



## *Takshashila Policy Advisory*

# Supplementing State Policing Capacity for COVID-19 Duties

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## Proposal

Supplement existing police manpower resources by inducting state government employees who are involved in preventive, regulative, investigative, and implementation work. The objective is to enable the police department to carry out its primary functions effectively and remain at the forefront of COVID-19 duties.

## Problem

There are three key challenges for state police forces arising from COVID-19:

1. The police department has to simultaneously manage both pandemic-related tasks such as enforcing lockdowns and traditional tasks such as maintaining law and order and pursuing criminal investigations.
2. The police are stretched thin due to the new tasks and roles they have taken on as a result of COVID-19.
3. Cases of COVID-19 within the police could affect morale.

## Solutions

To deal with COVID-19 while continuing to police effectively, the following three steps are suggested:

1. Supplementing police forces with personnel from other sections of the state and union government.
  - a. Motor vehicle inspectors (MVI) can assist with traffic control during lockdown and curfew.
  - b. Revenue and commercial department officers can ensure shops and other commercial establishments follow relevant rules during lockdown and curfew.

- c. In rural areas, Forest Department officials can take over routine policing functions in consultation with the police department.
  - d. Home guards, Territorial Army volunteers, and ex-servicemen can be used for general policing duties. They can be trained for one month and placed on six-month contracts.
2. Employing the private sector in key supplementary roles.
- a. The role and responsibility of Private Security Providers must be enhanced for watch and ward duties at various places where there is huge human footfall like bus stations, places of religious worships, malls and other.
  - b. Private security personnel are already present in hospitals. This role can be expanded to other health facilities including fever hospitals set up during the pandemic. Personnel must be provided ample PPE for their tasks.
  - c. Such personnel can also be hired on contract to provide security at other public facilities such as food distribution warehouses, government-run canteens, future vaccination centres, and administrative buildings.
  - d. Cyber Threats: Deteriorations in India's external relations and the ongoing pandemic are likely to exacerbate existing cyber-threats and create new ones. Bengaluru's private companies should be advised to bolster their own cyber defences. Private sector expertise in this field can also be offered to government when necessary.
  - e. Technology: The police department must be given the latest technology and tools in the fight against COVID-19.
3. Setting up dedicated facilities for COVID-19 and assisting next-of-kin.
- a. Existing open-air facilities such as parade grounds (whether of state police or CAPFs) can be repurposed into open-air COVID-19 hospitals dedicated to police personnel and their families. This will give personnel the confidence that they will be taken care of when they fall ill. This must be done in all Police commissionerates in the state.
  - b. The next of kin of police personnel who lose their lives whilst performing COVID-19 duties must be given employment in the police department.
  - c. Generous ex-gratia payments can be instituted for the families of personnel who lose their lives due to COVID-19.

*End*