

Birds keep Air Traffic Control personnel on toes at Begumpet airport

The bird menace is high at the airport because of eateries that have come up near the runway at Tadbund junction.

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Hyderabad: Personnel at Air Traffic Control (ATC) in Begumpet are on their toes every time a flight ferrying VIPs or top industrialists land or take off at the airport. Reason: Threat looms large over the runway because of birds.

To grapple with the problem and prevent bird-hit incidents, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) is continuing its drive to shoo away birds from the airport by bursting firecrackers even though commercial operations were shifted to Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) here on March 22, 2008.

The AAI has entrusted the task of clearing birds from the runway to an agency, which has pressed into service over half a dozen employees to chase away birds by bursting firecrackers.

“We are leaving no stone unturned to ensure safe landing and taking off of flights at the airport in spite of shifting commercial operations to RGIA,” said Airport Director C Pattabhi.

The Begumpet airport is now used for military aviation training and for flights carrying VIPs. This apart, flights and choppers belonging to the Indian Army would land here to attend emergency duties especially to supply essential commodities in flood-hit areas.

Of late, the movement of VIP flights has gone up at the Begumpet airport. Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu has been visiting the city frequently. A few days ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to the city to inaugurate Metro Rail Project and Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES). President Ram Nath Kovind too visited the city and took part in the concluding ceremony of the World Telugu Conference. Chartered flights of industrialists also land at Begumpet.

“We are supplying material for bursting firecrackers while the agency is providing necessary manpower,” Pattabhi said.

The ATC officials always keep a tab on the runway once they get information about the arrival of a flight. Using binoculars, they scout for birds and if they notice them, a message is given to the agency to clear them.

The bird menace is high at the airport because of eateries that have come up near the runway at Tadbund junction.

“Staff from Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation also helps us in educating managements of hotels asking them not to dump garbage in open places abutting the airport,” Pattabhi added.