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Raksha Mantri gives away awards to Defence Estates personnel for survey of 17.78 lakh acres of defence land using modern technologies

Says, the survey will prove to be crucial for security & development of these areas and save money & time in resolving land disputes

Shri Rajnath Singh calls upon DGDE to bring about reforms in more areas for enhanced effectiveness

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh gave away awards to the personnel of Defence Estates, in New Delhi on February 10, 2022, for their contribution in the successful completion of survey of 17.78 lakh acres of defence land using modern technologies. Awards were given to 11 officers and 24 personnel of 38 Defence Estates Offices and four Assistant Defence Estates Offices.

As per the records maintained by the Defence Estates Office, Ministry of Defence owns about 17.99 lakh acres of land, of which 1.61 lakh acres of land is located within 62 notified cantonments across the country. About 16.38 lakh acres of land is spread across many pockets outside the cantonments. Out of 16.38 lakh acres land, about 18,000 acres is either state hired land or is proposed for deletion from records on account of transfer to other Government Departments. Survey work of 17.78 lakh acres of land has been completed which is a significant achievement, as for the first time post independence the entire defence land was surveyed in coordination with revenue authorities of various state governments using the latest survey techniques.

Congratulating the award winners, Shri Rajnath Singh commended the Defence Estates personnel for completing the exercise in adverse weather conditions at uninhabited remote places, amidst the threat of COVID-19 pandemic. He termed the survey as historic and exuded confidence that the clear demarcation of defence land will prove to be crucial for the security and development of these areas. He added that the accuracy of the measurement of land and the reliable records born out of the survey will save considerable amount of energy, money and time that goes into resolving land disputes.

The Raksha Mantri lauded Directorate General Defence Estates (DGDE) for using drone imagery, satellite imagery and 3D modelling techniques in such a survey for the first time, which, he said, has made the results even more accurate and reliable. The survey used modern survey techniques such as Electronic Total Station and Differential Global Positioning System. Drone and satellite imagery based surveys were also conducted to get accurate and time-bound results.

Shri Rajnath Singh underlined the importance of survey and land records, describing it as the basis of development in any area, state or nation. “In the last 200-300 years, the knowledge of survey has played an important role in the journeys of those who managed to establish their dominance around the world. Therefore, it is a matter of great satisfaction and happiness that today our country is moving forward in the field of land survey with modern methods, which will ensure protection of defence land and cantonment areas,” he said.

The Raksha Mantri highlighted the important role played by cantonment areas in the socio-economic and cultural development of the country. “Today, when the government proposes an allocation of Rs 173 crore in its budget for the construction of boundaries on defence land, it does not only mean financial grant, it also symbolises our commitment to save and develop the cantonment areas. In this context, this survey was extremely important,” he added.

Defining technology as an integral part of day-to-day life, Shri Rajnath Singh appreciated the fact that Ministry of Defence is playing the role of a flag-bearer in this direction. The e-Chhawani portal is one such initiative, which the Raksha Mantri had inaugurated in February 2021 to promote ‘ease of living’ to the residents of Cantonment Boards. The portal (<https://echhawani.gov.in/>) provides online civic services to more than 20 lakh residents of 62 Cantonment Boards spread across the country. Praising DGDE for the initiative, he said, the time taken to process the services and the use of paper has been reduced by 50-80 per cent since the launch of the portal.

The Raksha Mantri shed light on another such initiative ‘Srijan Portal’, which he had inaugurated during ‘Aatmanirbhar Week’ in August 2020. The portal is a ‘one stop shop’ that provides access to the vendors to take up items that can be taken up for indigenisation. “The online portal of Canteen Store Department, e-Sehat Portal, MoD Pension Portal, NCC training and Gallantry awards portal are other such initiatives through which we are promoting ease of living and ensuring the well being of our Armed Forces personnel and veterans,” he added.

Shri Rajnath Singh reiterated the Government’s commitment to promote digitisation under the ‘Digital India’ campaign and make the lives of the people easier. He termed as pathbreaking the use of space technology by the

Meteorological Department to forecast the weather in advance with more accuracy than before. He said, it provides the Armed Forces and disaster relief teams appropriate time to deploy for relief. "The use of technology in the fields of agriculture, education and health reflects our country's progress. The recent announcement of Digital currency and Digital University in Union Budget 2022-23 shows our resolve of making our systems world class through technology," he added. The Raksha Mantri urged other Ministries and departments to take inspiration from DGDE and promote the use of technology, which can go a long way in nation-building, he said.

The Raksha Mantri reaffirmed the Government's resolve of ensuring the welfare and convenience of the Armed Forces personnel who protect the country from all kinds of threats. Hoping for more transparency, accountability and timeliness in its works, he urged DGDE to bring about reforms in more areas, which will result in more effectiveness in the methodology. He assured all support of the Ministry to achieve this objective.

The Defence Estates Organisation is responsible for the management of defence lands and the municipal administration of 62 cantonments with a population of about two million. For the protection of defence land, protection of land title, updation of land records and maps, prevention of encroachment etc., clear identification of defence land, boundary survey and demarcation of boundaries is necessary. Four survey reports on Defence Land Survey were also released on the occasion.

Shri Rajnath Singh also launched an e-chhawani webinar. Representatives of 27 municipal corporations of 13 states and 62 cantonment boards are taking part in the day-long webinar. Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar, Vice Chief of the Army Staff Lt Gen Manoj Pande, Financial Advisor (Defence Services) Shri Sanjiv Mittal, Director General Defence Estates Shri Ajay Kumar Sharma and other senior officials of Ministry of Defence and Defence Estates Department were present during the award ceremony.

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