

For first time, 100 ex-servicemen deployed in Environment Protection Force to safeguard Ladakh's fragile ecology

These EPF personnel will enforce checks on incidents of illegal off-roading, protect wildlife, and preserve Ladakh's pristine environment



Leh, July 4: In a first-of-its-kind initiative to bolster the overall environmental protection mechanism and safeguard Ladakh's fragile ecosystem, 100 Ex-servicemen were today deployed into the Ladakh Environment Protection Force (EPF) by Lt. Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena.

The EPF personnel, comprising Ex-servicemen from the Army, paramilitary forces, and Ladakh

Scouts, will be deployed across ecologically sensitive areas of the Union Territory to maintain strict checks on rising incidents of illegal off-roading, threatening the wildlife and harming the delicate ecology of Ladakh. To strengthen the EPF, these ex-servicemen have been authorised to issue on-the-spot challans for any such violation within their designated areas.

The unique initiative has been launched in response to the growing incidents of illegal off-roading, unauthorised camping inside protected areas, disturbance to wildlife and pollution in Ladakh's ecologically sensitive landscapes. The deployment of ex-servicemen is aimed at strengthening the enforcement mechanism against violations of environment and wildlife laws.

The Environment Protection Force has been specifically entrusted with preventing violations inside protected wildlife areas like stalking and causing disturbance to wildlife, littering, using single-use plastic, throwing plastic waste in the open and other environmentally harmful activities.



Besides strengthening environmental enforcement, the initiative also serves as a meaningful rehabilitation measure for Ex-servicemen by providing them an opportunity to continue serving society after retirement. Each member of the Environment Protection Force will receive a fixed monthly remuneration of ₹25,000 while being deployed in and around their native or designated areas, enabling effective monitoring through their familiarity with the local terrain.

Flagging off the Ex-servicemen, L-G Shri Saxena observed that Ladakh possesses one of the world's most fragile high-altitude ecosystems and is home to several endangered wildlife species that require the highest level of protection. He stated that increasing tourism must go hand in hand with environmental responsibility and that the Environment Protection Force would play a pivotal role in maintaining a balance between human activities and ecological conservation, while guiding people to promote responsible tourism in Ladakh.

"The Environment Protection Force brings together the discipline, integrity and commitment of our Ex-servicemen to protect this fragile ecosystem. I am confident that they will not only prevent violations of environmental and wildlife laws but also become ambassadors of cleanliness, biodiversity conservation and responsible tourism across Ladakh," L-G Shri Saxena said.

The LG also administered an oath to the members of the Environment Protection Force, reaffirming their commitment to faithfully discharge their duties in protecting Ladakh's environment, forests, wildlife and biodiversity. Every member of the Environment Protection Force also pledged not to use single-use plastic in their personal lives and to actively encourage their families, friends and local communities to adopt environmentally sustainable alternatives.