

The Hindu

Police force hamstrung by severe shortage of staff



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Thousands of vacancies, mostly in the rank and file, remain in the Tamil Nadu police even as the force prepares to conduct the local body elections in a couple of months. The huge vacancy, according to senior police officials, was posing a challenge to routine policing as the available strength was inadequate to sustain effective crime prevention/investigation duties.

Even special units like the Special Branch CID, which handles the State intelligence and internal security; the Economic Offences Wing; the Coastal Security Group; and the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption are handicapped by vacancies at different levels.

The force reportedly has 21,000 vacancies in various ranks across the State and the number is only rising with retirements. But for the induction of 8,500 Tamil Nadu Special Police Youth Brigade (TNSPYB) personnel

into the force last year, there has been no recruitment of police constables since 2012. The TNSPYB men were still undergoing training and were expected to join the force as Grade-II police constables, police sources said on Sunday.

“About 5,000 new vacancies add up each year due to retirements or deaths. The public-police ratio is dwindling even as the number of crimes is steadily on the rise. The need of the hour is to conduct a massive recruitment programme through the Uniformed Services Recruitment Board. While most of the available manpower goes to VIP security, bandobust for agitations and public meetings, routine work at the station level goes for a toss,” a police official, who preferred not to be quoted, said.

The shortage of staff often leads to delay in investigation and filing of charge-sheet in cognizable offences. There should be no compromise in the deployment of men for vehicle checks, night patrolling and traffic regulation, police officials say.

Deployment as orderlies

Despite an acute shortage of staff in sensitive areas of policing, hundreds of police personnel continue to work as orderlies attending to the camp office (residence) work of police officers. “At least 400 vehicles, each with not less than two drivers, run as camp office vehicles across the State. The Director-General of Police has initiated the process of redeploying such manpower/vehicles for police-related work,” the official said.

Unlike the Assembly elections where Central para military forces were roped in for security, the State police have to manage the local body polls with the available strength.

“The State has been witness to large-scale violence in local body elections in the past. The existing vacancies are against the sanctioned posts approved several years ago. The sanctioned strength has not been revised in several units for years now though the number of cases has gone up,” another police official said, adding that the added burden of work took a toll on the health of the constabulary.

He said more and more police personnel were being diagnosed for hypertension, diabetes and stress-related ailments in the annual health screening camps.