

Passengers subdue man on airplane

Passengers aboard an Ethiopian Airlines jetliner on Saturday helped subdue a man attempting to break into the cockpit as the aircraft flew to Beijing from Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia.

Aviation Industry Corp of China said on Monday that one of its employees, Cao Hongguo, who was a passenger on board Flight ET604, was the first to restrain the suspect, according to a news release and a video interview of Cao sent to China Daily by the State-owned aviation giant.

More than 200 passengers on the flight have returned safely to Beijing, though they were delayed for several hours as the Boeing 777 had to make a stop at the Allama Iqbal International Airport in Lahore, Pakistan. The man was transferred to police at the airport.

Ethiopian Airlines did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday.

Cao, 37, is a senior project manager at AVIC-INTL Project Engineering Co, a subsidiary of AVIC, who oversees a water supply project in Karimenu, Kenya. He was returning to his home in Henan province to take care of his pregnant wife.

Cao said that about five hours into the flight, one of the crew members rushed into the economy class cabin and called for help. Cao followed the stewardess to the first class cabin and saw a strongly built man fiercely hitting the cockpit door, according to the news release from AVIC.

Cao tried to restrain the man, who struggled against him. Two other passengers and four stewardesses then jumped in to help.

The struggle lasted about 20 minutes with the alleged attacker ending up being tied up using headphone wires, Cao said in the video interview.

The video shows Cao with slight facial injuries.

"I don't think it's a big deal that should be taken as the action of a 'hero'. I didn't think about it at the time. I just took action when I heard someone calling for help," he said.

Kenneth Pellegrino, captain of the ET604, attached a handwritten letter to the news release from AVIC certifying Cao's actions, saying "he was instrumental" in helping handle the incident.