

7. Special Cell

7.1. Introduction

The Special Cell of the Delhi Police is the National Capital's specialized Counter Terror Unit which also deals with terror associated/ancillary criminal activities of narcotic and psychotropic drugs syndicates, gunrunning, FICN (Fake Indian Currency Notes) circulation, cyber-crimes and other forms of organized criminal activities in the National Capital. It functions through the four Ranges, SWAT⁴⁹ Unit, City Suspect Surveillance Unit, Cyber Crime Unit and other supporting units/sections.

As of March 2019, the total sanctioned strength of the Special Cell was 841 against which 1265 personnel were deployed. The Delhi Police has also submitted proposals for sanction of 1043 additional personnel for the Special Cell. However, the proposals are yet to be considered by the Government.

7.2. Ranges

In the Special cell, there are four functional Ranges (New Delhi Range, South-Western Range, Northern Range and Southern Range), which are responsible for collection of intelligence to monitor and check anti-terrorist activities, checking of hideouts, apprehension of terrorists/militants/gangsters, smugglers, gunrunners, counterfeiters, narcotics etc. and any other matter affecting national security, public order and tranquillity.

7.2.1. Manpower in Ranges

Against the requirement⁵⁰ of 987 personnel, actual strength of the four Ranges is only 638 personnel.

It was observed that the Delhi Police has proposed (December 2014) to carve out the 'Eastern Range' which will cover entire Trans-Yamuna area of Delhi, from the existing 'New Delhi Range' and had assessed requirement of 146 and 318 personnel for the Eastern Range and, post-bifurcation New Delhi Range respectively. Since the proposal has been awaiting approval for more than four years, the Trans-Yamuna area is still being covered by 236 personnel of the New Delhi Range only. Thus, deployment of only 236 personnel against assessed

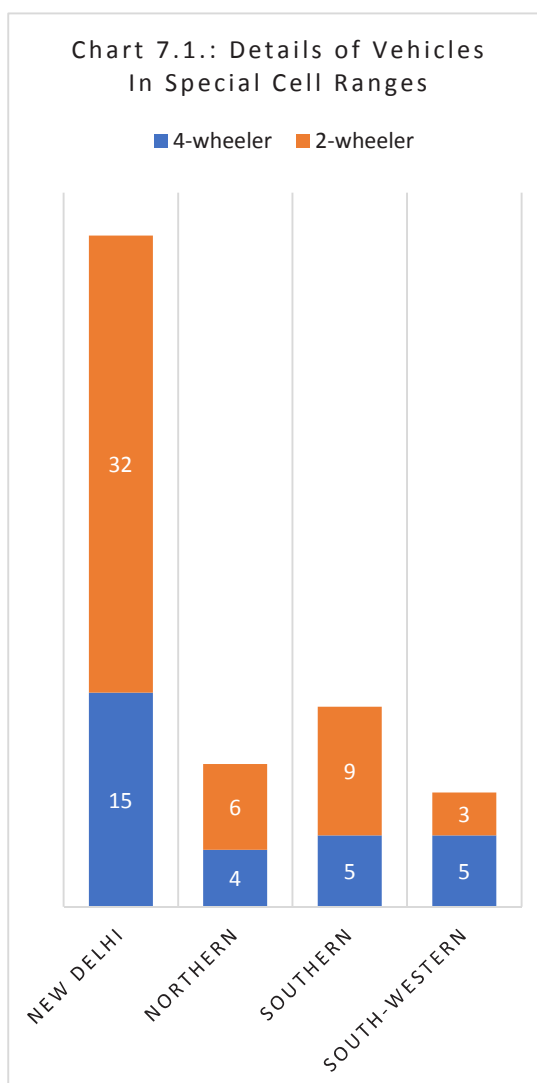
⁴⁹ Special Weapons and Tactics Unit

⁵⁰ As per the proposals of Special Cell

requirement of 464 personnel, is putting these 236 personnel under acute stress as their daily duty ranges from 16-18 hours.

7.2.2. Vehicles in Ranges

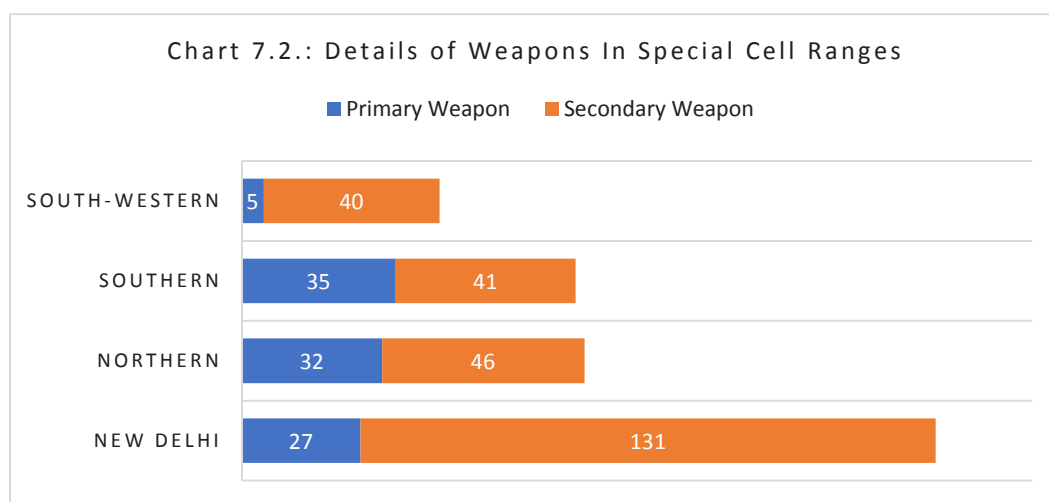
Besides deficient manpower, Ranges also suffer from deficiencies in availability of vehicles, which are vital for quick response in real time during law and order situations. Audit also observed that against the Special Cell's assessment (February 2018) of requirement of 47 four-wheelers and 125 two-wheelers for operation purpose in Ranges, there were only 25 four-wheelers and 50 two-wheelers at their disposal. Out of these, against the requirement of one Bulletproof (BP) Light Motor Vehicle (LMV) and one BP Minibus for each Range, one Range did not have either, and the remaining three Ranges did not have Bulletproof LMV. The shortage in availability of vehicles for Ranges should be addressed immediately, as it may affect their operational efficiency.



7.2.3. Bulletproof Jackets and Weapons in Ranges

Regarding the protective equipment (Bulletproof Jackets) for personnel on active duty in Ranges, no norms have been prescribed by BPR&D/Delhi Police. However, it was observed that the number of BP Jackets available (105) were less than the personnel on operational/active duty in Ranges (506). Also, the Special Cell has requested (January 2019) for 400 BP Jackets, which indicates that the Ranges are currently not provided with adequate number of BP Jackets for their personnel, who regularly undertake dangerous and sensitive operations.

Though there were no specific norms to assess the requirement of arms and ammunition, a disproportionately lower number of primary weapons/sidearms (Pistol/Revolver) in South-Western Range merits review (Chart 7.2).



Delhi Police replied (June 2020) that procurement of BP Jackets is ongoing and that the tender for procurement of 7351 Bulletproof jackets was scheduled to open on 29th June 2020.

Government should expeditiously take a decision regarding Delhi Police’s proposal for creation of ‘Eastern Range’ and ensure that the manpower deployed in Special cell ranges is as per the requirement. Delhi Police need to address the issue of severe shortage of vehicles (including bulletproof vehicles) and bulletproof jackets to ensure that the operational efficiency of Special cell is not affected.

7.3. SWAT Commando Unit

The SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) Commando Unit consists of 202 commandos (as of March 2019) specially trained for counter terror operations, and SWAT Teams are deployed at vulnerable places to thwart any terrorist attack and remain in a continuous state of preparedness. SWAT has been constituted (2009) as first responder to any armed attack by terrorists, gangsters or anti-national elements in Delhi. During April 2016, when SWAT was operating with 174 personnel⁵¹ from a single base, it had assessed a total requirement of 309 personnel to operate from at least three bases in Delhi to be able to respond in the quickest time. As of March 2019, though SWAT is operating from four bases, the number of personnel was only 241 (including 202 commandos).

⁵¹ Inspectors, SI, Constable

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Subsequently, MHA approved (November 2018) total 483 personnel for SWAT, and the new 242 posts were to be selected by the Delhi Police from the 3139 posts already sanctioned by MHA for other units of the Delhi Police. Audit observed that the Delhi Police was yet to take action in this regard. Thus, even after four years of the proposal to strengthen the SWAT and six months of approval of MHA to upgrade the SWAT, it was still operating with less than the required number of personnel (202 commandos against requirement of 311 and Nil personnel for Dog Squad and Bomb Disposal Squad, against a requirement of 24 and 18 respectively). It is important to have bomb technicians and dog squads with SWAT Teams to rapidly deal with explosive devices to prevent delays, enhance the teams' safety and improve their ability to successfully complete the mission.

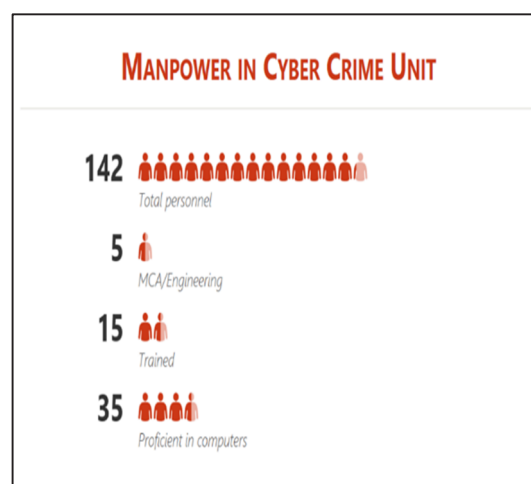
During scrutiny of records, audit observed that Commandos of SWAT Teams should be given training at specialized training centres regularly to keep them fit and alert as well as for awareness of the latest technologies and tactics. However, it was observed that there was no policy for providing specialized training after commando training in Police Training Centre (PTC), and out of 202 commandos, only 38 have undergone specialized training at National Security Guard (NSG). Besides the specialized training, number of commandos who attended the commando course at the PTC in a year ranged between 15 to 99 during the period 2013 to 2018. Thus, a mechanism should be evolved to regularly impart specialized training to the commandos for all round development, regular upgradation of professional and physical skills and adequacy of preparedness of commandos.

Regarding protective gear for SWAT Commandos, there were only 136 old BP Jackets of which most were reported to be in a very poor condition. Though the SWAT Unit has requested (January 2019) for 245 BP Jackets for its commandos, action is yet to be taken on this. Inadequacy of an important protective item such as a bullet proof jacket would not only reduce the efficiency of the Commandos in case of any armed act by the terrorists in Delhi but could also put their lives at risk.

Delhi Police replied (June 2020) that final decision regarding sanctioning of 275 additional posts is under process. Reply is not indicative of time bound action plan on part of Delhi Police.

7.4. Cybercrime Unit

The Cyber-Crime Unit (CCU) deals with cyber related crimes. It investigates hacking/unauthorized access to emails and websites, net-banking frauds, data thefts, phishing, fake profile on social networking sites, malware intrusions, use of proxy servers and TOR browsers for crime, use of crypto currencies for settlement of crime proceeds, ransom



ware, etc. It is thus imperative for CCU to have sufficient and trained manpower for effective policing by upgrading the skills of its personnel to meet the demands of the current environment. During scrutiny of records, Audit observed that out of 142 personnel deployed (as of April 2019) in CCU, only five had technical⁵² qualifications, 15 members had received some training in the field of cyber-crime and 35 had general proficiency in computers. This indicates that the CCU is ill equipped in terms of qualification and training to function efficiently at its optimum capacity.

Regarding the output of CCU, it was observed that out of 65 cases reported⁵³ between April 2018 and March 2019, only 10 could be disposed of till March 2019. Similarly, out of 608 complaints received between April 2018 and March 2019, 469 were pending as of March 2019. Though, the CCU did not furnish records/reasons relating to non-disposal of cases, it was noted that the unit was deficient in terms of adequate number of trained and qualified manpower to efficiently handle cyber related crimes. Government may consider defining the minimum qualifications and/or relevant training as criteria for deployment of personnel in Cyber-Crime Unit, to ensure expeditious disposal of cases related to cyber-crimes.

Delhi Police replied (June 2020) that it is imperative for the Cyber Crime Cell to have sufficient and trained manpower for effective policing, and a proposal regarding augmenting the strength is under process. Reply does not assure commitment for immediate improvement.

⁵² Two were MCA and three were B.Tech

⁵³ Cases wherein First Investigation Report has been lodged