

The Indian Express

Jammu & Kashmir: Centre sanctions additional 10,000 Special Police Officers

In an effort to reach out to people of Jammu and Kashmir, the Home Ministry has approved recruitment of additional 10,000 Special Police Officers (SPOs) in the state police force. There are 25,000 SPOs in Jammu and Kashmir.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh has given his approval for the engagement of the SPOs, especially for the security related requirements, a Home Ministry spokesperson said. The order will come into immediate effect and the additional number is over and above the existing strength of the SPOs.

The move came in the wake of reports which suggested that thousands of Kashmiri youths have opted for SPO job defying a call of Hurriyat hardliner Syed Ali Shah Geelani to boycott the recruitment rallies organised for it. An SPO will initially draw a salary of Rs 5,000 per month, Rs 5,300 after completion of one year and Rs 6,000 after completion of three years.

The reimbursement of expenditure to the state government by the Centre in respect of 10,000 SPOs will be as per existing approved Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Guidelines. The central government is in the process of providing employment opportunities to 1.40 lakh youths in the state through various means, including skill development training and jobs in police and paramilitary forces.

Official sources said around one lakh youths, who are mostly under-graduates, will be given various job oriented training under a centrally sponsored scheme called Himayat in next five years. The youths will be provided short-term training for at least three months, in a range of skills for which there is good market demand.

At the end of the training, the youths are assured of a job and there is one year post-placement tracking to see how they are faring. The sources claimed that since inception, 60,000 youths were given training under Himayat.

Another undergoing programme is called Udaan, which was launched in 2013 aiming to provide skill development training to 40,000 youths,

mostly graduate and post graduate, of the state over a period of five years. The sources claimed under Udaan, so far 21,000 youths were given training and many of them got jobs in corporate sectors.

The central government is also in the process of recruiting 5,000 youths in five newly created India Reserve battalions in Jammu and Kashmir. 60 per cent recruits of the IR battalions will be taken from border districts of the state.

Another 1,300 youths will be hired from the state by different paramilitary forces in next six months. Kashmir has been witnessing unrest since the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen militant Burhan Wani in an encounter on July 8. As many as 81 people, including two cops, have been killed in clashes between protesters and security forces.