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Hike in Defence Paramilitary budget with new security threats

By Special Correspondent

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New Delhi. Considering the changed security scenario in the aftermath of the Mumbai terror attacks, the Government has allocated Rs 1,41,703 crore for defence sector, marking a 35 per cent jump from the previous year's budget provisions. Last year's allocation for Defence stood at Rs 1,05,600 crore and the current increase amounted to Rs 36,103 crore.

The security environment has deteriorated considerably with the Mumbai terror attacks, giving an entirely new dimension to crossborder terrorism. And this has prompted the Home Ministry, entrusted with the task of maintaining internal security in the country, also to give a hike of over 25 per cent in its budget compared to the allocation for 2008-09.

But, one cannot ignore the fact that despite the nearly 35 per cent increase this year, India's defence spending is still at about 2 per cent of the GDP, compared to China's 7 per cent and Pakistan's 5 per cent.

Presenting the Interim Budget for 2009-10 in the Lok Sabha, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said the allocation has been increased because of the prevailing security environment, which, he candidly acknowledged has "deteriorated considerably."

Noting that the Mumbai attacks had amounted to the threshold being crossed on the security front, Mukherjee said, "We are going through tough times. The Mumbai terror attacks have given an entirely new dimension to cross-border terrorism."

With the total revised expenditure for defence last year standing at Rs 1,14,600 crore, he said the increased plan expenditure for defence this year would be Rs 86,879 crore.

Last year's Plan expenditure was only Rs 73,600 crore, thereby providing an increase of Rs 13,279 crore this year.

The increased allocation this year would include Rs 54,824 crore for capital expenditure as against Rs 41,000 crore in the revised estimates for 2008-09, Mukherjee said.

However, the government would provide for any additional requirement for the security of the nation, he added.

The increased allocation for defence assumes significance as the government has decided to go on fast track acquisition of defence equipment.

The armed forces have already prepared a long list of equipment, mainly for its Special Forces and commandos, to be bought under the fast track process.

After the Mumbai attacks, the government has initiated a massive revamp of the security structure of the country, which includes creation of a Coastal Command.

Acquisition for radars for the 7,500 km long coastline is the priority list of the security establishment, which has already declared developing airborne capabilities for National Security Guard (NSG) and modernisation of State Police Forces.

In the backdrop of Mumbai attacks, Anita Choudhary, Additional Secretary (Centre-State), in the Ministry of Home Affairs, points out that terrorism, left wing extremism and insurgency in the North-East India region are major threats to India's security.

Parliament's Standing Committee on Defence has asked the government to constitute a high-powered expert panel to advise on armed forces reforms and restructuring in view of the new security challenges such as the Mumbai terror attacks.

The Committee has strongly recommended that the government set up the experts panel to "reorganise, reform and restructure" the armed forces.

In a report, the committee felt that the country faced entirely new dimensions of security threats and challenges in view of the changing global scenario.

"There is an imperative need to continuously devise appropriate strategies to keep pace with the innovations being made in conventional and unconventional modes of warfare."

The recommendation was being made after hearing the views of the Defence Ministry and experts having experience of serving in the armed forces at the highest level.

An expert panel should be formed with a view to implementing the recommendations made by the Group of Ministers on the Kargil war submitted in 2001 and the Standing Committee's earlier report, it said, and wanted the government to apprise it of the follow-up steps.

PARA-MILITARY

Notably, the government has allocated an additional Rs 4,500 crore in the 2009-10 interim budget to the central police organisations with CRPF, the world's largest paramilitary force, bagging the lion's share of Rs 1,700 crore.

The CRPF, which plays a key role in assisting state governments to tackle insurgency, naxalism and terrorism besides internal security duties, got Rs 7208.18 crore this year as against Rs 5,510.10 crore in 2008-09 – an increase of Rs 1,698.08 crore.

The BSF, entrusted the task of keeping vigil along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and the country's 6,622 kms borders with Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, got Rs 1,156.23 crore more compared to last year's Rs 5,376.99 crore.

The CISF, which is on the threshold of a massive expansion programme, will receive Rs 480.10 crore more than last year's Rs 2,001.15 crore.

The force has recently been given additional responsibility of guarding private and joint venture installations and Indian Embassies abroad.

With insurgency in the Northeast remaining a matter of grave concern for the security establishment, Rs 2,258.99 crore has been earmarked for Assam Ri.es for 2009-10, an increase of Rs 527.77 crore.

The ITBP, that guards the country's 3,488-km-long borders with China in Northeast and Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir, will get Rs 1,575.05, an increase of about Rs 270 crore.

Another border guarding force, Sashatra Seema Bal (SSB), which protects the country's 1,818 kms border with Nepal and 699 kms boundary with Bhutan, has got Rs 326.39 crore more – from last year's allocation to



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Rs 1592.68 crore this time.

The elite commando force NSG, which played a sterling role in tackling the Mumbai terror attacks, has got Rs 44.63 crore more – from Rs 204.08 crore in 2008-09 to Rs 248.71 this year.

The Special Protection Group (SPG), which protects the Prime Minister and his family, has seen an increase of little over 28 per cent for the next fiscal.

The budgetary proposals for SPG, which has been bringing in modern equipment for guarding the Prime Minister, for this .scal has been pegged at Rs 226.17 crore as against Rs 176.56 crore during the year 2008-09.

The Intelligence Bureau gets a marginal 8.5 per cent hike – from Rs 679.04 crore in 2008-09 to Rs 736.75 crore for the next fiscal.

The Delhi Police, which comes under Ministry of Home Affairs, has been given nearly Rs 770 crore more in the next .scal in view of its increasing responsibility of maintaining law and order in the national capital. The budgetary allocation for the Delhi Police this year will be Rs 2,857.53 crore.

With the security scenario becoming more and more complex each passing day, Deputy National Security Advisor Shekhar Dutt feels that The industry should intensify R&D in security technology.

“Our policies and strategies need to prepare for the future and not merely address the present. From box-based planning, we need to orient to a transformational mode where activity lines and time lines are well defined,” he said at a seminar on Internal Security.

For achieving a competent position globally, he mentioned that the industry should intensify R&D with regard to security technology and urged for a better instrumentation of security environment, by linking the economy with science in a manner which is structured and monitorable.

Dutt believes that internal security involves human beings who value their own freedom as much as they value the nation's security. While technology is definitely an important tool, the essential driver remains the human mind.

India is witnessing a transition from a traditionally developing society to a modern state accentuated because of the ongoing technological revolution.

The increase in the number of business establishments has also increased the need for security. This in turn presents a scope for the security business establishments to help in building capacity in the security domain, which includes mobility equipment, communication devices, security equipment, and forensic mechanism, any thing which would help strengthen homeland security.

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