

OPENING STATEMENT OF THE HOME MINISTER AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE ON DECEMBER 31, 2009

This is the report of the Ministry of Home Affairs for December 2009. It is also the last month of the calendar year and hence gives me an opportunity to look back on what has been accomplished this year.

2. Parliament was in session between November 19 and December 22, 2009. During this period, elections in Jharkhand were completed. The Telangana issue dominated the headlines. The Ruchika Girhotra case attracted attention and gave rise to a number of concerns.

3. The impressive turnout in the five-phase elections in Jharkhand was a stinging rebuke to the CPI (Maoist) and a rejection of the call to boycott elections. Although the elections threw up a fractured verdict, four political parties have come together to form a coalition government. Shri Shibu Soren was sworn in as Chief Minister on December 30, 2009.

4. In Parliament, the major issues that concerned MHA were the Liberhan Commission of Inquiry report, the Calling Attention motion on the Delhi riots and the Short Duration Discussion on Left Wing extremism.

5. After concluding the debate on the Liberhan report, I issued certain directions on December 16, 2009 to the authorities concerned. Briefly, the authorities concerned have been asked to examine the evidence on money collection and transfer; the charge of conspiracy; and addition of names to the lists of accused in the pending cases.

6. Similarly, after the discussion on the Delhi riots, I issued certain directions on December 16, 2009 regarding pending claims for compensation; decision on the request for sanction of prosecution; applications for jobs pending with GNCTD; missing persons; and action against police officers named in the Kusum Lata Mittal report.

Internal Security

7. Two more ULFA leaders, namely, Arabinda Rajkowa and Raju Barua were apprehended on the India-Bangladesh border and subsequently arrested by the Assam Police on December 4, 2009.

8. A sum of Rs.39.70 crore was reimbursed to the States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Maharashtra under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme. So far, Rs.59.70 crore has been released and the budget of Rs.60 crore nearly exhausted.

9. Draft policies on Arms for Individuals and Arms Manufacturing were put on the website of MHA. Comments have been invited from stakeholders by January 6, 2010. We hope to notify the new policies within a week thereafter.

10. The visa rules for tourists were tightened. Hereafter, after the tourist visits India and leaves the country, there has to be a break of 60 days before he/she can apply for another tourist visa. The overwhelming majority of tourists who visit India for a few weeks would face no difficulty whatsoever. There is a very small number of tourists who use India as a hub and visit neighbouring countries. In such cases, if the itinerary shows visits to India and other countries as part of the same trip, we have allowed the Visa Issuing Authorities to relax the 60-day period and permit up to three entries into India.

N/A

11. Six cases pertaining to the State of Kerala and two cases pertaining to the State of Goa were entrusted to the National Investigation Agency. A Special Court was notified at Kochi, Kerala under Section 11(1) of the NIA Act.

CPMFs

12. Under the Modernisation of Police Forces Scheme for 2009-10, MHA has a provision for Rs.1,250 crore. A sum of Rs.118.43 crore was released to various States in December 2009, taking the total release so far to Rs.849.66 crore.

13. CISF has been sanctioned additional posts to provide security to establishments/installations as under:

Mumbai airport	..	518 posts
New Delhi airport	..	289 posts
Aurangabad airport	..	55 posts
Rajiv Gandhi Thermal		
Power project, Hissar	..	126 posts
Ratnagiri Gas and Power Ltd.	..	231 posts

14. A scheme has been formulated to reemploy Ex-servicemen on contractual basis in the categories of Constable and Sub-Inspector in BSF, CISF and SSB. CRPF has already been permitted to reemploy Ex-servicemen.

15. A Research Cell will be set up in the National Police Academy, Hyderabad to conduct research on subjects relating to policing and internal security. Research Fellowships will be offered. In course of time, the Academy will become a Centre for Research Studies in police subjects.

North Eastern States

16. Suspension of Operation (SoO) Agreements with National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB-Pro Talks) and Dima Halam Daogah (DHD) were extended up to June 30, 2010.

17. The tenth bilateral talks at Home Secretary level between India and Bangladesh were held between November 30, 2009 and December 2, 2009 at New Delhi. Three draft agreements were finalized.

Jammu and Kashmir

18. On the advice of MHA, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has constituted two Committees to deal with 'vacation of properties occupied by security forces in a time-bound manner' and 'construction of alternate accommodation for security forces'.

19. Journalists representing a number of publications in Jammu and Kashmir were invited to Delhi under the media exchange programme. They spent five days between December 17 and December 21, 2009 and interacted with the senior officers of MHA.

Border Management; Disaster Management

20. India-Bangladesh Border : 40 kms of fencing and 50 kms of road work were completed in December 2009 under phase II of the project. 50 kms of fencing were replaced in December 2009 under phase III of the project. Poles for floodlighting were erected on a length of 50 kms and cables were laid on a length of 30 kms during the month.

21. India-China Border: 4.6 kms of formation works and 3.24 kms of surfacing works were completed during December 2009.

22. Border Area Development Programme (BADP): A sum of Rs.47.64 crore was released to Meghalaya, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal under BADP.

23. Coastal Security: Ten more boats were supplied by Goa Shipyard Ltd (6 boats) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd. (4 boats) during December 2009.

24. The Civil Defence Act, 1968 was amended by Parliament. The definition of 'civil defence' has been enlarged to include disaster management.

Other initiatives

25. The Crimes and Criminals Tracking Network System (CCTNS) continues to make progress. A sum of Rs.33.80 crore was released to 11 States in December 2009.

26. The fourth tri-partite talks with the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) and the Government of West Bengal were held on December 21, 2009. GJM has requested that the next round of talks may be held at the political level within 45 days.

27. The Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Tribal Councils) Regulation, 2009 was notified and it will come into effect on December 31, 2009.

28. The Freedom Fighters' Division has embarked on an ambitious mission of digitizing the records. So far, 106,000 files of freedom fighters' pension cases have been digitized, including 10,000 files that were completed in December 2009. A data base of living freedom fighters is also being compiled. So far, 27,000 living freedom fighters' pension cases have been included in the data base, of which 6,000 were added in the month of December 2009.

29. The work of direct data collection for the National Population Register (NPR) in the coastal villages of 8 States and 2 Union Territories is in progress. The biographical details of about 52 lakh persons and the biometric details of about 10 lakh persons have been collected so far. Cabinet has approved the creation of NPR for coastal areas and issue of identity cards to usual residents.

30. The provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2008, except Sections 5, 6 and 21(b), have been notified and they will come into force on December 31, 2009.

Telangana

31. The media has broadcast or published millions of words on the Telangana issue which, of course, is the right thing to do on an issue that is topical and of great moment. However, facts are sacred and in order to set the record straight I wish to highlight the following facts. The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) of the UPA Government in the previous term contained a paragraph on Telangana which read: *"The UPA Government will consider the demand for the formation of a Telangana State at an appropriate time after due consultations and consensus."* Major political parties in Andhra Pradesh contested the 2009 Assembly elections on manifestos that, in one manner or other, declared support for the formation of a separate State of Telangana. On December 7, 2009 the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh convened a meeting of the floor leaders of the political parties in the State Legislature. All political parties, except the CPI(M), supported the proposal to adopt a resolution in the State Assembly for creation of Telangana. The CPI(M) referred to the stand taken by the party before the Committee headed by Shri Pranab Mukherjee. The MIM observed that the proper forum to express its views was the Legislative Assembly. The minutes of the meeting were received by the Central Government on December 8, 2009. After considering the minutes, the Central Government decided to initiate the process of forming the State of Telangana. On December 9, 2009, it was announced that *'an appropriate resolution will be moved'* in the State Assembly. I would like to highlight the key words in that statement: they are **'process'**, **'appropriate resolution'** and **'moved'**. In

the background of the minutes of the all party meeting, I would like to ask, "What was wrong with that statement?"

32. However, following the announcement, major political parties in Andhra Pradesh witnessed deep divisions among their members, especially MPs and MLAs. It was obvious that the situation had altered. The Government tried its best to bridge the differences. Unfortunately, there was no agreement and it was felt that there was a need to hold further consultations with all political parties and groups in Andhra Pradesh. Hence, another statement was made on behalf of the Central Government on December 23, 2009 emphasizing the need for '*wide ranging consultations*' and promising to '*take steps to involve all concerned in the process.*' I do not understand why this was described by the media as a flip-flop. There was no flip-flop on the part of the Central Government. Government was simply responding to the altered situation as a result of divisions in the political parties.

33. Yesterday, the Central Government decided to convene a meeting of the leaders of the eight recognized political parties in Andhra Pradesh. The meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, January 5, 2010.

Conclusion

34. 2009 has been an eventful year. The most satisfactory achievements have been on the anti-terror front where we had, fortunately, a year without terrorist attacks; in containing militancy in Jammu & Kashmir and in the North East; and in taking resolute measures to tackle the menace of Left Wing extremism. Every hour, every day and every month, India's capacity to meet the challenges to internal security is growing. We are stronger today than we were a year ago and we will be stronger a year from now than we are today. Nevertheless, I must repeat my words of caution: there is no room for complacency and there should be no tolerance for business-as-usual. It is in this view that on December 23, 2009, during the course of my IB Centenary Endowment Lecture, I outlined a new architecture for India's security. All of us would have to work harder in 2010. There is more to be accomplished in 2010. Hence, 2010 promises to be more eventful than 2009. With these words, may I conclude by wishing all of you a very happy and prosperous New Year.