

SECURITY GUARDING PORTS AND DOCKYARD

Introduction

India's plan for expansion of port network under the SAGAR programme is likely to see operationalisation of large number of ports and dockyards which will be spanning the 7500 kms plus coastline. The Government's push to drive transportation of goods and trade along the country's coastal areas as well as with regional neighbours may see expansion of existing ports and development of new ports. Security of ports and dockyards assumes importance due to new threats and international norms given the potent threat of terrorism. While the major ports will be secured by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), there are a number of subsidiary ports where port management authorities may hire private security agencies (PSA) thus an overview of the security guarding at ports and dockyards assumes importance.

Aim

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the concept of port and dockyard security in India and role of guarding by PSA.

Overall Context of Port and Dockyard Security in India

The central Government is responsible for the security of 12 Major Ports in India. The security of 203 non-major (minor) ports lies with the state government/Union Territory Administration concerned. These agencies organize port security by establishing integral organization or through a network of PSA and state police. With large number of new ports coming up, State governments will come to increasingly rely on PSA for provision of security given the inherent speed in implementation and flexibility of employment.

In the larger context port security is part of coastal security which is the task of the Coast Guard and Marine police. Port security is regulated by codes adopted by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) that was introduced in the year 2002 as a part of the Safety of Life At Sea (SOLAS) convention mainly to prevent terrorist incidents. ISPS code for ports denotes a government appointed Port facility Security Officer (PFSO) responsible for implementing Port Facility Security Plan (PFSP). The PFSP contains all actions to be undertaken to avoid security breaches and on occurrence of an incident including terrorist attacks. Similarly dockyards also have a security plan for protection including sabotage.

From the perspective of guarding, actions will include protection of a shipping port and crime from sabotage, crime and other unlawful activities. PSA guards will fit into the overall PFSP or dockyard security plan and will be adhering to the norms laid down.

Security Challenges Ports and Dockyards for Guarding

Ports and dockyards are active zones with constant activity spread over a very large area. Thus security of the vast area including various pockets within having containers and other equipment provides cover for criminals and miscreants. With many cargo containers having high value goods these are attractive targets for criminals. Criminal gangs at ports and dockyards are specializing in pilferage of goods. There

is a larger vulnerability of theft, cargo pilferage, smuggling and so on at the ports. In addition there is also a concern over movement of illegal immigrants in and out of the country through smaller ports which will be on the charge of PSA in the near future. While much of the area is covered by electronic surveillance there are a large number of gaps which require physical coverage by patrols particularly at night. At dockyards sabotage of specialized shipping equipment as well as ships is also a major concern.

Considerations for Port Security by PSA

PSA could be employed by the port and dockyard authorities centrally to supplement their integral resources or shipping companies and warehouses to guard goods. While basic principles of security guarding remain the same special considerations envisaged for ports and dockyard is covered as given below:-

- PSA representatives should make themselves fully familiar with the ISPS Code and other international norms for security so that these are not violated at any time.
- Security guarding plan should conform to the PFSP or Dockyard security plan based on which integral SOP should be prepared by the PSA. The SOP should conform to the ISPS Code.
- The SOP will be based on the local conditions obtained and will include security of perimeter, the water front and restricted areas as nominated in the PFSP. In addition vulnerable areas should be separately identified and included.
- Control of access assumes importance particularly as large number of heavy vehicles to carry containers will be entering and exiting the port. Measures to ensure that designated cargo is being transported out assume importance.
- Integrated electronic and manned guarding is necessary with focus on avoiding gaps.
- Security of ware houses and particularly open goods sheds has to be undertaken by deploying manned guards with suitable barriers or alarms to detect infringement.
- Miscreants could infiltrate through the water front, which also requires to be covered by effective lighting particularly at night. Mobile lighting vans will also be necessary to beef up illumination where necessary along with night vision binoculars.
- Security of ports is designated by threat levels from normal to heightened, guarding profile for each need to be accordingly upgraded. The role of the PSA security guards at each level should be identified unambiguously and rehearsed individually as well as in groups.
- Guards would have to be deployed in small detachments and never less than a buddy pair given threat perceived as criminals will be frequently armed.
- There are restrictions on carriage of arms at ports and dockyards, thus armed guards where necessary will have to conform to the same and will be approved by the PFSP.
- Communications will have to be provided to guards as well as guarding detachments given the large area to be covered.

→ Quick reaction teams preferably mobile should be available to reinforce threatened areas if necessary and support detachments which are vulnerable.

→ Regular rehearsals as nominated by the PFSP should be carried out; in addition independent audit is recommended from time to time to ensure effective and efficient guarding.

→ Provision of ancillary services such as fire fighting and disaster management may also be considered by PSA by creating additional capabilities.

Conclusion

Security of ports and dockyards is a responsibility that will come to the PSA for which a review of the overall concept based on international and national standards is necessary. Some issues which need consideration are included herein for preparation for such a role to enable effective and efficient security of vital national assets which need to be considered and implemented based on local conditions.