

744 Youth to be in CRPF's New Tribal Battalion

The Tribal Battalion of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) will be raised by recruiting 744 Scheduled Tribe (ST) youths from four insurgency infested districts of Bastar in Chhattisgarh, the Central Government has informed.

The districts from where the tribal youths would be recruited for the new Battalion are — Bijapur, Dantewada, Narayanpur and Sukma.

The decision to set up a Tribal Battalion has been taken with a view to give more employment to the tribal youth keeping in mind their unique characteristics.

There is no rationale for opposition to the setting up of the Tribal Battalion as recruitment of tribals from Bastar region in CRPF will help addressing unemployment and inequality, and also wean away youth from Left Wing Extremism (LWE), it stated.

Earlier, the Union Cabinet under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also approved raising of four 'India Reserve Battalions' (IR Bns) for Chhattisgarh State to be deployed in LWE pockets of the State.

The Union Cabinet had announced to raise a total of 17 India Reserve Battalions (IR Bns) for Jammu & Kashmir and Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected States, officials stated.

It includes five IR Bns in the State of J&K, three IR Bns in Jharkhand, three IR Bns in Odisha and two IR Bns in Maharashtra including four for Chhattisgarh.

Notably, Chhattisgarh stands fourth in the country in terms of the number of districts affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE).

A total of 106 districts in the country are considered as Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected.

Of these, Bihar State has maximum 22 districts, followed by Jharkhand (21), Odisha(19), Chhattisgarh (16), Andhra Pradesh and Telangana,- both 8 each, West Bengal and Maharashtra,- both 4 each, Uttar Pradesh,- 3 and Madhya Pradesh, one.

Apart from the above, it is worth mentioning that the numbers of incidents of LWE violence and resultant deaths have although significantly declined during the last four years from 2011 to 2014, officials stated.

Maoist activities decreased in all the states except Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh with number of incidents rising to 42 per cent, observes the annual report of the Union Ministry of Home for 2015-16.

The report mentioned that the rise in incidents had been due to conduct of Panchayat polls in January-February month in 2015-16 in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region.

It further mentioned that the Dandakarnya region in South Chhattisgarh had been the nucleus of Maoist activities.

The Central Government in June this year decided to also upgrade the Government multi-specialty hospital at Jagdalpur in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh.

A decision to this effect was taken in a review meeting of the progress of work in Left Wing Insurgency (LWE) states chaired by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi recently, officials informed.

Other issues such as installation of mobile towers in grey areas, increasing the reach of networks of DD and AIR, improvement in programmes, expansion of railway lines, banking & postal services were also discussed in detail.

The officials of concerned Union Ministries and Chief Secretaries of the seven LWE-affected states participated in the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh had stated that progress in development works has picked up during the last two years, and extended his congratulations to the states and the concerned central ministries.

He stressed upon the need to build upon this progress further and finish the projects in hand at an even quicker pace, so that the people living in these areas are benefitted and get access to services and facilities at par with other parts of the country.

The Home Minister also noted that deaths due to LWE incidents had declined by 42% in the year 2015 as compared to the year 2013.

Progress of different projects was thereafter reviewed and discussed with the Secretaries of the Central Ministries of Railways, Road Transport and Highways, Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Post, Information & Broadcasting, Communication & IT, Finance, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource Development.

While taking it as a challenge, the Chhattisgarh Government has completed construction of 1052 kms of roads in insurgency infested pockets of the State with co-operation of the Central Government, State PWD Minister Rajesh Munat said in March this year.

In an official statement issued here, Munat said that the police provided adequate security cover to road development projects in the red zones.