



Defence Estates Organisation is a shining example of transparency, efficiency & accountability - the administrative ethos needed for Viksit Bharat: Raksha Mantri at DGDE Day

“Need to develop a sustainable culture of innovation & continuous improvement for future challenges”

RM urges DGDE to introduce Annual Challenge Statements every year & strengthen litigation handling capacity

Shri Rajnath Singh confers Raksha Mantri Awards for Excellence, recognising outstanding achievements in Defence Land Management & Municipal Administration by Cantonment Boards

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 16 DEC 2025 4:58PM by PIB Delhi

The Directorate General Defence Estates (DGDE), under the Ministry of Defence, celebrated Defence Estates Day 2025 with great solemnity and pride at Raksha Sampada Bhawan, Delhi Cantonment on December 16, 2025. The celebrations were graced by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh who, in his address, described the Defence Estates Organisation as a shining example of transparency, efficiency & accountability - the administrative ethos needed to realise Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047. While he commended DGDE for evolving with time and fulfilling the role of a ground-oriented organisation, he exhorted the organisation to stay even more prepared for future challenges by developing a sustainable culture of innovation and continuous improvement through a systematic approach.



Raksha Mantri appreciated the initiatives of DGDE such as digital land records, use of satellite imagery and encroachment removal actions, while also making special mention of its efforts in the fields of environment conservation, education and skill development. “Making cantonments green and clean, working on water conservation, and adopting a scientific approach to waste management shows that security and sustainability can go hand in hand. Today, students living in cantonments are excelling in Artificial Intelligence and robotics. This is essential because the world is today becoming technology-driven, and it is necessary that our children are connected with both tradition and technology,” he said.

To address both long-standing issues as well as new challenges, Shri Rajnath Singh gave a number of suggestions, including the introduction of Annual Challenge Statements every year. “For issues such as old cases of rent recovery, disputes related to leasing compliance, we can invite experienced officers and young officers with fresh perspectives, and experts to suggest new solutions. This will not only lead to small improvements, but will ensure transformative change. It will allow the organisation to develop into a learning institution that is agile, future-ready, and solution-centered,” he said.

On the issue of litigation related to defence land which consumes time as well as resources, Raksha Mantri stressed on strengthening the litigation handling capacity, while exploring ways to make it more intelligent and predictable. He recommended the creation of a mechanism where the timing of cases, current status, next hearing, performance of legal counsel, and financial risks are available in real-time and in one place. “This can make decision-making more effective. Better land records, robust documentation, early dispute resolution, and better coordination with civil authorities are steps that can move us from reactive litigation management to preventive land governance,” he stated.



Shri Rajnath Singh added that, as the Cantonments are constantly being modernised, DGDE has the opportunity to become a benchmark in citizen-centric urban governance. He emphasised on developing a Citizen Satisfaction Index for cantonments, based on objective and measurable service outcomes. This, he said, will not only highlight the areas for improvement but also enhance accountability and transparency, making the Cantonments glowing examples for the country.

Raksha Mantri underscored the need to focus on shaping public perception and institutional credibility, terming transparency, rule-based governance, and integrity as core values of good governance. “While signing every file, while making every decision, we should think whether it would strengthen the credibility of our institution. This approach will make our organisation, defence ecosystem, and in turn our nation even stronger. This is our collective responsibility,” he said.

On the occasion, Shri Rajnath Singh conferred the Raksha Mantri Awards for Excellence in Public Service 2025, recognising the outstanding achievements in the fields of Defence Land Management and Municipal Administration by Cantonment Boards across the country. The awards were given in the following categories:

Swachh Chhawani-Swasth Chhawani

- Category A : Cantonment Board, Deolali
- Category B : Cantonment Board, Barrackpore
- Category C : Cantonment Board, Varanasi

Digital Accomplishments (DEOs)

- Jointly DEO, Jabalpur Circle and DEO, Pathankot Circle

Innovation in Public Services

- Cantonment Board, Delhi



Land and Record Management

- Category A : DEO, Prayagraj
- Category B : DEO, Itanagar

Improvement in Cantonment General Hospital

- Category A: Cantonment Board, Khadki
- Category B: Cantonment Board, Landsdowne

Implementation of eChhawani Project

- Cantonment Board, Nasirabad



Maintaining Centres for Divyang Children

- Cantonment Board, Belgavi

Improvement in the functioning of Cantonment Boards Schools

- Primary/Middle Schools - Cantonment Board, Ahilyanagar
- Secondary & Senior Secondary Schools - Cantonment Board, Lucknow

Raksha Mantri also dedicated three citizen-centric initiatives to cantonment residents. The first initiative was the extension of Telemedicine services from Delhi Cantonment General Hospital to all 61 Cantonment Boards. Established with the support and guidance of AIIMS, New Delhi, the Telemedicine facility provides tele-consultation in specialties including Medicine, ENT, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Cardiology, Gastroenterology and Psychiatry, along with tele-education and tele-workshops.

The second initiative involved the integration of the e-Chhawani module with the Accrual Based Accounting System (ABAS). This integration directly links financial management functions with citizen services. APIs developed by the DGDE ABAS team in collaboration with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) now provide a unified, real-time platform for payments, receipts and service requests.



The third initiative was the integration of the Defence Estates Mapping Portal (DEMAP) with PM GatiShakti. DEMAP, a secure digital platform developed by DGDE, integrates advanced Geographic Information System-technology with defence land records (Raksha Bhoomi), enabling transparent and efficient land management through an interactive, multi-layered digital mapping system.



Shri Rajnath Singh also released two booklets titled '*Strategic Roadmap to Developed India @ 2047*' and '*Water Conservation Initiatives of DGDE*', outlining the Department's long-term vision and sustainability efforts.

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh, Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Dr Samir V Kamat, Financial Advisor (Defence Services) Shri Raj Kumar Arora, and Director General, Defence Estates Smt Shobha Gupta and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

This year's Defence Estates Day holds special significance as the Defence Estates Organisation enters its 100th year of service to the nation, marking a century of dedicated contribution towards efficient management of defence lands, civic administration of cantonments, and upholding transparency, accountability and public welfare.

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इस विज्ञप्ति को इन भाषाओं में पढ़ें: Urdu , हिन्दी