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Ex-servicemen big help in Covid fight



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The Government has gone all out to tap the potential of vast pool of ex-servicemen by deploying several thousands of them all over the country in various roles in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. This measure comes in tandem with mobilisation of more than 500 National Cadet Corps(NCC)cadets now deployed on duties like ensuring supply chain management, law and order, and sensitising local people about the pandemic.

With more than 5,000 ex-servicemen already deployed in the fight against the disease, defence ministry officials said here on Tuesday the veterans belonging to Army, Navy and Air Force are assisting the civil administration and providing their services voluntarily and selflessly.

It is being coordinated by Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW), Ministry of Defence. The veterans are being contacted through the

Kendriya Sainik Board and a network of 32 Rajya Sainik Boards at State-level and 403 Zila Sainik Board all over the country.

Giving state-wise figures, they said in Karnataka, Brigadier Ravi Munniswamy (retired), who is coordinating the effort across the State, is spearheading a team of 45 veteran bicycle riders in Bengaluru, who through a WhatsApp group are providing medicine and essential supplies to old and infirm in the city.

In Andhra Pradesh, around 300 ex-Servicemen volunteers are assisting the state police while in Uttar Pradesh, the Zila Sainik Boards in 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh are assisting with a team of veterans. They have already identified and contacted 6,592 former military personnel from Army Medical Corps in the state and put them on standby for any contingency.

As regards Punjab, Brig Satinder Singh (retired), Director Rajya Sainik Board, Punjab, informed that they

have employed 4,200 Ex-Servicemen as Guardians of Governance who are present in every village of Punjab for data collection and community surveillance.

Similarly in Chhattisgarh, Air Commodore A N Kulkarni(retired), who is coordinating the response in the state, informed that so far only a handful of veterans have been employed to provide assistance to the police in

Bilaspur, Janjgir and Korba.

In the North-East, Brigadier Narain Dutt Joshi(retired) is ready with 300 volunteers to assist in 19 Districts of Assam. Whereas Colonel Gautam Kumar Rai (retired) at Shillong has 79 volunteers ready to assist the civil administration. Brig JP Tiwari (retired) from Tripura has reported that the list of volunteers has been shared with the State and district adminis-

tration and they are on standby for any task assigned to them.

Similar efforts are order of the day in the states of Jharkhand, Haryana and Uttarakhand. Brigadier Pathak (retired) from Jharkhand, Colonel Rahul Yadav (retired) from Haryana and Brigadier KB Chand (retired) from Uttarakhand are taking necessary steps to mobilise veterans there.