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Complimentary Copy



FCRA Streamlines Legal Channels for Foreign Grants



Biparjoy: Preparedness and Alertness Save Thousands of Lives

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From the Editor's Desk



Balaji Srivastava

Director General, BPR&D



In such a scenario, the FCRA wing plays a remarkable role. It has not only simplified the registration process through the implementation of an online registration system but has also helped in curbing corruption.



Many organisations strive to transform the governance system into good governance, with certain institutions actively engaging with the common people. A prime example is the police administration, which operates in proactive and reactive capacities to strengthen the peace system and provide an environment conducive to other agencies.

This prominent role has earned it the perception of being the most dynamic and visible state mechanism, impacting every citizen and institution in various ways and benefiting them through its services. Likewise, several other units within the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, play crucial but often unnoticed roles in establishing good governance.

However, information regarding the work of such institutions barely reaches the common people. One such important division within the Ministry of Home Affairs is the 'Foreigners Division', housing the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) wing.

The democratic and public welfare-oriented governance has led to the formation of many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) within the country, significantly contributing to public service. Both government organisations and NGOs work in tandem, complementing the governance system with their extensive reach, broad influence, and professional expertise.

While some of these institutions positively engage in civic services pertaining to social issues, there are also some negative elements engaged in activities inimical to national interests and public policies.

Such institutions often lack financial transparency and misuse the resources they receive. In such a scenario, the FCRA wing plays a remarkable role. It has not only simplified the registration process through the implementation of an online registration system but has also helped in curbing corruption. Moreover, this wing has played a crucial role in preventing white-collar crimes like money laundering.

Simultaneously, the wing has implemented rigorous measures to prevent unauthorised and illicit financing of NGOs and institutions. Through its proactive measures, it has effectively promoted transparency in foreign funding, prevented the possibility of its misappropriation, and strengthened the regulatory framework.

The efforts of this organisation are remarkable as it is diligently contributing to the establishment of good governance within the country. This edition of 'Vigilant India' is especially dedicated to highlighting the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) and its role and scope.

We look forward to your feedback and suggestions while presenting this 5th issue of 'Vigilant India'. You may like to send the same at dg@bprd.nic.in.

Jai Hind!



आज भारत एक दशक पहले की तुलना में ज्यादा स्थिर, सुरक्षित और मजबूत देश है। आज भारत को उसकी राजनीतिक स्थिरता के लिए जाना जाता है।

-श्री नरेंद्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री



140 किलोमीटर प्रति घंटे की रफतार वाले तूफान बिपरजॉय में एक भी व्यक्ति की जान नहीं गई, ये बहुत संतोष की बात है। इस तूफान में NDRF और SDRF ने अपनी जान जोखिम में डालकर लोगों की जान बचाने का काम किया... इसके लिए मैं उन्हें हृदय से बधाई देता हूँ।

-श्री अमित शाह, केंद्रीय गृह एवं सहकारिता मंत्री



वर्ष 2014 से अब तक 'बॉर्डर एरिया डेवलपमेंट प्रोग्राम' के अंतर्गत 839 पुलों का निर्माण, 25 लाख किलोमीटर ऑप्टिकल फाइबर बिछाई गई, 5,638 से ज्यादा स्मार्ट सिटी परियोजनाएं पूरी कर ली गई हैं और यही विश्व स्तरीय इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर आज नए भारत की सशक्त पहचान है।

- श्री नित्यानंद राय

केंद्रीय गृह राज्य मंत्री, भारत सरकार



By paying utmost respect and attention to the pleas of Taxpayers, the government led by PM Shri @narendramodi ji is formulating citizen-centric and citizen-friendly policies.

- Sh. Nisith Pramanik,

Minister of State (Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports)



Whether it is a road, air, railway, ropeway or port infrastructure, India has witnessed a complete transformation Under the visionary leadership of PM Shri @narendramodi Ji.

- Sh. Ajay Mishra, Minister of State (Ministry of Home Affairs)



गृह मंत्री ने आंतरिक सुरक्षा सुदृढ़ करने में केंद्रीय सशस्त्र पुलिस बलों की भूमिका की सराहना की। सीमापार से घुसपैठ और मादक पदार्थों व हथियारों की तस्करी को रोकने के लिए सीमा पर अत्यधिक चौकसी बरतने की जरूरत पर बल दिया। सीमाओं की सुरक्षा के लिए हर सीमावर्ती गांव और वहां के निवासियों के साथ संपर्क और संवाद बहुत जरूरी है, सभी सीएपीएफ को स्थानीय उत्पादों की खरीद को बढ़ावा देना चाहिए, जिससे सीमावर्ती क्षेत्रों में रोजगार के अवसर बढ़ेंगे और पलायन रुकेगा।

-केंद्रीय गृह मंत्रालय

The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, also known as FCRA, stands as a vital requirement for non-governmental voluntary organisations seeking foreign donations. Without an FCRA licence, the doors to overseas contributions are firmly closed. Despite this, some organisations continued to receive donations from abroad. Some in legal ways, some in illegal ways. With Shri Narendra Modi assuming the role of Prime Minister, a transformative era of crackdown commenced. In the year 2020, under the guidance of Union Minister for Home and Cooperation Shri Amit Shah, the Central Government championed a cause for unwavering transparency and dedicated efforts in the nation's interest, leading to significant amendments in the FCRA, urging organisations to embrace accountability and transparency.



FCRA Streamlines

Legal Channels for Foreign Grants

Government Cracks the Whip On Illegal Foreign Remittances

Bureau

Over the past few years, India has witnessed a surge in various activities carried out through foreign donations, posing a potential threat to the nation's interests. Recognising this pressing concern, the Central Government has introduced crucial amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act to ensure effective monitoring of overseas

contributions.

The primary objective is to channel donations to benefit the underprivileged and promote social welfare rather than allowing the funds to be exploited for destabilising the country. The Union Minister for Home and Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, has promised that not a single penny will infiltrate the country's borders for wasteful endeavours. He further emphasised that

Salient Features of Amendment

1. Earlier, NGOs used to have many separate bank accounts and would receive crores of rupees from abroad. Under the new amendment, an accredited bank branch has now been earmarked for NGOs to receive foreign donations. It is mandatory to open a bank account in the State Bank of India branch located at Connaught Place in New Delhi. With this, banking transactions can be monitored.
2. Auditing of NGOs has been made mandatory.
3. An organisation will have to invest that money in the same work for which it has received foreign aid.
4. NGOs will need to show their activities. Until a few years ago, the renewal process of NGOs' licences was very lax, and many dubious activities and transactions worth crores of rupees were taking place because of this. Therefore, the process of renewal has been made transparent.
5. According to a report given by the Intelligence Agency IB to the Ministry of Home Affairs, some NGOs had been diverting foreign donations towards suspicious activities instead of utilising them for their intended purposes. When investigated or questioned by the authorities, these organisations gave false information, claiming that the funds were used for administrative expenses such as employee salaries, office rent, and transportation costs. It was discovered that they inaccurately reported 50 % of the expenditure on paper. In light of these findings, a new legal amendment was introduced, limiting the proportion of foreign donations spent on administrative matters to only 20%.
6. NGOs were linked to other essential identity cards, including Aadhaar cards, and the misuse of PAN cards was stopped.



In the last 9 years, India has created a new definition of development. This is the result of public participation, be it poor or deprived, women power or youth power, every class has been empowered. During this period, the country has set an example of innovation in all fields.

- Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

following the implementation of this legislation by the Centre, numerous revelations have come to light, exposing the alarming threats posed to the nation's core interests.

The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) was enacted to monitor foreign donations received by social and religious organisations, so that they are not used for anti-

national activities. It allowed the government to oversee the utilisation of foreign funds. This law has existed for decades, but has now been strengthened by recent amendments by the Union Home Ministry which aim to prevent illegal donations and enable the government to monitor foreign contributions.

Safeguarding the integrity of our



nation's environment and system is paramount. In 2014, after PM Modi assumed office, the NGO sector faced heightened scrutiny. In 2015, based on intelligence inputs, the Central Government compiled a list of NGOs allegedly involved in various activities, including links with left-wing extremists, associations with sectarian organisations like the Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and others.

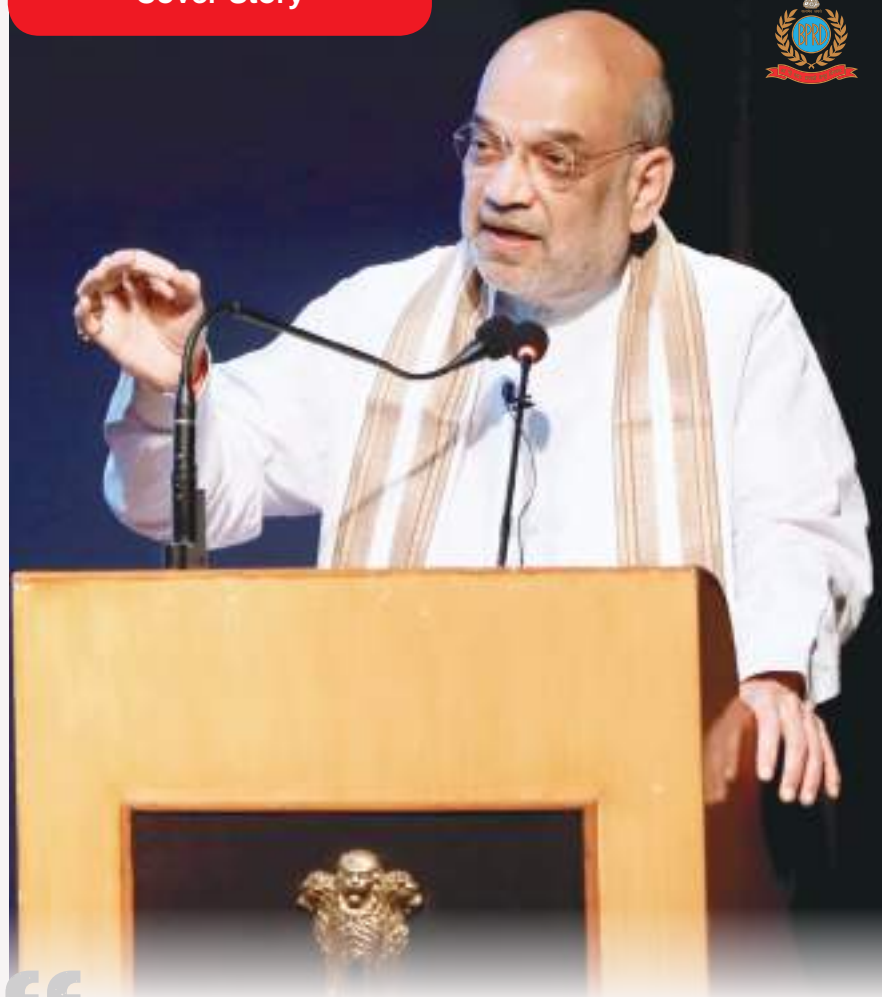
In a significant meeting held on November 21, 2014, the government's Economic Intelligence Council expressed deep concerns regarding certain NGOs' potential misuse of foreign funds. Subsequently, resolute action was taken, and the licences of over 13,000 NGOs heavily reliant on foreign aid were cancelled. In 2017, around 4,800 NGOs had their licences revoked.

As part of stringent measures, the government mandated that all NGOs, companies, or individuals receiving foreign funds must open accounts in any of the 32 designated banks, ensuring increased transparency and accountability.

In September 2020, the government introduced amendments to the FCRA, significantly strengthening regulations concerning foreign donations. Under the revised law, individuals, associations and companies are now mandated to possess an FCRA certificate to accept foreign contributions.

The updated legislation explicitly states that foreign contributions received by an organisation cannot be transferred to another individual or organisation. These amendments aim to ensure greater accountability and transparency in utilising and transferring foreign funds within the country.

During the 'Chintan Shivir' of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India held in October 2022 at Surajkund, the FCRA took centre stage in a crucial discussion of the Union Home Minister with the Chief Ministers, Home Ministers and Director Generals of Police from several states and UTs.



“

Some NGOs want to keep India's society healthy, but some want to torture it. The policy of the Government of India cannot be the same for both types of NGOs. No mercy can be shown to those who do not follow the FCRA law. It will not work if the sources of money coming from abroad are not under the supervision of the state. The government will not allow even a single penny to enter the country for the destruction of the country.

Shri Amit Shah, Union Minister for Home and Cooperation

”

The Union Minister for Home and Cooperation underlined the crucial need to effectively utilise internal security resources in combating the nation's challenges. This necessitates optimising, rationalising, and integrating resources to enhance inter-state coordination.

On September 21, 2020, Shri Nityanand Rai, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, reassured the Lok Sabha that the FCRA Bill is not

intended to target any specific religion or NGO. He emphasised that the bill aims to prevent the misuse of foreign funds and is instrumental in realising a self-reliant India, aligning with the broader vision of the nation's growth and development.

During the discussions on the FCRA bill in the Rajya Sabha, the government emphasised the need for regulation of funds received from abroad to prevent their utilisation in anti-



Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2010

- ◆ Foreign funding of individuals in India is regulated under the FCRA Act and implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ◆ Individuals are allowed to accept foreign contributions without permission from MHA. However, the monetary limit for acceptance of such foreign contribution shall be less than Rs.25,000.
- ◆ The Act ensures that the recipients of foreign contribution adhere to the purpose for which such contribution has been received.
- ◆ It is mandatory for organisations to register themselves every five years.

Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2020

- ◆ **Prohibition on acceptance of foreign contribution:** The Act prohibits public servants from receiving foreign contribution.
- ◆ **Transfer of foreign contribution:** The Act prohibits transfer of foreign contribution to any other person.
- ◆ **Aadhaar for registration:** The Act makes it mandatory for all officers, directors or principal functionaries receiving foreign contributions to have an Aadhaar number, as an identity document.
- ◆ **FCRA Account:** The Act states that foreign contributions should be received only in such branches of the State Bank of India, New Delhi as designated by the bank.
- ◆ **Surrender of Certificate:** The Act allows any person to surrender its Certificate of Registration to the Central Government.

national activities. The government's intention behind this legislation was to establish a comprehensive framework that prohibits accepting and transferring foreign donations while implementing clear rules regarding opening FCRA accounts and mandating the provision of Aadhaar numbers.

The FCRA Bill was successfully passed in the Rajya Sabha. Under the new bill, NGOs can utilise only 20% of foreign funds for administrative purposes instead of the previous limit of 50%.

In July 2022, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs introduced amendments to certain rules associated with the FCRA, allowing Indian individuals to receive up to Rs 10 lakh per year from their relatives residing abroad without the requirement of notifying



the authorities. Previously, the limit was set at Rs 1 lakh. According to the ministry's notification, if the amount exceeds Rs 10 lakh, individuals now have 90 days to inform the government, a significant extension from the previous 30-day deadline.

Additionally, the Union Home Ministry issued a separate notification designating five more offences under the FCRA as 'compoundable,' which means that organisations or individuals accused of these offences can resolve the matter through a settlement, rather than facing direct prosecution. Before this amendment, only seven offences were considered 'compoundable' under the FCRA.

The FCRA stands as a vital safeguard to regulate foreign donations, shielding India's internal security from potential threats. It was originally enacted in 1976 but underwent subsequent amendments in 2010, 2016, and 2018. The recent enactment of the FCRA Bill brought about further revisions to the FCRA 2010, reinforcing its significance. Under the law, organisations seeking foreign contributions must mandatorily register themselves.

Initially valid for five years, the registration can be renewed, provided all thresholds are diligently met. Registered associations are permitted to receive foreign contributions for diverse purposes, including social, educational, religious, economic, and cultural initiatives. They are required to file annual returns akin to income tax regulations. The FCRA 2020 introduced notable changes, stipulating that foreign contributions can only be received in a designated "FCRA account" held at a branch of the State Bank of India in New Delhi, as specified by the Central Government.

This account serves exclusively for foreign contributions. While deliberating the FCRA amendment in the Lok Sabha, Shri Nityanand Rai clarified that the intention behind the Act was not to impede NGOs but rather to enhance transparency and prevent the misuse of foreign



contributions. Defending the reduction of administrative expenses, he argued that expecting substantial humanitarian work from an NGO that allocates half its funding for internal purposes would not be realistic. Highlighting the national security aspect, he emphasised, "The FCRA is a national and internal security law, which ensures that foreign funds do not affect national interests. Transparency is our primary objective." In December 2021, the Union Home Ministry cancelled the FCRA registration of the renowned Missionaries of Charity organisation based in Kolkata. The cancellation stirred political discourse because of the organisation's association with Mother Teresa and its work both within India and abroad. As investigations unfolded, it became evident that this action was taken for violations in the provisions of the statute.

The Ministry of Home Affairs had previously clarified that registrations for NGOs failing to meet the eligibility criteria would not be renewed after

December 25, 2021. Numerous institutions were found not complying with this requirement, resulting in the cancellation of registrations for thousands of NGOs nationwide, including the Missionaries of Charity. However, realising their oversight, the institution expeditiously completed the necessary paperwork, restoring their FCRA registration within a few days.

This incident serves as a compelling example of the emphasis placed on transparency in the utilisation of foreign contributions, which amount to significant sums of money intended to support genuine NGOs engaged in social welfare activities.

It underscores the importance in registering under the FCRA to receive foreign donations for NGOs. By enforcing compliance and highlighting the need for transparency, the government strives to create an environment where foreign contributions are directed towards meaningful endeavours that uplift society and contribute to the nation's progress. ■



FCRA: Evolution and Reforms

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 (FCRA, 2010) is a crucial legislation enacted by the Government of India to regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions or hospitality by certain individuals, associations, or companies. Over the years, the Act has undergone significant reforms to adapt to changing circumstances, align with global standards, and enhance transparency and accountability.

Bureau



Continuous reform is the key to good governance. Several obsolete laws have witnessed necessary changes and amendments in the last few years by the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Although the FCRA Act has its roots in the early years of India's independence, it has undergone significant reforms to establish a more robust regulatory framework that addresses emerging challenges and improves transparency. These reforms aim to strike a balance between regulations and facilitating legitimate activities.

The original FCRA Act 1976 established a framework for regulating

individuals' and organisations' acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions. The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act was established by Parliament in 1976 to oversee the acceptance and use of foreign contributions or hospitality by specific individuals or organisations. This was done to ensure that Parliamentary institutions, political groups, and individuals working in important areas of national life operate in a manner that aligns with the values of a sovereign democratic republic. In 1984, Parliament made major changes in the 1976 Act to make it more effective.

Intending to consolidate the law and to regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions, Parliament enacted the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) in

the year 2010 by repealing the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976 and introducing broader provisions for regulation of acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution. This amendment replaced the original FCRA Act of 1976 and substantially changed the regulatory landscape. It introduced a more comprehensive framework for accepting and utilising foreign contributions. It aimed to align the Act with emerging global standards in transparency and accountability.

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 (FCRA, 2010) and Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Rules, 2011 (FCRR, 2011) came into force on May 1, 2011. It aimed to prohibit accepting and utilising foreign contributions or hospitality for any activity detrimental to the national



India accomplished a journey from red tape to the red carpet in the last 9 years of Ease of Business. PM Narendra Modi Ji introduced an efficient tax system, investor-friendly policy, and easier approvals to create a hassle-free business environment, making India an FDI destination.

-Shri Amit Shah, Union Minister for Home and Cooperation



interest. FCRA, 2010 also prohibited acceptance of foreign contribution by candidates for election, correspondents/columnists/publishers/printers/owners of a registered newspaper, judges, government/public servants, members of any legislature, political party or its office bearers, organisations of a political nature and associations/companies engaged in production/broadcast of news/current affairs through any electronic media.

However, during the implementation of the FCRA 2010, instances of misuse of foreign funds were reported. The term 'Foreign Contribution' is defined in the FCRA, 2010. Broadly, the foreign contribution is the donation, delivery or transfer made by any 'foreign source' of any article or currency (whether Indian or foreign) or any security (as defined in the extant Acts). Many associations or persons were not adhering to statutory compliances such as submitting annual returns and maintaining proper accounts. The continuation of such a situation had the potential to affect national security adversely. Therefore, it became imperative that the legal framework be robust to prevent using foreign funding for any purpose that is not in the national interest.

To better regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution to charitable organisations, the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2020, was enacted by Parliament on September 28, 2020. The 2020 Amendment Act has many significant features in pursuing national security and transparency. Transferring foreign contribution (FC) from one entity/association to another is prohibited to prevent misuse and diversion. FC can be remitted only in an "FCRA account" in the SBI, New Delhi Main Branch.

In order to increase the utilisation of FC for welfare activities, the ceiling of administrative expenditure has been reduced from 50% to 20% of FC received in a financial year. Additionally, Aadhaar has been made mandatory as the ID for office bearers. Public servants were also brought under the category 'prohibited receiving FC', and the requirement of field inquiry (to ascertain on-ground activities) was introduced for the renewal of registration.

The government initiated more measures to reduce the compliance burden on associations/persons and to enhance transparency. In July 2022, more violations under the FCRA, 2010 and FCRR, 2011 that could otherwise attract prosecution/imprisonment were made compoundable. Furthermore, the process of compounding has been made online to enhance transparency. Besides, FCRR 2011 was amended in July 2022 to reduce the compliance burden on citizens. As per amended Rule 6 of FCRR 2011, any person receiving FC more than Rs 10 Lakh in a financial year from his/her relatives must inform the central government within three months of receipt of FC. Earlier, such monetary threshold limit was Rs 1 Lakh and intimation to the central government was required within thirty days. The time limit prescribed in FCRR 2011 for intimation by associations to the central government in case of opening of utilisation account; or change of bank account, name, address, key member/office bearer, etc., has been increased from 15 days to 45 days. The amended FCRR 2011 has also discontinued the requirement of uploading and reporting quarterly returns for receipt of foreign contribution towards easing the

regulatory compliance burden.

The reforms introduced in the FCRA Act have had positive implications. The amendments have streamlined the regulatory process, improved transparency, and reduced bureaucratic hurdles for NGOs involved in legitimate activities. The digitisation of the registration process, online reporting, and the introduction of Aadhaar authentication have made compliance procedures more efficient and accessible.

The FCRA Act is a crucial tool in regulating foreign contributions and preventing misuse. Through multiple reformative measures, the government has ensured that the FCRA Act continues to be a robust and fair framework that encourages genuine organisations while safeguarding national interests.

Foreign Contribution

The term 'Foreign Contribution' is defined in the FCRA, 2010. Broadly, the foreign contribution is the donation, delivery or transfer made by any 'foreign source' of any article or currency (whether Indian or foreign) or any security (as defined in the extant Acts). The definition also explains that any amount received by any 'person' from any 'foreign source' in India by way of fee or towards cost in lieu of goods or services rendered by such person in the ordinary course of his business, trade or commerce is excluded from the definition of 'foreign contribution'. The terms 'person' and 'Foreign source' are defined in FCRA, 2010.

Foreign Hospitality

The term 'Foreign Hospitality' is defined in FCRA, 2010. It broadly means any offer in cash or kind made by a foreign source for providing a person with the cost of travel to any foreign country/territory or with free boarding, lodging, transport, etc. FCRA, 2010 mandates that any member of a legislature or office bearer of a political party or judge or a government servant or an employee of any corporation/body owned and controlled by the government shall not accept foreign hospitality without prior permission of the central government. The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Rules, 2011(FCRR, 2011) prescribe procedures to obtain such prior permission. ■

Unveiling the Misuse of Illegal Foreign Donations

To ensure transparency and accountability in the NGO sector, the Central government has taken decisive action by cancelling the FCRA licences of a staggering 20,673 NGOs since 2014. Out of the estimated 33 lakh NGOs operating across the country, a mere 10% diligently report their activities to the government.

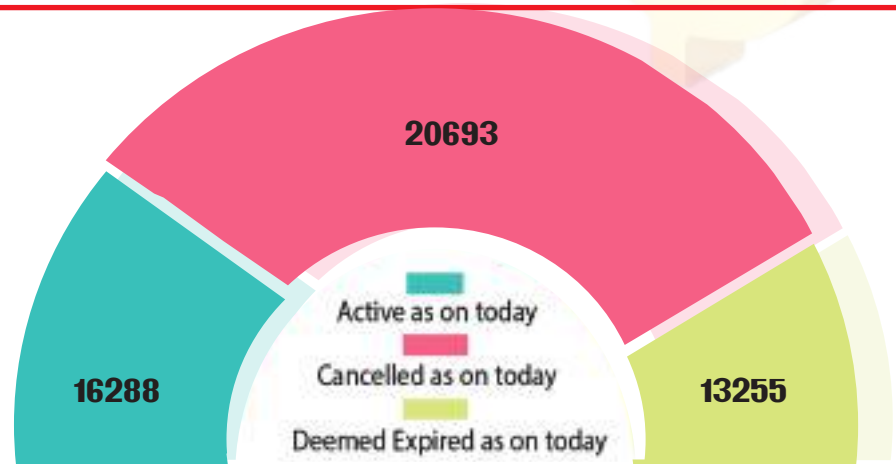
Bureau

Numerous non-governmental voluntary organisations have been found to unlawfully accept foreign donations and exploit them for purposes such as religious conversion and anti-national activities. Security agencies had repeatedly reported on organisations engaging in anti-national and non-democratic activities, but it was only after Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took office in 2014 that these organisations were brought to public attention. The Central government swiftly implemented various measures to clamp down on such entities, including crucial amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

Foreign conspiracies have long thrived in India under the guise of supporting causes like human rights, poverty alleviation, education, malnutrition, and civil rights. Some NGOs have exploited these platforms to impede projects of national significance, whether it be supporting Naxalite movements or obstructing development initiatives related to nuclear and coal.

It is important to recognise that there are reactionary individuals who disguise themselves as civil society members, and it is crucial to understand their role within the national context.

The government has become aware of numerous instances where funds from overseas sources were utilised to incite public sentiment against the government and development projects. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) recently discovered 12 NGOs that were engaged in allegedly facilitating the unlawful entry of Rohingya



As on June 10, 2023

Muslims into India.

These organisations allegedly facilitated the entry of individuals by providing them with specific documents based on UN refugee provisions. It has apparently become their primary business to defame India in the name of conducting studies on minority issues, human rights violations, tribal affairs, Kashmir, and northeastern matters.

These organisations have been accused of pursuing a divisive agenda focussed on conversion and destabilising society. Many prominent NGOs transfer funds to smaller NGOs under the guise of supporting education, healthcare, nutrition, and shelter initiatives.

Some NGOs across the country have approached the Supreme Court to challenge the amendment to the FCRA law. The Supreme Court has taken a firm stance against the misuse of foreign funds. The apex court has directed the government to make sure that NGOs do not misuse funds.

Following various complaints and approval from the MHA in May 2022,

the CBI conducted raids at approximately 40 locations, including Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Coimbatore, Mysore, and Rajasthan. These operations aimed to investigate alleged violations of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA). The raids uncovered instances where representatives and intermediaries of various NGOs were found engaged in illegal financial transactions to facilitate foreign donations in contravention of the FCRA, 2010.

The Union Home Secretary, Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla, wrote a letter to the CBI Director requesting an inquiry into a bribery scandal. Subsequently, surveillance was initiated on several suspects. On May 10, 2022, the CBI launched a large-scale nationwide search operation that resulted in the arrest of 16 individuals, including six officials from the ministry's FCRA unit. According to the chargesheet filed by the CBI, these officers allegedly solicited bribes to expedite pending FCRA applications.

Through the interception of 437 phone calls, it was revealed that the accused



officials, in collusion with intermediaries, allegedly demanded bribes ranging from 5% to 10% of foreign donations received by the NGOs. The CBI also seized 12 pen drives and approximately 50 mobile phones, providing valuable information about the alleged bribery network's financial transactions and modus operandi. The investigation remains ongoing, with the possibility of supplementary chargesheets and a broader conspiracy being explored.

Based on intercepted calls and WhatsApp conversations, the CBI gathered evidence and obtained records from the FCRA unit. The racket was exposed after the Ministry of Home

Affairs received information about three bribery networks operating within the FCRA unit. The gravity of the information prompted Union Minister for Home and Cooperation Shri Amit Shah to order a CBI investigation into the matter.

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010, governs the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions by individuals, associations, and companies. According to PRS Legislative Research, specific individuals, including "public servants", are prohibited from accepting foreign contributions. In April 2023, the MHA recommended a CBI inquiry against Oxfam India for violations related to receiving donations from abroad. The

ministry's recommendation said that despite enacting the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2020, Oxfam India allegedly continued to transfer funds to different institutions, contravening the law. Under Shri Shah's guidance, the MHA is taking strict action against NGOs that illegally collect money in violation of the FCRA.

One notable case involves Khurram Parvez, who allegedly acted as a Pakistani agent for almost two decades through his organisation Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS). He allegedly facilitated the recruitment and financing of local Kashmiris for terror activities. The possibility of internal support within India for Khurram Parvez and his NGO cannot be ruled out.

On November 22, 2021, the NIA arrested him and conducted searches at his residence and the JKCCS office in Srinagar throughout the day. The seizures allegedly included anti-India propaganda material, information about the Indian Army, sensitive locations, strategic assets, and visiting cards of leaders from Pakistan-based terrorist organisations, including Hizbul Mujahideen.

The investigation has allegedly uncovered the widespread exploitation of various self-proclaimed NGOs and trusts that engage in fundraising activities, within India and abroad, under the guise of charitable endeavours.

Shockingly, these funds were allegedly channelled towards fueling separatist movements and carrying out terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir. Operating as a regional human rights activist, Parvez allegedly preyed on vulnerable Kashmiri youth, enticing them into anti-India actions by offering financial incentives through these NGOs.

Strikingly, no record of JKCCS, the organisation he operated under, was found in the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) registration records in India. The absence of regulatory oversight facilitated the flow of funds from overseas, enabling support for terrorist activities. Many fraudulent NGOs were allegedly established under the banner of JKCCS, serving as additional conduits for receiving and managing illicit foreign funds. Notably, one such entity named Kashmiri Women's Initiative for Peace and Disarmament (KWIPD) was nonexistent on the ground. ■

Rise in Funds for Organisations registered under FCRA

In March 2023, the Union Minister of State for Home, Shri Nityanand Rai, provided details in the Rajya Sabha regarding foreign funding received by Indian NGOs in the past three years. According to the information shared, these NGOs received a staggering Rs 55,449 crore in foreign funding during this period. The breakdown of funds received by the year shows that Rs 16,306.04 crore was received in the financial year 2019-20, followed by Rs 17,058.64 crore in 2020-21, and a substantial increase to Rs 22,085.10 crore in 2021-22. Among the states and union territories, Delhi-based NGOs topped the list, receiving the highest foreign funding amounting to Rs 13,957.84 crore. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra followed with significant funding of Rs 6,803.72 crore, Rs 7,224.89 crore, and Rs 5,555.37 crore, respectively. It's important to note that these NGOs had registered under the FCRA. Due to violations of regulations, the registrations of 1,827 NGOs have been cancelled by the Centre over the past five years. As of March 10, a total of 16,383 NGOs possess valid FCRA registration certificates. Out of these, 14,966 associations have submitted the mandatory annual returns for the financial year 2021-22 in accordance with the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010. Some complaints regarding misappropriation or diversion of foreign contributions were received. Such complaints are addressed in adherence to the provisions outlined in the Act and the corresponding rules.

FCRA Amendments Streamline Registration and Application Process

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One of the significant changes brought about by the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA)

amendments is the introduction of online application and registration processes. With the amendments, the entire process has been digitised, enabling applicants to complete the registration and application formalities online.

This digitised process reduces paperwork, minimises the chances of errors, and expedites the overall registration process. The introduction of online payment mechanisms has also simplified the fee payment process.

As per the FCRA, 2010, no person or association shall accept foreign contributions (FCs) without obtaining registration or prior permission from the central government. Any person or association carrying out activities for definite cultural, economic, education, religious or social programmes may seek registration or prior permission for receiving FCs by applying the prescribed form on the FCRA portal — <https://www.fcraonline.nic.in>. The application for registration or prior permission is scrutinised to ensure compliance with the criteria laid down in FCRA 2010 and the rules made thereunder.

Maintaining transparency and ensuring the prevention of the diversion of funds are the salient features of the Act. A field inquiry is conducted by the Central Security Agency to check the on-ground activities of the association and antecedents of its office bearers.

The person/association is granted a registration certificate or prior permission on fulfilling the eligibility criteria. The registration certificate is valid for five years from the date of registration, whereas prior permission is given for a specific project.

Every person/association is required to get the registration certificate renewed within six months before its expiry. The certificate of an association that fails to apply for renewal within the validity of its

Over the years, the law has undergone several reforms to streamline its provisions and make the registration and application process more accessible for organisations seeking foreign funding.



FCRA registration certificate is considered 'deemed ceased'.

Similarly, the certificate of an association whose renewal application is refused becomes 'ceased' from the date of expiry of the registration certificate or the date of the refusal of application (as the case may be). Such associations are not permitted to receive or utilise any foreign contribution. Only those associations whose FCRA certificate is 'alive' or 'active' are allowed to receive or utilise FCs. As per the government data, the registration certificate of 16,275 associations is alive as of June 12, 2023.

The central government's concerted efforts have resulted in a more effortless and digitised application process under the FCRA.

Any association that is in existence for the last three years and has a proven track record of spending at least Rs 15 lakh in its chosen field of work (educational, social,

religious, economic and cultural) during the previous three years may apply for registration under FCRA 2010.

The application can be submitted on the online FCRA portal. Before creating a login ID on the FCRA website, a person/association is required to obtain a unique Darpan ID from the NITI Ayog's 'Darpan portal'. Based on the Darpan ID and PAN number, the person/association may create its login on the FCRA website. The website provides a complete procedure for applying in an online portal. Furthermore, detailed FAQs are available on the website.

By using login credentials, a person/association can avail of all FCRA's services, such as renewal, prior permission, foreign hospitality, change of details and submission of annual returns. The FCRA support team handles any queries regarding login or application filing process, etc., through email and telephone.

The recent FCRA amendments have significantly improved the registration and application process, making it easier for organisations to seek and receive foreign contributions. The digitisation of processes, reduced processing times, and enhanced transparency measures have streamlined the regulatory framework and eliminated unnecessary hurdles. These changes encourage greater participation from eligible entities and promote the inflow of foreign funds for development and welfare activities in India. ■

Corrigendum

The box titled "DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill – 2019 to benefit" published on pg. 9 of Vigilant India, 4th Ed. "Forensic Science Accelerates Conviction Rate" inadvertently mentioned the Bill as 'passed in Lok Sabha' whereas it has been introduced only. The oversight is regretted - Editor

Sustainable Development Goals for a Brighter Future

It is the collective responsibility of the people not to let the Sustainable Development Goals lag. Countries in the Global South must send a strong message to the world about the action plan needed to achieve this.

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It

is an immensely proud moment for India as it assumes the prestigious role of presiding over the G20.

The gathering of development ministers from around the world in the historically and culturally rich city of Kashi (Varanasi) exemplifies India's strong democratic tradition. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi himself acknowledged that Kashi, a city renowned for knowledge, discourse, culture and spirituality, encapsulates the diverse heritage that unites people from all corners of India. Serving as a meeting point for diverse perspectives, Kashi symbolises the essence of India.

During his address, the Prime Minister emphasised that Kashi derives its strength from India's timeless traditions and encouraged attendees to explore and experience the spirit of this remarkable city. He extended his best wishes for the success of this gathering, aiming to promote Agenda 2030 and fulfil the aspirations of countries from the Global South.

On June 12, the G20 development ministers convened in Kashi (Varanasi), with the PM addressing the gathering via video conferencing. The PM stressed the importance of comprehensive, inclusive, fair, and sustainable efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasising the need to increase investments towards this end. Additionally, he highlighted the significance of finding solutions to address the debt risks faced by numerous countries.

PM Modi advocated for the reform of multilateral financial institutions to broaden eligibility criteria, ensuring accessibility to finance for those in need. He pointed out India's endeavours in uplifting the lives of people residing in over a hundred aspirational districts that were previously underdeveloped. These



districts have now emerged as catalysts for growth within the country. PM Modi encouraged the G20 development ministers to study this model of development, considering its potential relevance in accelerating the progress of Agenda 2030.

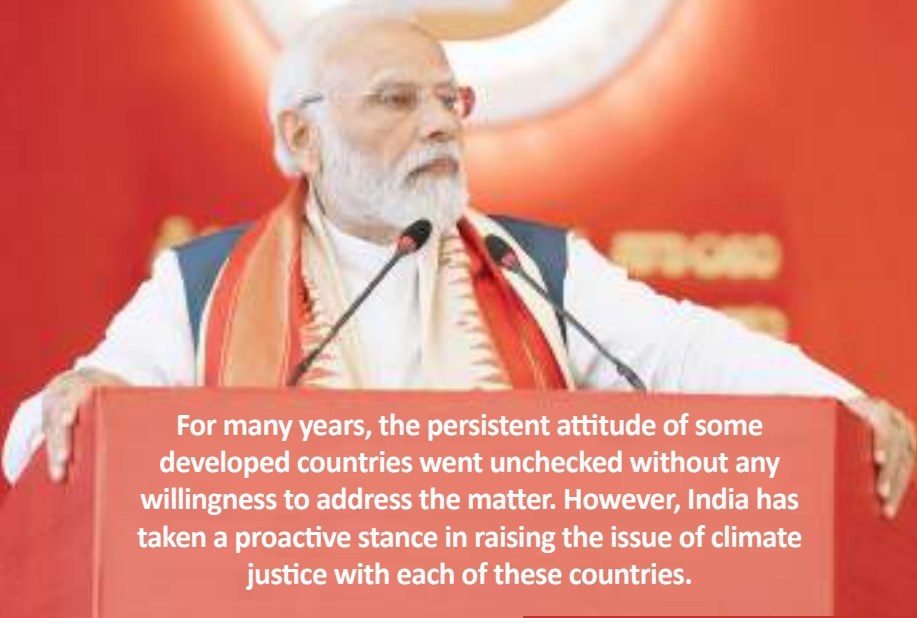
"Development is a core issue for the countries of the Global South," the PM said, highlighting the severe impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on these nations. He also pointed out that geopolitical tensions have contributed to food, fuel, and fertiliser crises. The decisions made in such circumstances hold significance for the entire global community. Shri Modi stressed the collective responsibility of all people to ensure that these goals are not left behind.

The Prime Minister stated that India is ready to share its experiences with partner countries. He expressed hope that the discussions would lead to concrete actions promoting data for discussion, development, and distribution

in developing nations.

Emphasising the growing data divide, the PM highlighted the crucial role of high-quality data in meaningful policy-making, efficient resource allocation, and effective public service delivery. He underlined the importance of democratising technology as a means to bridge this divide. The PM cited India's digital revolution, where technology has been utilised to empower individuals, enhance data accessibility, and ensure inclusivity.

Regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Shri Modi underscored the significance of gender equality and women's empowerment in achieving these goals. He stressed that India's focus extends beyond women's empowerment alone and encompasses women-led development. Women are not only shaping the development agenda but also serving as agents of growth and transformation. The Prime Minister called upon all to adopt a transformative action plan to promote women-led development. ■



For many years, the persistent attitude of some developed countries went unchecked without any willingness to address the matter. However, India has taken a proactive stance in raising the issue of climate justice with each of these countries.

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Emphasising the theme of Environment Day 2023, which focusses on the campaign to eliminate single-use plastic, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi expressed his satisfaction with India's consistent efforts in this direction over the past 4-5 years. India has undertaken comprehensive measures since 2018 to tackle the issue of single-use plastic at two levels. Firstly, a ban on single-use plastic has been implemented, and secondly, the processing of plastic waste has been made mandatory.

The PM highlighted that in the 21st century, India is marching forward with a clear roadmap for addressing climate change and protecting the environment. He emphasised that India has achieved a delicate balance between the immediate needs of the present and the long-term vision for the future. Shri Modi noted that the government has provided essential assistance even to the most underprivileged sections of society while making significant strides to address future energy requirements.

Over the past nine years, India has placed immense focus on promoting green and clean energy. The PM cited notable examples such as solar energy and LED bulbs, which have not only contributed to cost savings for people but also helped in preserving the environment. Moreover, he highlighted

India's Timeless Cultural Legacy Embraces Nature and Progress

India's leadership role during the global pandemic, mentioning the launch of the Mission Green Hydrogen programme and the significant steps taken to promote natural farming, aimed at preserving soil and water resources by reducing the use of chemical fertilisers.

Over the past nine years, the number of wetlands and Ramsar sites in India has nearly tripled compared to previous figures. Today, two new schemes have been launched to further advance the campaign for a green economy and a sustainable future.

The PM talked about the commencement of the 'Amrit Dharohar Yojana', aimed at conserving Ramsar sites through public participation. This initiative will transform these sites into hubs of eco-tourism and generate green employment opportunities for thousands of individuals. Additionally, the 'Mishti scheme' has been introduced to revive and safeguard the country's mangrove ecosystem. This scheme will focus on restoring mangrove cover

in nine states, helping mitigate the escalating threats posed by rising sea levels and natural disasters like cyclones, particularly in coastal areas.

Shri Modi underscored the importance of transcending vested interests and prioritising the protection of the global climate. Addressing the prevalent development model followed by many large and modern countries, which involves prioritising economic development before addressing environmental concerns, the PM said that while these countries may have achieved their development goals, the environment has paid a heavy price. Even today, developing and underdeveloped nations continue to bear the consequences of the flawed policies implemented by some developed countries.

In the rich tapestry of India's millennia-old culture, progress and nature coexist harmoniously. The PM attributed this unique inspiration to India's unwavering focus on both ecology and economy. India is undertaking unprecedented investments in infrastructure while maintaining an equal emphasis on environmental conservation.

Drawing a contrast between economic growth and ecological preservation, the PM highlighted significant achievements. On the one hand, India has witnessed the expansion of 4G and 5G connectivity, and on the other hand, there has been a remarkable increase in the country's forest cover.

The PM also underscored the significance of Mission Life, which has transformed into a mass movement promoting an environmentally conscious lifestyle. This mission has generated new awareness about adopting lifestyle changes to combat climate change.

The PM shared the tremendous response received since the launch of Mission Life in Gujarat's Kevadia-Ekta Nagar last year, with over 20 million people becoming actively involved within a month. The initiative has encompassed rallies, quiz competitions, and the spirit of 'giving life to my city'. He highlighted that millions of individuals have embraced the mantra of 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' in their daily lives. The fundamental principle of Mission Life lies in the transformation of individuals to create a positive impact on the world. ■



Charting the Path to a Developed India with Swaraj, Good Governance and Self-Reliance

The commemoration of the 350th anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's coronation holds great significance as it symbolises the spirit of independence and serves as a profound source of inspiration. Even after centuries, the values championed by Shivaji Maharaj continue to guide us towards progress. The Prime Minister expressed that this journey would be to build the India of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's dreams of 'Swaraj', good governance and self-reliance, and it would be a journey of a developed India. Shivaji Maharaj's legacy resonates with his call to break free from the chains of servitude and unite to build a nation.

celebrated throughout Maharashtra as a festival, highlighting the significance of Shivaji Maharaj's legacy and his profound impact on the region.

During his address on June 2, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi laid stress on the significance of leadership and the responsibility of leaders to inspire and instil confidence in their citizens.

He also highlighted that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's era serves as a testament to the level of confidence and resilience that can be imagined within a nation. He acknowledged the challenging circumstances of that time, where centuries of slavery, poverty, invasions, and exploitation weakened society and eroded the faith of the citizens.

However, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj not only fought against the invaders but also restored the confidence of the public, showing them that self-rule was attainable. His leadership inspired individuals to rise above the mentality of slavery and actively participate in nation-building. Drawing inspiration from Shivaji Maharaj, the PM highlighted a significant event from the past year, when the Indian Navy replaced its flag with Shivaji Maharaj's emblem, symbolising the liberation from the remnants of British rule. Today, this flag represents the pride of a New India, both on land and at sea.

Shri Modi emphasised that history has witnessed many rulers who excelled

in military dominance but lacked administrative abilities, as well as those who were renowned for their governance but lacked military leadership.

However, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's exceptional personality stood out in these aspects, as he established both "Swaraj" (self-rule) and "Suraj" (good governance). At a young age, he exemplified military leadership by conquering forts and defeating enemies. Simultaneously, as a king, he paved the way for good governance by implementing reforms in public administration.

Shivaji Maharaj not only protected his state and culture from invaders but also presented a comprehensive vision for nation-building. His unique approach distinguished him from other historical heroes, as he governed with a philanthropic spirit that ensured people lived with dignity.

Shivaji Maharaj's actions conveyed a powerful message to those who sought to harm 'Swaraj', religion, culture, and heritage. This instilled confidence among the people and fostered a spirit of self-reliance. The PM noted that this had garnered increased respect for the country. Whether it is farmers' welfare, women's empowerment, or ensuring governance reaches the common person, Shivaji Maharaj's governance and policies remain relevant even in contemporary times. ■

Bureau

The commemoration of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's coronation, celebrating its 350th anniversary, encapsulated the essence of 'Swaraj' (self-rule) and nationalism. Throughout his reign, Shivaji Maharaj consistently placed the unity and integrity of India as his utmost priority. Today, we witness the reflection of his profound ideals in the vision of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat" (One India, Great India). The nation's and its people's welfare were fundamental principles governing Shivaji Maharaj's reign. To commemorate this historic occasion, a grand celebration took place within the premises of Raigarh Fort, the first capital of the 'Swaraj'. The day was joyously

Biparjoy: Preparedness and Alertness Save Thousands of Lives



Cyclone 'Biparjoy' made landfall along the Gujarat coastline, unleashing its formidable strength, but the government's effective preparation helped to minimise the damage caused. The brave efforts of 19 NDRF (National Disaster Response Force), 13 SDRF (State Disaster Response Force) and 2 Reserve battalions resulted in successfully rescuing those affected, despite the risks they faced during the operation.

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Cyclone 'Biparjoy' unleashed its destructive force upon the region, prompting the Central Government, particularly the Ministry of Home Affairs, to take comprehensive preparations. The Union Home Ministry officials maintained constant communication with the relevant government departments of Gujarat. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah issued clear instructions to ensure no negligence in tackling the storm, emphasising swift relief and rescue efforts for affected individuals.

In preparation for Cyclone 'Biparjoy' approaching Jakhau port in Gujarat's Kutch district, authorities acted quickly to move around 30,000 people from coastal areas to temporary shelters two days before the expected landfall. Several teams comprising NDRF and SDRF were formed, and collaboration between the

Army officials, civil administration, and NDRF was established to manage relief operations effectively.

Under the leadership of Shri Modi, a high-level meeting was conducted to evaluate the preparedness of Central ministries and agencies, along with those of Gujarat, in addressing the situation caused by the cyclone. The Prime Minister instructed the senior officials to prioritise the safe relocation of individuals living in vulnerable areas in Gujarat. Additionally, he emphasised the importance of maintaining and promptly restoring essential services like electricity, telecommunications, healthcare, and drinking water. Furthermore, the safety of animals was also prioritised, and control rooms were instructed to operate round-the-clock.

The Ministry of Home Affairs kept a close eye on the cyclone by staying in constant communication with the Gujarat government and other Central agencies. They were able to maintain situational

awareness throughout. The assistance of the NDRF was also sought, with 12 pre-positioned teams equipped with boats, tree cutters, and telecommunication equipment. Additionally, 15 additional teams were deployed to augment the response efforts.

The commendable efforts of the NDRF and the SDRF were acknowledged and praised by Shri Shah. He expressed appreciation towards the 19 battalions of NDRF, 13 battalions of SDRF, and 2 Reserve battalions, which bravely put themselves in danger to safeguard and rescue others. The Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, BSF, State Reserve Police, and State Police worked together seamlessly with NDRF and SDRF, showcasing their collective dedication to the mission. In a video conference meeting to assess preparedness and minimise the potential damage caused by the cyclone, the Union Home Minister urged the Gujarat government to relocate individuals residing in vulnerable areas

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It is a matter of great satisfaction that not even a single person lost his life in such a storm. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India's "Zero Casualty Approach" in disaster management has yielded positive results.
Shri Amit Shah, Union Minister for Home and Cooperation

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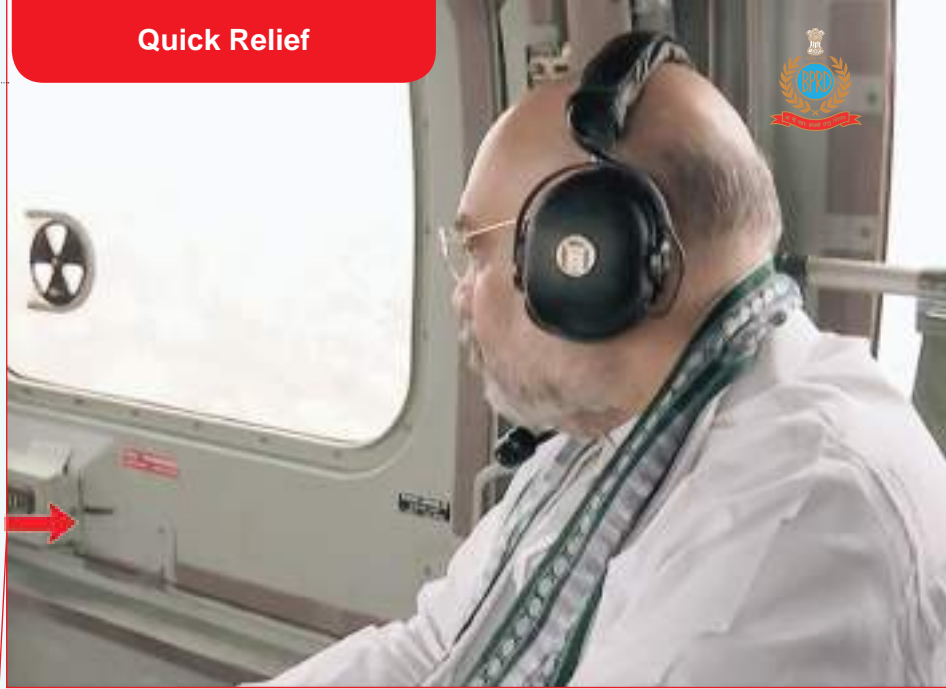
to safer zones. He emphasised ensuring uninterrupted access to essential services such as electricity, telecommunications, healthcare, and clean drinking water. The meeting was also attended by Gujarat Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel, 2 Union Ministers, several state ministers, MPs, MLAs, and officials from the eight districts that are susceptible to the

Union Minister for Home and Cooperation Shri Amit Shah undertook an aerial survey to assess the damage caused by cyclone 'Biparjoy'. He also took stock of the crops damaged by the cyclone and later met the farmers and listened to their problems.

cyclone. In order to avoid any damage caused by the cyclone, effective security measures were implemented. The Indian Coast Guard and the Navy took pre-emptive action by dispatching ships and helicopters for relief, search, and rescue operations.

The Air Force and the engineering task force units were also prepared with boats and rescue equipment for potential deployment. Aircraft and helicopters were used to keep a watchful eye over the coast through ongoing surveillance. Shri Shah expressed the collective goal of minimising Cyclone Biparjoy's potential damage and ensuring zero casualties.

On June 15, as the cyclone struck, the Union Home Minister conducted an aerial survey of the affected areas in Gujarat, spanning from Bhuj to Mandvi and Jakhau. While visiting Mandvi, the minister toured the local civil hospital where pregnant women had been relocated prior to the



NDRF Shows Exemplary Courage

On June 14, an early alert was issued regarding the potential cyclone 'Biparjoy' in Gujarat's coastal districts. Promptly responding to the information provided by the Indian Meteorological Department, a war room was established at the Meteorological Department in Delhi. Subsequently, the NDRF (National Disaster Response Force) and Gujarat's SDRF (State Disaster Response Force) swung in to action in the coastal areas. The preparedness system was put on high alert in anticipation of the cyclonic storm.

During the cyclone in Gujarat, there was remarkable coordination between the Central and state governments, the NDRF, and all relevant agencies. The success achieved in effectively managing such a massive storm is a testament to the strong and successful disaster resilience and management effort led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and guided by Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah. In line with this commitment, the Ministry of Home Affairs took proactive measures by promptly dispatching an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) team immediately after a natural calamity without waiting for a memorandum from the state government.

Over the past four years, 73 IMC teams have been expeditiously deployed to various states within 10 days of the disaster. A National Disaster Response Reserve (NDRR) has been established to ensure swift relief operations following a calamity backed by a revolving fund of Rs 250 crore. This reserve is stocked with essential supplies to provide immediate assistance in the aftermath of a disaster.

Furthermore, the 'Aapda Mitra Yojana' has been implemented across 350 multi-hazard disaster-prone districts. This initiative aims to foster disaster resilience by engaging and empowering local communities to effectively respond to and mitigate the impact of calamities.

cyclone's arrival. He spoke with women who gave birth during the storm and visited the hospital wards. Additionally, he met with farmers from a nearby village who had suffered crop damage due to the cyclone. He expressed great satisfaction and highlighted that no lives were lost during the cyclone, despite its speed reaching 140 km per hour. He credited the Prime Minister's guidance to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the government of Gujarat, and all agencies involved. He emphasised that the collective teamwork demonstrated effective disaster management and minimised damage. The coordinated efforts of the Government of India and the Chief Minister of Gujarat resulted in a comprehensive approach to tackle 'Biparjoy'. The absence of any human casualties serves as a testament to the success of the entire system and exemplifies the effective utilisation of timely information.

During the storm, only 47 individuals sustained minor injuries, and 234 animals, unfortunately, lost their lives. In anticipation of the cyclone, the power supply was temporarily halted in 3,400 villages, with 1,600 villages having their power restored within 24 hours. By June 20, the power supply was expected to



NDRF jawans showed courage, alerted people and took them to safe places





Shri Amit Shah visited the hospitals after the cyclone, where 1206 pregnant women had been taken for their safety before the storm hit. These women expressed satisfaction over the facilities provided to them. There were 707 successful deliveries during the disaster.

be fully restored in all villages. Thanks to the commendable preparations, 1,206 pregnant women were safely transferred to appropriate medical facilities. They expressed satisfaction with the provided amenities and care.

The Union Home Minister said a remarkable 707 successful deliveries took place during the calamity. Many people (108,208 civilians) and cattle (73,000) were safely evacuated to safer locations. In order to avoid any danger caused by strong winds, a total of 327,890 trees were pruned in a timely manner. Furthermore, proactive steps were taken to eliminate 4,317 hoardings from all districts. To ensure the safety of individuals, 21,585 boats were promptly retrieved from the sea, and more than 100,000 fishermen were rescued and brought safely to shore.

Shri Shah also commended the Gujarat government for their proactive preparations and adequate arrangements before and during the cyclone. He lauded their exemplary demonstration of utilising timely information to save lives. The Gujarat government wholeheartedly implemented the guidelines on cyclones set forth by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), with the active involvement of government departments, public representatives, local communities, and voluntary organisations. During a press conference in Bhuj, the Union Home Minister expressed his satisfaction that no lives were lost during Cyclone 'Biparjoy'. Despite its speed reaching 140 kilometres per



hour, the continuous guidance provided by the PM contributed to this success. The absence of any human casualties is a testament to the system's overall effectiveness and serves as an inspiring example of utilising timely information. He further emphasised the importance

of documenting the actions taken by all agencies since the initial cyclone warning for 'Biparjoy'. This document would serve as a comprehensive record of the remarkable success of effectively managing the disaster. Its dissemination to every state could provide a valuable precedent for future encounters with natural calamities. Therefore, he urged that the document be publicised and shared nationwide as a success story.

Expressing gratitude on behalf of the Prime Minister, the Home Minister extended his thanks to all the agencies, officers, State and Central Government employees for their exemplary efforts in successfully dealing with Cyclone 'Biparjoy'. ■





India to Become Disaster Resilient By 2047

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Although it may not be possible to completely prevent disasters, the government has developed a thorough plan to minimise their impact. The Union Home Ministry has worked hard to implement this plan. Recently, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Union Minister for Home and Cooperation Shri Amit Shah, in which instructions were given to the ministers and officials of the Disaster Department of all the states and Union Territories.

In the meeting held at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, the Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah, announced three major schemes worth more than Rs 8,000 crore for disaster management in the country.

These include a Rs 5,000 crore project to expand and modernise fire services across the states; a Rs 2,500-crore project to reduce the risk of urban flooding in the seven most populous metros — Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Pune — and a Rs 825 Crore National Landslide Risk Mitigation Project for Landslide Mitigation in 17 States and Union Territories.

He said that it should be our endeavour that not a single person's life is lost due to natural disasters.

All states have attempted to achieve this goal in the last five years.

In his address, the Union Home and Cooperation Minister said that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Centre and the states successfully tackled the worst pandemic of the century under

the leadership of the Prime Minister. India demonstrated remarkable unity in combating Covid-19. According to Shri Shah, the government, led by Shri Modi, distributed over 220 crore free COVID-19 vaccines, provided food for millions of impoverished individuals, facilitated the return of hundreds of thousands of migrant workers to their native towns, and addressed their needs via the direct benefit transfer (DBT) program.

The Home Minister also stated that in the past, our response to disasters was mainly focused on providing relief after the disaster had occurred. However, in the last nine years, under the guidance of Shri Modi, we have adopted a new approach to disaster management that prioritises early warning systems, prevention, mitigation, and preparedness. This has

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Now, our aim should be that not even a single person's life should be lost due to disaster. In the last 5 years, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, all the states have made efforts towards achieving this goal.

-Shri Amit Shah, Union Minister for Home and Cooperation

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been achieved through the collective efforts of hard work and dedication.

Headed that the Modi government has set a target of preparing around one lakh youth volunteers in 350 high-risk disaster-prone districts and is getting great results during disasters.

Shri Shah said that the Centre has made proactive efforts to help the states during the last four years by sending Inter-Ministerial Central Teams 73 times within 10 days.

He said that in the last nine years, the State Disaster Response Fund allocation has almost tripled to Rs 1,04,704 crore from Rs 35,858 crore earlier. In addition, the release of funds from NDRF has increased nearly three times from Rs 25,000 crores to Rs 77,000 crores. He said that due to the proactive approach, the Centre and States have increased budgetary provisions in disaster risk reduction and post-disaster relief and rehabilitation.

He said that in 2021, the National Disaster Mitigation Fund was constituted under the Central Government with an allocation of Rs 16,700 crore. Under SDMF, Rs 32,000 crore had been set aside for mitigation.

During the meeting, topics related to disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, the safety of nuclear power plants, early warning and dissemination systems, utilisation of mitigation

funds, setting up and strengthening of State Disaster Response Forces (SDRFs), State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs), District Disaster Management Authorities, and encouraging volunteering by the community in disaster preparedness, response and mitigation were discussed.

The ministers and representatives of the State Governments and Union Territories shared valuable inputs on the issues raised during the meeting. They also shared the best practices being followed by their respective States and views on the future challenges in disaster management.

During the meeting, it was taken into cognisance that the Centre and the States have achieved many milestones in the last nine years. It was reiterated in the meeting that team efforts, with seamless execution strategies, would result in minimum loss of lives, property and livelihood.

The India Disaster Resource Network has been catalogued across the nation, and over one lakh new records have been entered into it. Further, provision of Rs 354 crore has been made to implement Common Alerting Protocol through SMS.

Multi-pronged initiatives like Disaster Management Information System Portal and 112 Emergency

Response Support System are also useful.

The Home Minister said that the PM has initiated the tradition of awarding the Subhash Chandra Bose 'Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar' to the individuals and organisations that have contributed to the field of disaster management. Shri Shah said it has greatly encouraged the individuals and organisations in this field. During a meeting on June 2, there was a discussion about preventing floods. The Home Minister reviewed the flood management preparations during the upcoming monsoon season. He also discussed long-term measures for creating a comprehensive policy to address the country's ongoing flood problems.

He said that disaster management efforts are being made to help minimise the loss of lives and livelihoods during disasters.

He also said that the five-day rain or flood forecast, currently given by IMD and CWC, is to be expanded to a seven-day forecast by the next monsoon season to improve flood management. According to the Union Home Minister, the MHA and NDMA aim to create comprehensive software by March 2024. The minister also suggested seeking assistance from foreign expert agencies for developing this software. Additionally, the Government's 'Aapda Mitra' scheme should include training for traditional village divers to enhance their skills in disaster rescue operations.

The Union Home Minister directed the officials to continue strengthening coordination between the Central and State agencies to have a permanent system to forecast floods and rising water levels across the country. ■



Ensuring Border Safety through Active Engagement



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Although technology has made life more convenient, it can also be misused. The central government has implemented several necessary measures to prevent criminal elements from abusing it. A meeting was recently held, with Union Minister for Home and Cooperation Shri Amit Shah as the chairperson. The meeting discussed various topics related to the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), including border security, capacity building, guidance for junior officers, police-public relations, social media and law enforcement, central and state subjects, mission recruitment, training, CAPF e-Awas Portal, monitoring of infrastructure projects, welfare, experience sharing, and best practices.

In the open session, the officers gave suggestions to the Home Minister on various issues related to the CAPF.

The meeting was also attended by Union Minister of State for Home Shri Nisith Pramanik and Union Home Secretary Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla. During the meeting, the Union Home Minister emphasised the significance of maintaining good law and order for the progress of the country, which can only be achieved through a strong police administration.

The Government of India, led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has consistently worked towards improving

- Focus on the need to be extremely vigilant on infiltration and smuggling of drugs and weapons from across the border.
- CAPFs to promote the purchase of local products of border villages; increased employment opportunities will stop migration.
- All CAPFs to have dedicated teams for drone technology and anti-drone measures.

the police administration system to make it more people-oriented and meet the public's expectations, especially in terms of safety. According to Shri Shah, the CAPF plays a vital role in maintaining internal law and order, safeguarding borders, ensuring fair general elections, providing relief and rescue during disasters, and protecting strategically significant institutions and monuments across the country. He also said that the common citizen of the country feels safe and sleeps peacefully due to CAPF personnel's devotion towards their duty and alertness. The Home Minister emphasised that while the police and armed forces are expected to meet the needs of the public, the government also provides necessary facilities for the well-being of the police and CAPF

personnel and their families to enable them to perform their duties efficiently. According to Shri Shah, IPS officers have the duty of maintaining the nation's unity, integrity, and internal security through their oath. In order to guarantee the safety of the borders, it is crucial to collaborate with law and order as well as the local administration of the district.

He also said that the Ayushman CAPF scheme of the Modi government aims to ensure that every jawan has a long and healthy life. He suggested that all CAPFs should seek inputs from Jawans to make this scheme perfect. Shri Shah urged that all CAPF hospitals should provide free treatment to the general public. He added that every jawan should adopt at least 5 trees into his family; this will keep the environment clean and increase Jawans' sensitivity towards nature. The Union Home Minister instructed that all the houses constructed for the CAPF should be assigned by November of this year; he also said that all future home assignments be done through the e-Awas portal within two months.

During his meeting, Shri Shah also requested that all Non-General duty positions in CAPFs be filled promptly and any obstacles in the recruitment process be addressed within a month. He emphasised the importance of incorporating at least 30% 'Shree Anna' in the diet of Jawans and promoting an interest in millets. ■

Successful Resolution



Bureau



Union Home Secretary Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla held a meeting with Mr. Tariq Ahmed of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia and United Nations at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), UK, on May 29. The meeting aimed to facilitate discussions between India and UK on various topics. A key focus was addressing security concerns related to the Indian High Commission. India also presented its stance on anti-India groups and their activities. Furthermore, both parties deliberated on migration and mobility partnership, criminal records sharing, diplomatic visa agreements, etc.

● In accordance with the directives of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Ministry for Home Affairs has undertaken a review of all pre-Independence Acts for repeal or for fresh Acts to meet the evolving needs in a timely manner. On June 2, a meeting was convened under the Union Home Secretary to review the pre-Independence Acts administered by the MHA and the action taken so far

Union Home Secretary Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla held special consultations with Mr. Tariq Ahmed, Secretary of State for the Middle East, South Asia and the United Nations, UK. Apart from this, a review meeting was held with the Director General of Shipping and senior officers of the Central Armed Police and discussed the strategy ahead.

to repeal or amend the same. A total of 18 Acts were scrutinised during the meeting, including the Passport Act of 1920, The Registration of Foreigners Act 1939, The Foreigners Act 1946, The Official Secrets Act 1923, the Delhi Laws Act 1915, The Poison Act 1919 (12 of 1919) and Indian Penal Code 1860 (45 of 1860).

● On June 6, Shri Bhalla met the Director-General of Shipping. During this meeting, he discussed coastal areas' security and setting up a Bureau of Port

Security. Besides, a discussion was also held regarding the Merchant Shipping (Bureau of Port Security) Rules, 2023.

- On the same day, a review meeting took place at the Ministry of Home Affairs involving senior officers from all Central Armed Police Forces. Shri Bhalla emphasised the importance of ensuring proper healthcare facilities for all jawans through the 'Ayushman Yojana'. It was decided that immediate steps be taken to facilitate the empanelment of more hospitals under the Ayushman CAPF scheme. Furthermore, senior officers were directed to facilitate the entry of the local population to their hospitals (629 AB-PMJAY registered hospitals) for medical treatment.
- The Union Home Secretary, on June 6, held a high-level meeting with the head of different Border Guarding Forces (BGF) on the issue of implementation of 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan' in border areas. It was decided that the BGF would act as a first respondent to addicts, and CAPF hospitals/health centres would be referral points to de-addiction centres. Additionally, each BGF will have a designated nodal officer responsible for implementing the campaign. ■



Prabhakar Alok*

FCRA—An Instrument To Counter National Security Threats: A Layman's Perspective

As warfare evolves to the Fifth Generation, the battlefield transforms from the physical (land, air and sea) to cognitive domain. In this developing scenario, Janapada (the people) and Kosha (economy) - two of the seven pillars of Kautilya's national security architecture acquire importance. A weakened economy would stunt development and future of the country, thereby surrendering its sovereignty and straining its delicate cosmopolitan fabric.

Cognitive dissonance causes socio-political upheaval, which has potential to impact public order. Psychological operations and propaganda were tactics of cognitive manipulation in WW II and in the Cold War. However, economic destabilisation was not a pronounced tactic since economic exclusiveness was the norm, unlike globalisation, which became all-encompassing since the opening up of China. Intertwined economies of the present day provide space for tactical operations to manipulate economic networks, besides creating social tensions.

Global community has now become aware of the fact that the economy is a modern strategic asset relegating military and nuclear acquisitions. Countries have taken legislative and administrative measures to counter the threat to their respective economies.

National Security and Investment Act 2021 of UK aims to "identify and manage risks to their national security - but in a sensible and proportionate way that allows investment to continue to flow". In USA, The Committee on Foreign Investment in US (CFIUS) "is an interagency committee authorized to review certain transactions involving foreign investment in the United States and certain real estate transactions by foreign persons, in order to determine the effect of such transactions on the national security of the United States."

USA's Foreign Investment Risk Review Management Act (FIRMA), 2018, "strengthens and modernizes CFIUS to address national security concerns more effectively, including by broadening the authorities of the President and CFIUS to review and to take action to address any

national security concerns arising from certain non-controlling investments and real estate transactions involving foreign persons." These exemplify national security concerns of 'military superpowers' towards economic threats and its counter intelligence implications. India has emerged as an economic power house due rapid economic development. Impressive infrastructure development, advancements as in fintech, pharmaceuticals, electronic manufacturing, etc, propelled by structural and policy changes have made India one of the most attractive destinations for investors. To maintain that position, we need to ensure our economy remains as secure as possible. Thwarting inimical forces that try to scuttle India's growth story is the primary national aim. This would entail curtailing attempts to trigger all forms of disaffection through direct or cognitive assault using Counter-Intelligence tradecraft. Economic threat has been defined in The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 2010 (FCRA). The Act aims "to consolidate the law to regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality by certain individuals or associations or companies and to prohibit acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality for any activities detrimental to the national interest and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto." The FCRA consists of a framework for regulating and controlling the acceptance and utilization of foreign contribution and prohibits the acceptance and use of foreign contributions for activities that are detrimental to national interest.

Unregulated flow of foreign money impacts national sovereignty. While the quantum of foreign money has been a concern, the purpose of such inflow requires scrutiny in the national security context. FCRA oversees remittances and their national security implications. Funding local entities, primarily NGOs has been identified as one of the modus operandi of interested western groups. There are currently about 18,000 NGOs, which receive nearly Rs.20,000 crore per annum. Regulatory infrastructure have gathered that some foreign donors target infrastructure projects in India with a view to impede or delay the projects by amplifying minor infarctions.

Human Rights, Women's Rights, Religious Freedom, Human Trafficking, Dalit Rights, Rights of Indigenous Peoples and climate action have attracted India's adversaries to indulge in cognitive manipulations by

creating an unpleasant image of India abroad and also creating societal discord within the country.

Govt of India have further reformed FCRA to ensure closer scrutiny. In order to introduce greater transparency and to strengthen compliance, MHA amended FCRA by providing that foreign contributions must be received in bank accounts hosted only in one branch of State Bank of India. This has ensured enhanced regulatory oversight, streamlined the flow of FCRA funds and brought uniformity in application of the Act to all recipients.

In order to simply and streamline the FCRA process, MHA digitised all records, applications, filings and reviews onto a real-time, online and secure platform, thereby easing the process of receiving foreign contributions. The FCRA acts as a mechanism to prevent money laundering and terror financing; and ensures compliance with international standards and aligns India's regulations with international best practices. Recent regulatory actions have yielded excellent results. In earlier years, foreign activist donors would fund only those projects that impeded infrastructure projects in India, such as coal mines, coal fired power plants, sea ports, mineral ore mining or other such industrial projects.

While the world has recently realised possible adverse impact of foreign remittances, India had enacted FCRA 40 years ago. FCRA offers several benefits, which include regulation and transparency and safeguards national security and public interest. However, FCRA may have to undertake a nuanced review towards foreign contribution, encapsulating possibilities of foreign control over supply chains, technology theft and other disruptions that could be initiated by means of foreign funding. The above review could be in the context of the fact that legislative reforms and sustained implementation are crucial for good governance. Laws should be pertinent, transparent, responsible and adaptive to the current requirements of the nation. Embracing legislative reforms empowers governments to address loopholes and streamline procedures. Since 2014, Prime Minister Modi's Government has remained steadfast in protecting key interests of the nation, especially from motivated funding that inspires disturbance in public order and impedes economic development. ■

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Director General level Border Coordination Conference of BGB (Bangladesh) with Border Security Force - 2023 held at BSF Chhawla Camp, New Delhi. Both the border guarding forces emphasized on expediting and giving more momentum to the developmental and infrastructure activities. This will give a boost to trade and bilateral relations between the two countries.

A National Level Conference on SDRF, Civil Defence, Home Guards and Fire Services was organised by NDRF at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on June 6. It was inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Shri Ajay Kumar Mishra.



On World Blood Donor Day, a blood donation and free health check-up camp was organized at Bureau of Police Research and Development Headquarters in collaboration with Hindu Rao Hospital, Delhi. On this occasion, Director General Shri Balaji Srivastava administered the oath of World Blood Donor Day to all the officers and staff.



On the occasion of World Blood Donor Day (June 14), a blood donation camp was organised by the National Crime Records Bureau following the spirit of 'Give Blood, Give Plasma, Share Life, Share Often'. NCRB personnel took blood donation pledge on the occasion.



भारत के वीर

Tribute and cooperation to the soldiers of the country

<https://bharatkeveer.gov.in>

GUIDELINES

- ◆ You can donate directly to individual braveheart's account (upto max of Rs 15 lakhs) or may donate to the Bharat Ke Veer corpus.
- ◆ To ensure maximum coverage, a cap of Rs 15 lakhs is envisaged per braveheart and the donor would be alerted if the amount exceeds Rs 15 lakhs, so that they can choose to either decrease their contribution or divert part of the contribution to another bravehearts account, or to the Bharat Ke Veer corpus.
- ◆ Bharat Ke Veer corpus would be managed by a committee made up of eminent persons of repute and senior government officials, in equal number, who would decide to disburse the fund equitably to the bravehearts family on need basis.



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All-round development is taking place in the country under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi. From the empowerment of the poor to the youth, many areas have opened up, due to which their participation in nation building is increasing.

Shri Amit Shah, Union Minister for Home and Cooperation

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