



Ministry of Home Affairs

# Union Home Secretary asks Central and state government officials to be better prepared to minimize losses due to natural disasters

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Union Home Secretary Shri Rajiv Gauba has asked all concerned officials of Central and State governments to be better prepared so as to minimize losses due to natural disasters such as floods, cyclones, earthquakes etc. In his inaugural address at the annual conference of relief commissioners/secretaries, he said we have to build our capacities through better weather forecast, conducting mock drills and improved resource management. Citing figures, he said on an average during the decade from 2005 -14, India suffered economic losses of approximately Rs. 60,000 crore per annum due to different kinds of natural disasters of which the maximum damage was caused by floods.

Shri Gauba said India is flood prone as bulk of precipitation takes place in a short time but we can reduce our losses through better preparation. Though continued efforts over the last several years have managed to reduce the impact of natural disasters, still there is room for improvement, he added. He hoped that the deliberations at the conference would help in sharing experiences, improving coordination etc. While assuring the States that Home Ministry's assistance would continue, Shri Gauba urged them to build their own capacities and gradually reduce dependence on the Centre. He also emphasised the importance of building capacities at the city and district levels and involving communities.

In his address, Shri R. K. Jain, Member, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), said that the Centre and the States should continue their coordinated efforts to minimise losses due to floods and cyclones. He said, deaths due to heat waves which were about 2200 in the year 2015 scaled down to about 220 in 2017 primarily due to the ground work done on dissemination of information, better awareness etc.

Director General, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Shri Sanjay Kumar said last year more than 35 NDRF teams were airlifted for rescue operations in flood-hit areas and they rescued more than 3000 people and evacuated more than one lakh people. He said, twelve battalions of NDRF are stationed all over the country for quick deployment in times of emergency.

The one-day conference was attended by relief commissioners of State governments and Union Territories and officials of IMD, Geological Survey of India, Defence Ministry and Central Water Commission.

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