On-board a hijacked plane

(Navya 9th JK2)

Striking out one more day on the calendar, I said with a sigh, “Finally, there’s only three more days to go for our trip to the United States……..” Before I could finish, my sister called out to me. “Hurry up! Quick! , she said, “The movie’s going to start. Remember, I told you about it. Neerja, it’s about the brave airhostess who gave her life to save her passengers in a hijack situation.’’ Oh she was so brave! We couldn’t even have imagined putting ourselves in her boots. At the end, “We are proud to be Indians”, said us both, taking great pride.

“Kids! C’mon now! Help me out in packing”, shouted mom and the next moment we were right before her, saying, “ Yes, your Highness!” This was followed by a great roar of laughter that echoed in the house. Time flew and soon the day arrived when we were to leave. Our flight was at 1:20 am and sharp at 10 we locked up the house and left with all our luggage. As we entered the airport, the cool wind of the air conditioner passed through my face, tickling my cheeks, the shinning marble reflected the yellow lights and the wonderful aroma of the pizzas being baked in the restaurant to my left made me feel I’m on heaven. But soon the heavenly feeling vanished when I saw the long – long line at the check- in counter.

After all the check-ins and everything including mom’s shopping, we reached the boarding gates and boarded the flight. It had been a long time since we had settled down but the plane hadn’t taken off. Just then I overheard two crew members. They looked tense. I couldn’t hear them properly, they were speaking very low. But one word I heard very clearly was-‘HIJACK’. “Oh my God! There is a possibility of hijacking situation to this plane.”

I, at first, didn’t tell anything to anyone. I thought that it would be sensible to remain quiet at that point of time. The next moment, the pilot announced of take off. I took a big sigh of relief. Then, I thought that situation was under control as the crew was also calm.

Half-an-hour after the plane had taken off, when almost when everyone of the plane was sleeping, a man got up. He was hiding something. He went upto the cabin and talked to the crew. He came back with a gun, shot in air and announced that the plane has been hijacked. The screams and shouts of fear by the people irritated the man; he dragged an airhostess to the front and kept a loaded gun on her head. In the pin-drop silence, he signalled some passengers in random who seemed to be his partners. They also removed their guns and joined him. “But I don’t understand! How did they get the guns past the security check?’’ I thought. “They mustn’t have gone past the security check…..”,said a man from beside me. After a confused moment, “Staff!” we said together. Did I think so loud? Anyways, the other two men walked from one end to the other threatening anyone they see while the leader went upto the cockpit to control the pilot maybe.

Again I overheard someone talking, but this time they were the terrorists. Listening to what they talked, I said, “Oh! So this is the matter.” “What is the matter?”, said a voice from the other side of me. “Huh! Didi, you scared me. Listen, these terrorists are not the leaders, not even the one in the cockpit. Their mastermind had been arrested by the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and they have demanded of his release and a helicopter to escape for all our lives within two hours.” “Ohh! Mom……” “Didi! What are you doing? Don’t tell anything to anyone, now. It will lead to problems, nothing else and…” “Shhh… Quiet!” interrupted pne of the terrorists and we remained mum.

Rolling my eyes from here to there, I could see nothing but faces filled with fears and terror and children crying softly in their mother’s laps. “How I wish someone like Neerja Bhanot was here!” Again interrupting my thoughts a crew member announced that the plane will land in Mumbai again in the next 10 minutes. The situation was under control. The Indian Army had agreed to the demands of the terrorists. There was nothing to worry about then. The crew prepared for landing.

We reached home safely. There was only one thing that I personally regretted. Not that we could not go to the USA, but for the sake of our lives, the Indian Army agreed to the terrorists demands and set their leader free. I was completely lost in my thoughts when dad asked me to pass him the newspaper. “Wow! This is cool! Mom! Dad! Listen to this…. ‘The Indian Army was successful in recapturing the Pakistani terrorist, Raffiq Ali and his organization after the Mumbai-NewYork plane hijack….’”, I read out from the newspaper.

“All’s well that ends well’’