Agencies quoting officials declared that the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has sought the help of Indian cyber-security agencies and police to trace the person or people behind these threats.

Additionally, an Indigo flight from Saudi Arabia also made an emergency landing in Jaipur following a bomb threat, an airport official said. The flight took off from Dammam airport in Saudi Arabia and was scheduled to land at Lucknow airport.

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