

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

MHA YEARENDER-2018

Major achievements of MHA: Smooth conduct of local body elections in J&K, AFPSA lifted from parts of North-East, peaceful rollout of NRC in Assam, Improvement in LWE scenario, Smart fence on Western border, Launch of single digit pan-India emergency phone number ‘112’, First India-China Agreement on Bilateral Security Cooperation and Unveiling of the National Police Memorial

New Delhi: December 14, 2018

Highlights

The Internal Security scenario during the year 2018 remained largely peaceful while the situation on the borders with Bangladesh, Myanmar and China has significantly improved. On the Western borders, the Security Forces have retaliated with equal measure to ceasefire violations and neutralised infiltration attempts. In J&K, concerted anti-militancy Operations have resulted in the elimination of a large number of terrorists while the local body elections were conducted smoothly. In the North-East, the security scenario has vastly improved during the last four years with the result the AFPSA was lifted from Meghalaya & parts of Arunachal Pradesh this year; the Draft NRC in Assam was published without any incidence of violence and the Final NRC is on course. In the hinterland, the LWE affected districts have shrunk from 76 in 2013 to just 58.

Under the Modernization of Police Forces (MPF) programme, two pilot projects of smart fencing were unveiled along the Indo-Pak International Border in Jammu. Launch of a single digit pan-India emergency phone number ‘112’, under the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS), has been heralded in Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland. MHA set up a new Division to address Women’s Safety issues while two separate portals, namely – Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC) and National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO), furthered Women’s Safety issues.

Enhancement of Centre’s share in the State Disaster Response Fund from 75% to 90%, tremendous success of e-Visa, First India-China High Level Meeting on Bilateral Security Cooperation, conduct of regular meetings of the Zonal Councils, dedication of the National Police Memorial to the nation at the hands of Prime Minister and new Police Medals instituted are some of the other highlights of the Ministry of Home Affairs during the year gone by.

J&K: Security Forces launch counter-terrorism Operations; successful conduct of local body elections

In Jammu and Kashmir, amidst recurring incidents of stone pelting in the Kashmir Valley, the Union Government took a major conciliatory initiative in May, 2018 by declaring the Suspension of Operations in the State coinciding with the holy Ramazan month; however, after a review it was not extended beyond the Ramazan period following which the Security

Forces launched concerted anti-militancy Operations resulting in significant gains. 238 terrorists were killed in as many as 587 incidents while 86 Security Forces personnel were martyred and 37 civilians killed this year as on December 2, 2108. In June the Union Ministry of Home Affairs conveyed its approval for raising two women Battalions for J&K Police.

Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh paid a 2-day visit to J&K on June 7-8, 2018 where he announced sanction of grants-in-aid amounting to Rs. 14.30 crore for Bock level sports in the state under the 'Khelo India' Scheme by the Union Sports Ministry. The Union Home Minister paid another two-day visit to J&K the next month, on July 4-5, 2018, during which he reviewed the security situation and developmental issues in the State.

On 28th September MHA announced New Initiatives in J&K undertaken by the State Government pursuant to the review meeting on 4-5 July, 2018 during Union Home Minister's visit to the state. Most significant of these was the peaceful conduct of the historic Local Body Elections. Ahead of the landmark local body elections in the State, the Union Home Minister again visited Srinagar on 23rd October and reviewed the security situation.

The local body elections helped re-establish the long overdue grassroots level democracy in J&K. The urban local body elections were held after 2005 and Panchayat elections after 2011. These elections have paved the way for making available nearly Rs. 4,335 Crores of 14th Finance Commission Central grants to the duly constituted local bodies. Central Government provided all possible support to the State Government for smooth conduct of these elections including deployment of Central forces in sufficient numbers.

The Leh and Kargil Autonomous Hill Development Councils have been strengthened and empowered to become the most autonomous councils in the country to address various issues being faced by people living in the remote areas of Ladakh region. The LAHDC & KAHDC have been given more powers to levy and collect local taxes. Control has been given over functioning of various departments as well as the Government employees working for the subjects that stand transferred to them.

Considering the crucial role being played by the Special Police Officers in anti-militancy operations in J&K, MHA enhanced their honorarium from Rs 6,000 per month to 9,000 on completion of 5 years and Rs 12,000 on completion of 15 years. MHA also approved a scheme of Rs 5.5 Lakh financial assistance to nearly 5,764 West Pakistan Refugees settled in J&K.

Peaceful North-East: AFPSA lifted from Meghalaya & parts of Arunachal; Peaceful rollout of Draft NRC; pacts with more insurgent groups

The security scenario in the North East is constantly improving. Last year recorded the lowest insurgency incidents and casualties among the civilians and security forces in two decades since 1997. While there is almost no insurgency left in Tripura and Mizoram, there has been a marked improvement in security situation in other States of the region. In the last four years since 2014, there has been 63% reduction in insurgency incidents in the region. Similarly, there is huge reduction of 83% in civilian deaths and 40% in SF casualties in 2017, compared to 2014.

Further, the lifting of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from all areas of Meghalaya on 31st March is illustration of the vast improving security scenario in the NER.

In Arunachal Pradesh also, areas under AFSPA have been reduced from 16 PS/Outposts areas bordering Assam to 8 Police Stations, besides Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts.

The Centre extended ceasefire for one more year with NSCN/NK and NSCN/R wef 28th April.

Continuing with the North-East, in a major breakthrough on repatriation of displaced Bru persons from Mizoram since 1997, an agreement was signed on 3rd July by Government of India, Governments of Mizoram and Tripura and Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) in presence of Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh, Chief Minister of Mizoram, Shri Lalthanhawla and Chief Minister of Tripura, Shri Biplab Kumar Deb.

The incident-free rollout of Draft National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a significant achievement. On 25th July, MHA issued guidelines to Assam State Government and neighbouring States to ensure maintenance of law & order in the run-up to and post-publication of Draft NRC on July 30, 2018. In the run-up to Draft NRC publication in Assam, Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh issued separate statements on 22nd & 30th July assuring that every individual will get justice and will be treated in a humane manner.

Union Home Minister chaired the 67th Plenary Session of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in Shillong on July 9-10, 2018. HM urged the eight member states for effective implementation of the recently approved financial package of Rs 4,500 crore by the Centre and directed them to focus on specific areas and better convergence of the govt. sponsored schemes.

Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas shrink, development beckons

Over the last four years, there has been a substantial improvement in the LWE scenario. Incidents of violence have seen a sharp decline while the geographical spread of LWE violence also shrunk from 76 districts in 2013 to just 58 districts. Besides, just 30 of these districts account for 90% of the LWE violence in the country. At the same time certain new districts have emerged as the focus of expansion by the Left Wing Extremists.

MHA undertook a comprehensive exercise in consultation with the States to review the affected districts in order to ensure that the deployment of resources is in sync with the changed ground reality. Accordingly, 44 districts have been excluded and 08 new districts have been added to the list of Security Related Expenditure Scheme (SRE) districts.

The Union Home Minister attended the passing out parade of 241 Bastariya Battalion of CRPF in Ambikapur, Chhattisgarh on 21st May. The 'Bastariya Battalion' that came into existence on 1st April 2017, has been created to enhance local representation in CRPF's combat layout in the Bastar area.

Internal Security: MHA sternly deals with incidents of mob lynching, vandalism and rumour mongering over the net

On the Internal Security front, MHA issued two Advisories to the States on 7th March to sternly deal with incidents of vandalism of statues in some parts of the country. Advisories were also issued to the States to deal with incidents of mob lynching. On 23rd July, Government set up a High Level Committee (HLC) chaired by the Union Home Secretary to deliberate on incidents of mob lynching; Government further decided to constitute a Group of Ministers headed by the Union Home Minister to consider the recommendations of the HLC.

On 25th October, Union Home Secretary chaired a review meeting with representatives of social media platforms on steps to check rumour-mongering and sexually abusive content over the net. This has been followed up with several meetings.

Border Management: Smart border fence unveiled

On 17th September, Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated two pilot projects of smart fencing along the Indo-Pak International Border in Jammu. The smart border fencing projects built under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) programme is the first of its kind in the country. The two projects each covering a 5.5 km border stretch along the International Border have got hi-tech surveillance system that create an invisible electronic barrier on land, water and even in air and underground and help the BSF detect and foil infiltration bids in most difficult terrains. The CIBMS is designed to guard stretches where physical surveillance is not possible either due to inhospitable terrain or riverine borders.

The Government on 19th January sanctioned raising of 6 additional Battalions of BSF having total financial implication of Rs. 2,090.94 crore. All these battalions have since been raised for deployment. A proposal for raising some additional battalions in ITBP is also under consideration.

Newly built 6th Battalion ITBP Headquarter of Jalalpur in Chhapra district of Bihar was inaugurated by Union Home Minister and Bihar Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar on 22nd April.

On July 12, 2018, Union Home Minister had interaction with Field and State Level Officers implementing the Border Area Development Programme (BADP).

Modernization of Police Forces: Launch of ERSS

Modernization of Police Forces (MPF) has been the topmost priority before the Government and the launch of single digit pan-India emergency phone number '112', under the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS), by the Union Home Minister in Himachal Pradesh on 28th November and in Nagaland on 1st December, marks a landmark milestone.

NCRB on 14th March unveiled a Mobile App template, which is a bouquet of 9 police related services, for the citizen. These services will provide smooth interface between Citizens and Police. States/UTs upon customization can host this App on their CCTNS platform through which citizens can register Police Complaint, and can check the Status of their complaint. Another feature of the App also enables a complainant to download FIR (except those categorized as "Sensitive").

Women's Safety: New Division in MHA; launch of Cyber Crime reporting portal & database of habitual sexual offenders

Women's Safety is a matter of concern for all and in order to channelize Government's efforts, the MHA created a new Division in May to address issues of Women's Safety comprehensively. This Division deals with all aspects of women safety in coordination with relevant Ministries/Departments and State Governments. It was considered to create a National Mission for the Safety of Women, with participation of stakeholder Ministries/Departments, who would undertake specified actions in a time bound manner.

These included setting up of Special Fast Track Courts (FTCs), strengthening of forensic set up and building up of National Registry of Sexual Offenders, appointing additional Public Prosecutors, and providing appropriate medical and rehabilitation facilities to victims.

On 24th October the Government constituted a GoM headed by the Union Home Minister to strengthen legal & institutional frameworks to deal with & prevent sexual harassment at workplace.

On 20th September, the Home Minister launched two separate portals to strengthen Women Safety, namely –Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC) portal to check objectionable online content and National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO) to aid in monitoring & investigation of sexual crimes. The portal “cybercrime.gov.in” receives complaints from citizens on objectionable online content related to child pornography, child sexual abuse material, sexually explicit material such as rape and gang rape. The National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO), which is accessible only to law enforcement agencies, assists in effectively tracking and investigating cases of sexual offences.

A “Handbook on legal processes for Police in respect of Crime against Children” was earlier launched on 19th June by Union Minister of Women and Child Development (WCD), Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi at a function in New Delhi. On 10th August, Union Home Minister was the chief guest at the induction ceremony of an all-Women SWAT Team of Delhi Police.

Liberalization of Visa regime, e-Visa gets hugely popular

During the last one year, the MHA has taken a series of steps to liberalize the visa process in India. Some of the major steps are described below:

The Electronic Visa Facility now covers practically all the countries of the world. Foreign nationals of 166 countries can now enjoy this facility at 26 airports and 05 seaports. The foreigner does not have to interact with any Indian official till his arrival at the immigration counter. The Bureau of Immigration (BoI) generally decides within 24-48 hours whether or not to grant an e-visa to a foreigner. The popularity of e-visa is sky rocketing. The number of foreigners who visited India on e-visa has gone up from 5.17 lakhs in 2015 to 21 lakhs this year till 30th November. The number of Visas issued through e-Visa system is now approximately 40% of the total number of Visas issued and the figure is soon expected to cross the 50% mark, which is an indication of its popularity.

Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh on 13th April launched the web-based application ‘e-FRRO’ (e-Foreigners Regional Registration Office). e-FRRO module provides 27 Visa related services to foreigners. It has proved to be very successful and has obviated the need for foreigners to visit FRRO Offices for extending their stay, change of Visa status etc.

With a view to promote flow of tourism and investment, 30 islands of Andaman & Nicobar have been excluded from the RAP regime notified under the Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963. Foreigners are also allowed to visit 11 uninhabited islands, as notified by Andaman & Nicobar Islands Admn., only for day trips without any RAP. Requirement of registration by foreigners visiting these islands has also been dispensed with.

On 1st June, the Union Home Minister launched an Online Analytical Tool for effective monitoring of FCRA remittances.

MHA Event Clearance & Investment Security Clearance become faster with online process

The Union Home Secretary Shri Rajiv Gauba on 2nd May launched the online Event Clearance System (<https://conference.mha.gov.in>) for grant of security clearance to the conference/seminar/workshop organized in India. This has enabled the Indian Missions abroad to issue Conference Visa for foreign nationals/delegates intending to attend such events.

On 18th September Union Home Secretary launched an online 'e-Sahaj' portal for grant of Security Clearance. MHA has cleared about 1,100 cases of security clearance in the past one year. Although the given timeline is 90 days, MHA strives to decide Security Clearance cases in 60 days (average time per case in 2018 is 53 days), which is being reduced further. In 2016, there were 209 cases which were over 6 months old; in 2017, this came down to 154 cases and further down to 47 cases in 2018.

International Cooperation: First India-China Agreement on bilateral Security Cooperation

On 22nd October, the First India China High Level Meeting on Bilateral Security Cooperation was held in New Delhi. Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh and Mr. Zhao Kezhi, State Councillor and Minister of Public Security of the People's Republic of China led the respective delegations. An Agreement on Security Cooperation between the Ministry of Home Affairs of India and the Ministry of Public Security of China was also signed by the two Ministers. The Agreement further strengthens and consolidates discussions and cooperation in the areas of counter-terrorism, organized crimes, drug control and other such relevant areas.

Earlier, the Union Home Minister co-chaired the 6th meeting of the Home Minister level talks with his Bangladesh counterpart, Mr. Asaduzzaman Khan in Dhaka on 15th July. The two Ministers also witnessed the signing of the Revised Travel Arrangement 2018 (RTA 2018) amending the earlier RTA 2013 for further liberalizing the visa regime between the two countries, including enhanced duration for employment and student visas. During his 3-day visit, Shri Rajnath Singh also called on the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Ms. Sheikh Hasina.

On 26th October the 22nd National Level Meeting between India & Myanmar was held in New Delhi. The Indian delegation was led by Shri Rajiv Gauba, Union Home Secretary and the Myanmar delegation was led by Major General Aung Thu, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Home Affairs. During the meeting both sides agreed to take action against insurgent groups operating within their territories. The two countries agreed on providing of security cooperation along with international border and facilitating movement of people and trade across the border.

Union Home Minister conducted a 4-day visit to Mongolia from June 21-24, 2018. During the visit, Home Minister along with the Prime Minister of Mongolia presided over the ground-breaking ceremony of Mongolia's first petrochemical refinery project. Home Minister also visited the headquarters of the Mongolian General Authority for Border Protection (GABP) and announced GOI's decision to provide a high capacity server for the GABP's main control centre in order to assist them in more efficient border management.

The Union Cabinet on 7th February approved signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC), USA and Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D), India on Law Enforcement Training.

On 28th March, the Union Cabinet approved signing of an MoU between India and United Kingdom and Northern Ireland regarding cooperation and Exchange of Information for the Purposes of Combating International Criminality and Tackling Serious Organised Crime.

Union Home Secretary Shri Rajiv Gauba co-chaired the Third Home Affairs' Dialogue between India and U.K. held in New Delhi on 30th May. Senior Officers Meeting on Homeland Security Dialogue between India and USA was held on 18th July.

The two-day meeting of the Joint Steering Committee on Homeland and Public Security of India and Israel was held on February 27-28, 2018. Capacity building and modernization in the Police Forces besides border management issues were discussed.

A delegation from Morocco visited MHA on 12th November and signed agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters with Indian team lead by MoS (Home) Shri Kiren Rijiju. The Union Cabinet had approved the Agreement on 1st November.

On 7th March, the Union Cabinet approved an Agreement between India and France on the Prevention of the Illicit Consumption and Reduction of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Chemical Precursors, and related offences.

Union Home Minister inaugurated the 2-day Asia Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in New Delhi on 14th March and the Valedictory Session was addressed by MoS (Home) Shri Kiren Rijiju.

On 6th September, the Union Home Minister inaugurated the 3-day Defence & Homeland Security Expo and Conference- 2018 in New Delhi.

Seamless Centre-State relations: Regular Meetings of Zonal Councils conducted

It has been the objective of the present Government to strengthen the institution of the Zonal Councils as well as the Inter-State Council in order to promote and maintain a good federal atmosphere of cooperation among the States and between the Centre and the States as well. As a result, during the last four years, more than 600 issues were discussed, out of which more than 400 issues resolved.

Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council (ISC) headed by the Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh, at its meeting in New Delhi on 25th May, completed the onerous task of deliberations on all the 273 recommendations of the Punchhi Commission. Earlier, the 23rd Meeting of the Western Zonal Council was chaired by Union Home Minister at Ahmedabad on 26th April. The 28th meeting of the Southern Zonal Council was held under the Chairmanship the Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh in Bengaluru on 18th September. Out of the 27 items discussed, 22 were resolved in the meeting. On 1st October, the Union Home Minister chaired the 23rd meeting of the Eastern Zonal Council in Kolkata, where 30 issues on agenda were discussed and 26 resolved.

Disaster Management gets more funds from Centre: GoI enhances its contribution to SDRF from 75 to 90%; 4 new NDRF Battalions approved

Disaster Management during natural or manmade calamity is another major responsibility the MHA has been tasked with. On 27th September, Government of India took an important decision to enhance its contribution in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) from 75% to 90%. w.e.f. 1st April 2018. Central Government will contribute 90 per cent and all States will contribute 10 per cent to the SDRF.

On 9th August, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the raising of four additional Battalions of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) at an estimated cost of Rs 637 crore. These four battalions will initially be raised as two battalions in ITBP and one battalion each in BSF and Assam Rifles. Later these four battalions will be converted into NDRF battalions. Based on the vulnerability profile, these four battalions will be placed in J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Delhi NCR. At present there are 12 Battalions in NDRF which are deployed strategically across the country to provide immediate response.

The Vice-President laid the Foundation Stone of Southern Campus building of the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) on 22nd May in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh.

The Task Force constituted by the MHA presented its report on “Establishing a Coalition on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)” to the Union Home Minister on 2nd May. MHA and ISRO signed an MoU on 20th September for setting up of an state-of-the-art Integrated Control Room for Emergency Response (ICR-ER). It will cater to the requirement of Disaster Management as well as Internal Security.

During the July-August floods in Kerala in two spells, Cabinet Secretary chaired six meetings of NCMC in as many days during August to review the flood situation in the state. Centre launched massive rescue and relief operations. In one of the largest rescue operations, 40 helicopters, 31 aircraft, 182 teams for rescue, 18 Medical Teams of Defence forces, 58 teams of NDRF, 7 companies of CAPFs were pressed into service along with over 500 boats and necessary rescue equipments. They successfully saved over 60,000 human lives by rescuing them from marooned areas and shifting them to relief camps. Defence aircrafts and helicopters made 1,084 sorties of duration 1,168 flying hours and airlifted 1,286 tonne of load and carried 3,332 rescuers.

On 21st July, a Central Team led by MoS (Home) Shri Kiren Rijiju reviewed the flood situation in Kerala, followed by a visit of the Union Home Minister to the flood affected areas of Kerala on 12th August. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi monitored the rescue & relief efforts on a daily basis and he visited the State on August 17-18, 2018.

The Centre also provided urgent aid and relief material to Kerala in a timely manner and without any reservation. Central assistance of Rs.500 crore, as announced by the Prime Minister, and Rs.100 crore, announced by the Union Home Minister, for flood affected Kerala was released to the Government of Kerala on 21st August. This was in addition to Rs.562.45 crore already made available in SDRF of the State. Later, High Level Committee (HLC) meeting held on 6th December under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister approved the additional assistance from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) of Rs 3,048.39 crore to Kerala.

On 4th August, MoS (Home) Shri Kiren Rijiju visited flood affected areas in Nagaland.

NCCM also met under chair of Cabinet Secretary on 10th October to take stock of preparatory measures in the wake of impending landfall of the cyclonic storm “TITLI” along the coast between Orissa and north Andhra Pradesh.

On 26th February, the Union Home Minister chaired a meeting of the HLC, approving assistance of Rs 1711.66 crore in respect of state of Bihar. The HLC also approved assistance from NDRF amounting to Rs 1055.05 crore for the state of Gujarat, Rs 169.63 crore for the state for Kerala, Rs 420.57 crore for the state of Rajasthan, Rs 133.05 crore for the state of Tamil Nadu, Rs 420.69 crore for the state of Uttar Pradesh, Rs 838.85 crore for West Bengal, Rs 395.91 crore for Chhattisgarh and Rs 836.09 crore for the state of Madhya Pradesh. HLC on 14th May approved Central assistance of Rs 1,161.17 crores to states of Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Rajasthan and UT of Lakshadweep. HLC in its meeting on 29th June approved additional Central Assistance to the flood/drought hit States of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. On 12th September, HLC and approved additional assistance from NDRF of Rs 157.23 crore for the state of Uttar Pradesh (affected by rabi drought during 2017-18) and Rs 60.76 crore for the state of Maharashtra (affected by pest attack & cyclone during 2017). On 31st October, Union Home Minister approved release of 2nd installment of Central Share of SDRF amounting to Rs. 229.05 crore, in advance for the year 2018-19, to help Andhra Pradesh in providing relief measures to the people affected by the 11th October severe cyclonic storm Titli. On 19th November, HLC approved the additional assistance from NDRF of Rs. 546.21 crore to Karnataka. On 30th November, the Union Home Minister approved to release the 2nd installment of Central Share of SDRF amounting to Rs. 353.70 crore, for the year 2018-19, as an interim relief to help Tamil Nadu in providing relief measures to the people affected by cyclone Gaja. HLC meeting held on 6th December approved additional assistance from NDRF to Kerala, besides Rs. 131.16 crore to Nagaland and Rs 539.52 crore to Andhra Pradesh.

Coinciding with the Police Commemoration Day, on 21st October, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, speaking on the occasion, announced an award in the name of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, to honour those involved in disaster response operations. The award would be announced every year, recognizing the bravery and courage displayed in saving lives of people, in the wake of a disaster.

On 12th January, the two-day International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRI) was inaugurated by the Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh, in New Delhi; the Valedictory Session was addressed by MoS (Home) Shri Kiren Rijiju. The Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog, Dr. Rajiv Kumar inaugurated the First India-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction in New Delhi on 19th March, while Shri Kiren Rijiju addressed the Valedictory Session. Shri Kiren Rijiju led a high level delegation to participate in Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR), 2018 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia from 03-06 July, 2018.

Padma Awards: Record nominations as top Civilian Honours become People’s Awards

A record number of 49,992 nominations for the Padma Awards-2019 have been received which is 32 times higher over the nominations received in 2010. As against 1,313 nominations received in 2010, 18,768 were received in the year 2016 and 35,595 nominations in 2017.

The Government has transformed the Padma Awards into a 'People's Awards' in a true sense. People are encouraged to nominate unsung heroes who deserve these top Civilian awards (Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri).

The nomination process for Padma Awards was made online in the year 2016; and a simple, accessible and secure online platform was put in place to encourage citizens to participate in large numbers.

The technological intervention that has made the nomination process accessible to the people at large and the emphasis of the Government to confer Padma Awards upon unsung heroes, who are doing selfless service to the nation, have resulted in a transformation.

New Police Medals instituted

In order to recognize the gallant efforts of the CAPF personnel and encourage high standards of professionalism, the MHA announced on 28th June the institution of five Police Medals. - the Home Minister's Special Operation Medal, Antarik Suraksha Medal, Asadharan Aashuchan Padak, and Utkrisht & Ati-Utkrisht Seva Medal to promote professionalism and excellence in service and give recognition to those security personnel doing good work in stressful environment and in difficult areas. Earlier in March, the Government instituted the "Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Police Investigation" to promote high professional standards of Investigation of Crime in the State/UT Police and Central Investigating Agencies in the country. Officers from the rank of Sub-Inspector to Superintendent of Police are eligible. Based on the average crime data for the last three years, a total of 162 medals will be awarded every year; of these, 137 will be for the States/UTs and 25 for the Central Investigating Agencies. The names of awardees will be declared on 15th August every year.

National Police Memorial dedicated to the Nation

The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, dedicated the National Police Memorial to the nation, on Police Commemoration Day, in New Delhi on 21st October. The memorial has been erected on 6.12 acres of land in Chanakyapuri, at the northern end of Shanti Path. The National Police Memorial consists of Central Sculpture, a Wall of Valour-engraved with the names of police personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty and a State of Art Museum dedicated to the memory of the martyred police personnel.

This Police Memorial represents all State/UT Police Forces and Central Police Organizations of the country. Since 1947, 34,844 police personnel have been martyred, with 424 losing their lives this year.

Launch of Student Police Cadet (SPC) programme

In a novel initiative, the Union Home Minister launched the Student Police Cadet (SPC) programme for nationwide implementation at a ceremony in Gurugram, Haryana on 21st July. The SPC programme focuses on students of Classes 8 & 9 and special care has been taken to ensure that it does not lead to increase in the workload of the students.

Career enhancement and welfare measures for CAPF jawans

The Union Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, on 10th January, approved the Cadre review of Group 'A' Executive Cadre of CISF. It provides for creation of

25 posts of various ranks from Assistant Commandant to Additional Director General ranks to enhance the supervisory staff in Senior Duty posts of CISF.

Union Home Minister attended a ceremony in New Delhi on 20th January to raise funds for the “Bharat ke Veer” fund to assist the families of martyrs of the Central Armed Police Forces. Continuing with his practice over the years, Union Home Minister celebrated the New Year 2018 with ITBP Jawans in Uttarakhand.

Miscellaneous: Special Remission to Prisoners; helmet relief for Sikh women in Chandigarh

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 18th July gave its approval to grant Special Remission to Prisoners as part of Commemoration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Elder convicts, physically challenged, terminally ill and prisoners who have completed two-third (66%) of their actual sentence period, barring certain categories involving heinous crimes, are eligible for remission to be granted in three phases.

Union Home Ministry on 11th October advised the Chandigarh Administration to follow the notification issued by Delhi Government giving an exemption to Sikh women from wearing protective headgear (helmet) while driving two wheelers in UT Chandigarh.

BB/NK/PK/SS