

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh gives away Awards for Excellence in Defence Estates Management

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh called upon Cantonment Boards to be gentle to the poor living within their premises saying they should not fear officials instead feel protected by them. He was addressing a gathering after giving away Raksha Mantri's Awards for Excellence 2019 in Delhi Cantonment here today.

Raksha Mantri also reiterated the Government's commitment to provide high quality education and low-cost health to the poor sections of society. He appreciated that the residents of cantonment areas, especially civilians with low income, are being provided improved medical and health care. He hoped that these services will continue to expand and improve, catering to the needs of the people.

Appreciating Directorate General of Defence Estates, Shri Rajnath Singh told the gathering, "It is said that building organisation, commanding respect and earning property are difficult, however, more difficult it is to maintain these. Your department is doing the important work of managing defence land with an area of more than 17 lakh acres, catering to the land requirements of the three wings of the Armed Forces and providing civil and municipal services to over 20 lakh residents of 62 cantonment areas of the country."

Raksha Mantri appreciated the efforts being made by the department saying, "The goal of Defense Estate Organisation is to secure important land related interests of the Armed Forces and to cater to the needs/aspirations of the citizens of the cantonment area." He suggested that officials should brainstorm periodically to improve the already well-maintained properties.

Shri Rajnath Singh highlighted that the Cantonment Councils carried out various important tasks under the "Digital India" programme. "Public services have been made faster, efficient and accessible to people. An app has been created through which various services are being made available to the people whose complaints will reach the concerned officers in a time-bound manner," he said.

Raksha Mantri mentioned that he receives many requests related to organising traditional, social and cultural functions on defence land. He said there is a need to examine appropriate rules so that such requests can be considered positively.

Shri Rajnath Singh especially commended the role of cantonments in Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and making cantonment areas Open Defecation Free. He recalled his participation of an event in Delhi Cantt on the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2, 2019.

The Defence Estates awards was introduced in 2013 to recognise the achievements in the field of health, education, cleanliness as well as new innovative and digitisation in Public Services and Land Management.

Following are the list of awardees:

Sr. No.	Category	Award winner
1	Arrangements of centres for handicapped children.	Cantonment Board, Kanpur
2	Improvement in Modus Operandi of Schools of cantonments Boards.	Primary/Middle School – Pune Cantonment Board Secondary/Sr. Secondary School – Pune Cantonment Board
3	Swachh Chawani – Swasth Chawani	1. Cantonment Board Delhi & Cantonment Board, Meerut (Cat –A) 2. Cantonment Board Ahmedabad (Cat- B)
4	Achievement in the field of digitisation	Cantonment Board Delhi
5	Innovative procedures in public services	Cantonment Board Mhow
6	Land & Record Management	DEO, Secunderabad Circle
7	Improvement in Cantonment General Hospitals.	Cantonment Board Pune

During the programme Raksha Mantri also released a booklet titled, '*Pratibimb 2019*'. In this book a brief description on works and photographs on the occasion of 'Clean India Drive' and '150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi' performed by all cantonments boards during the year is compiled.

Chief of the Army Staff General Bipin Rawat, Secretary (Defence Finance) Smt Gargi Kaul, Director General Defence Estates Smt Deepa Bajwa and other senior military and civil officials of the Ministry of Defence also present on the occasion.

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