

CHAPTER X: MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Indo Tibetan Border Police

10.1 Irregular attachment of Indo Tibetan Border Police Personnel

The Director General, Indo-Tibetan Border Police attached a large number of officials, withdrawn from various field formations/units and deployed them in the Directorate in excess of the sanctioned strength and violating instructions of the Ministry of Home Affairs in this regard. The expenditure on pay and allowances of the attached staff over and above the sanctioned strength for the period 2003-2004 to 2004-2005 alone was Rs. 5.19 crore.

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) is headed by a Director General under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Its headquarters is located at New Delhi. Its sanctioned strength is determined by the Ministry of Home Affairs (Ministry). The Ministry issued instructions (May 2005) to all heads of paramilitary forces to detach the personnel attached in excess of the sanctioned strength. Only in exceptional and unavoidable cases, attachments could be regularised by the competent authority in individual cases and that too for very short periods.

Audit examination revealed (June 2005) that as against the sanctioned strength of 283 officials, 264 officials were in position in the Directorate. Against this shortage of 19 officials, the Directorate had withdrawn 262 officials from its field formations/units and attached them to its different wings without the approval of the Ministry. Of the total attached officials, 110 were from general duty cadres who were supposed to be fighters at the borders, 19 cooks, 45 drivers and 88 from other cadres such as instructors, safai karamcharis, washermen etc. Some of the officials were found attached from periods as far back as 1990. The expenditure on pay and allowances of officials attached over and above the sanctioned strength for the period 2003-2004 to 2004-2005 alone was Rs. 5.19 crore. Attachment of large number of officials at the Directorate for such long period was irregular and also contravened the directions of the Ministry issued in May 2005.

In response to the audit observation, the Ministry intimated (July 2006) that ITBP after receiving the Ministry's above cited instructions reviewed the whole attachment with Directorate General and brought it down from 262 to 170 and an exercise was on to reduce the attachment to the barest minimum. It also stated that the attachment of personnel over and above the sanctioned strength had been resorted to due to compelling circumstances for attending work relating to procurement of stores for equipping disaster management

battalion, creation of procurement cell, functioning of control room on round the clock basis and also to attend unforeseen circumstances. It also stated that DG ITBP was authorised to attach personnel from one unit to another, keeping in view functional and operational requirements. The reply is not tenable as the Directorate had been resorting to attachment of large number of personnel since 1990. The procurement of stores/equipment and attending to the control room etc. were regular functions of the Directorate and ITBP cannot ignore the instructions of the Ministry by attaching officials from field formations/units and in excess of the valid sanctioned strength of its Directorate for prolonged periods. Moreover, attachment of large number of cooks, drivers, instructors, safai karamcharis etc. can not have much to do with procurement of stores or attending to control room. Further, attachment of personnel from various field formations/units depletes their men-in-position at operational level.

Border Security Force

10.2 Irregular attachment of vehicles

The Director General, Border Security Force (BSF), in violation of scales laid down by the Ministry of Home Affairs, withdrew 158 vehicles from various field formations/units and deployed them at the BSF Headquarters in addition to its 100 authorised vehicles. The expenditure of Rs. 1.76 crore on petrol, oil and lubricants (POL) and repair and maintenance of these attached vehicles for the period 2004 to 2006 was thus irregular. The action also affected operational effectiveness of the field units.

The Border Security Force (BSF) is headed by a Director General under the Ministry of Home Affairs and its Headquarters is located at New Delhi with more than 150 battalions and training institutions located in different parts of the country. In September 2001, the Ministry had laid down scales of motor transport for Headquarters and various units of BSF and authorised 10,928 vehicles of different categories to BSF including 100 vehicles for its Headquarters.

Audit noticed (April 2006) that in addition to its authorised 100 vehicles, the Directorate of BSF had withdrawn 158 additional vehicles from the field formations/units and deployed them in its Headquarters at New Delhi. These additional vehicles had been deployed without the approval of the Ministry. The expenditure on POL, repair and maintenance of these vehicles for the period 2004-05 to 2005-06 alone amounted to Rs. 1.76 crore. Retention of such large number of vehicles on regular basis violated the authorisation of the Ministry issued in September 2001.

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In response to the audit observation, the Ministry stated (October 2006) that the number of surplus vehicles had been reduced to 125 and admitted that the concerned field formations from where the vehicles had been withdrawn were put to inconvenience. It further stated that though there was expansion of force and increase in its workload but the proposal for additional vehicles for the force could not be taken up due to ban on purchase of new vehicles.

The reply is not tenable as the Government of India's orders of November 2005 regarding ban on purchase of new vehicles is not applicable to Defence Forces and Central Para Military Forces. The action of the BSF of unauthorised retention of excess vehicles at Headquarters without the approval of the Ministry was irregular and it affected the operational effectiveness of the field units from where these vehicles were withdrawn.