

Average age of Mumbai Police is 23

Your city police force is all set to get younger. Wondering how? More than 1,500 constables to be inducted into the force in the last week of June will bring down the average age of the 46,500-strong force to 23 years, a record in the 156-year-old history of the force.

“We are already a young force. In the coming days, we will become younger, possibly the youngest force in the country,” Sangramsingh Nishandar, deputy commissioner of police (DCP), Mumbai police spokesperson told HT.

The only metropolitan police force that rivals the city police in terms of manpower is the 80,000-strong Delhi police, which now appears to be a force of veterans with no fresh recruits in the past five-six years.

“Although we have never undertaken an exercise to find out the average age of the force, our men will be older, as there have been no recruitments in the constabulary in the past few years. Once we have fresh recruits in the age group of 18-21, the force will become younger,” said Taj Hasan, joint commissioner (crime), who is also the spokesperson of Delhi police.

Till a decade ago, the Mumbai police looked old and ageing, especially with the freeze on recruitments for the post of sub-inspector (PSIs) and constabulary (constituting more than 96% of the force) in the wake of the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) scam. The average age of personnel shot up to 29-30 between 2000 and 2009.

“Along with the manpower crunch, the force had started to age. With 2,000 retirements annually and in the absence of fresh recruitments, a problem was bound to occur,” said a senior Mumbai police official.

However, from 2009, the government decided to carry out a recruitment drive twice a year and inducted 55,000 men into the Maharashtra police in the next five years to fill the vacancies. Mumbai police received an annual quota of 2,500 men during this period, totaling to 12,500 employees by 2014. The infusion of young blood in large numbers (a majority of them aged between 18 and 21) brought down the average age of the force to 26, Nishandar said.

After filling the vacancies, the government decided to increase the size of the constabulary in view of the large number of personnel heading towards retirement and a rapid increase in the scope of policing. “With more vacancies increased, we started receiving large batches of young recruits, like the batch of 1,695 this year. This coincided with large number of retirements in the last three years. In the process, the average age of the force has come down to an all-time low of 23,” he added.

Former director general of police (DGP) SS Virk said the Mumbai police stand at its historic best with the force averaging 23 years. “For a department like the police, the younger the force the better,” Virk said. Recalling his initial days in the force in the early 1970s, Virk said the average age of the force was 30 years, which was on account of a few retirements and recruitments too. “That time we did not need a big

force. On an average, every police station in Mumbai used to have 10-15 men. Now, even small police stations have more than 100 employees.”

However, the scenario changed in the mid-1980s when the force expanded its manpower.

Virk, who also headed the Punjab police, said young constables and officers increase the efficiency of the force and with proper training and guidance become assets for the force. “In any uniformed force, young recruits are always more enthusiastic and energetic than the elders. It is upto the leadership to convert such human resource into sound professionals by honing their skill and energy,” Virk said.