



March 2019

Challenges to Internal Security in India

Issue Brief

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This paper is the first in the series on Internal Security, researched and published by the Social and Political Research Foundation. If you have any suggestions, or would like to contribute to the section, please write to us at contact@sprf.in.

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March 2019

Executive Summary

The Internal Security of a nation-state can be understood as a concept relating to the apparatuses involved in securing its territorial boundaries and protecting its sovereignty. Given the multitude of religious, ethnic, regional and linguistic identities in India, internal

security is a *sine qua non*. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), in its annual report of 2017-18, highlighted *Organised Crimes on Civilians, Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), Cross-Border Terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Militancy in the North-East, and Drugs and Narcotics Trafficking*, as formidable

challenges to the country's internal security. This paper also adds *Environmental Degradation* and *Cyber Security* to the above list. This issue brief is first in the series on Internal Security and outlines an overview of each of the challenges.

Introduction

The Internal Security of a nation-state can be understood as a concept relating to the apparatuses involved in securing its territorial boundaries and protecting its sovereignty. These go hand in hand with the maintenance of peace, law and order, as well as the recognition that all citizens are equal before the overarching rule of law of the State (Singh 2016). The line between internal and national security is, however, contested. Samuel Makinda's definition of security as "the preservation of the norms, rules, institutions and values of the society" is useful here (1998: 282). It connects sovereignty to security, while also highlighting that 'Internal Security' as a concept is very much outlined

by the government in power at the time, and its geo-political realities. For a pluralistic context such as India with multiple religious, ethnic, regional, and linguistic identities and a unique geopolitical position in the subcontinent, internal security is a *sine qua non* (Ganguly, et al: 2018). Given this, as well as the understanding that State and non-state actors may seek to destabilize the country, India's National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval, in an address to the 2014 batch of Indian Police Services Probation Officers, noted, "We are now in the phase of fourth generation warfare, a difficult war against an invisible army, whether it is organised crime, terrorism, insurgency or foreign

powers trying to meddle into your internal affairs." (Doval: 2018). The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has highlighted Organised Crimes on Civilians, Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), Cross-Border Terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Militancy in the North-East, and Drugs and Narcotics Trafficking as prominent challenges for India's internal security apparatus in its Annual Report of 2017-18 (Ministry of Home Affairs 2018). Cyber Security Threats (which may severely disrupt India's online ecosystems), and Environmental Degradation (highlighted as possibly hampering ecological sustainability) have also emerged as the latest security challenges.

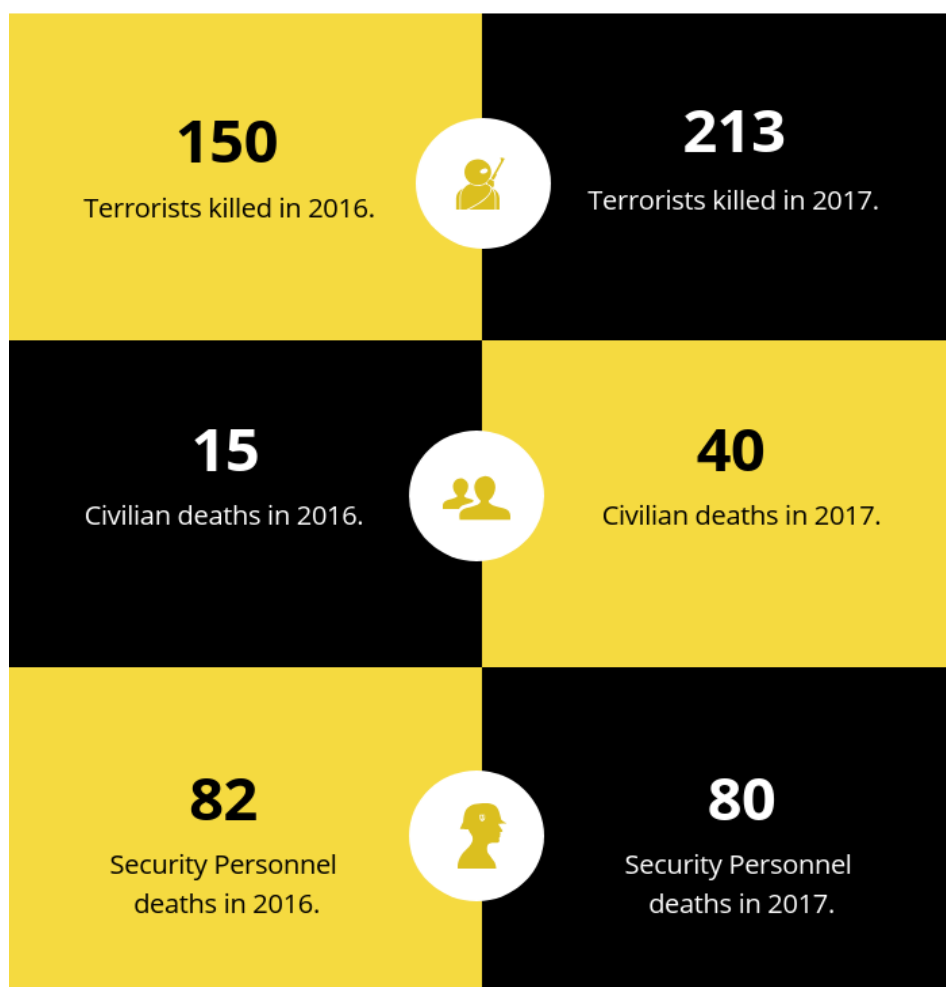
Cross-Border Terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir

Kashmir continues to be a flashpoint on India's security agenda and bilateral relations with Pakistan. The complexity of the situation, exacerbated by social and political fractures that lead back to events such as the UN Security Council's Resolution 47¹ and the Simla Agreement², has often led to internal disturbances in the form of the loss of lives and property. The state has a special status in the Indian constitution under Article 370 and its residents live under a different set of laws, including those pertaining to citizenship and ownership of property. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), in its Annual Report 2017-18, noted that the number of terrorist and civilian casualties increased over the last year; 213 terrorists were killed in 2017 as compared to 150 in 2016, and 40 civilians lost their lives in 2017 as compared to 15 in 2016. The number of deaths among security personnel, however, showed a 2.44% decrease. The report also highlighted that between 1990 and 2017, 13,976 civilians and 5,123 security personnel have been killed in Jammu and Kashmir. Funding and activities of numerous separatist and militant groups as well as organized crimes in the region have further solidified

the association of the 'Kashmir Issue' with the threat of terrorism. Moreover, socio-economic factors have contributed to the continued unrest in the state. The Unemployment Rate is at 24.6%,

and the Economic Survey has drawn attention to the challenges posed by qualified yet unemployed youth³ whose frustrations are often easily exploited. Rising militancy and radicalization,

Number of Casualties in 2016 and 2017



Between 1990 and 2017, **13,976** civilians and **5,123** security personnel were killed.*

*MHA Annual Report

the threat of political instability and the escalation of internal agitations, protests, and violence have contributed to a polarized discourse on Kashmir.

magnitude of the attacks turned the armed-rebellion, from just being a State-level problem, to an internal security issue. The Then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh labeled Left Wing Extremism as "...perhaps, the gravest internal security threat our country faces" (PIB 2009).

Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in 2009 and 2010. (Stainland 2018) The results are evidenced by the decline in the number of incidents of Naxalite violence by 60%, from 2,258 in 2008 to 908 in 2017⁵. However, the movement continues to impact 110 districts and is spread across 10 states of India⁶. LWE has expanded to what is being called the Compact Revolutionary Zone, extending all the way from Nepal through Bihar to the Dandakaranya region of Andhra Pradesh. Despite the falling number of incidents of Naxal violence, the number of casualties among security forces

Left-Wing Violence

In India, Left-Wing Violence⁴ originated from the 1967 agrarian rebellion of the Santhal tribes in Naxalbari village in West Bengal. While the first wave, which largely took place in West Bengal, was curbed through concerted state suppression, the remaining fled to Bihar and southward to Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, where they re-emerged in the 1980s and 90s with a stronger foothold. Owing to the anger and unrest over caste-based oppression and economic stagnation, these Naxals were able to further mobilize adivasis, Dalits and landless labourers. Strategically positioning themselves in the jungle terrains of these areas and exploiting the limited infrastructure, the insurgency expanded to a great part of Central India, causing virulent attacks. (Stainland 2018: 234-235) The consistency and

The MHA moved to deploy large-scale paramilitary forces through the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) including the Central



60%

Decline in the number of incidents of naxalite violence from 2008 to 2017.



27%

Increase in casualties among security personnel from 2015 to 2017.



Left-Wing Extremism continues to impact 110 Districts across 10 States

increased by 27%; from 59 in 2015 to 75 in 2017, including 35 CRPF personnel (Das 2018). Yet, both tribal and non-tribal populations continue to be affected (Routray 2017). The longevity and proliferation of the movement is fueled by the bureaucratic and systemic failures in these areas in bringing meaningful socio-economic development. Various studies have shown clear linkages between states with high levels of poverty, illiteracy and lack of basic amenities to the prevalence of Naxal violence. These areas lack schools,

teachers, doctors and nurses. Remnants of colonial-era laws in the 21st century have failed to understand and accommodate the lifestyle of local communities which is centered on forest produce-in effect alienating them from the rest of the country. Recently, the Supreme Court verdict moved to evict over 10 lakh families of forest-dwellers whose claims to forestland under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA) was rejected. The eviction order came on a batch of public interest litigation filed in 2008 by the Bombay Natural History

Society and the Wildlife First challenging the constitutionality of the FRA – which was aimed at correcting “historical injustices” by ensuring the rights of Adivasis and forest-dwelling communities over the land they have inhabited traditionally. Today, forest lands have become a contested arena indicating a fraught relationship between tribals, forest-dwellers and the bureaucratic apparatus of the State.

Militancy in the North-East⁷

The Ministry of Home Affairs observed that insurgency-related incidents have declined in the North-East and that the overall security situation has improved, with a reduction of 83% in civilian deaths and 40% in SF casualties in 2017, compared to 2014. This has been a result of conflict management efforts by the Centre, using both negotiations and military operations. The region has witnessed ethnic secessionist movements along with tribal and ethno-linguistic separatist conflicts. Nagaland, then part of Assam, was the first to experience militancy and soon similar movements in Mizoram,

Tripura, Assam and Manipur followed. The AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) was passed on 18 August, 1958, as a short-term measure to allow deployment of the army to counter separatist movement in the Naga

Hills. It was extended to all the seven states of the Northeast region in 1972 and became a tool for the government to curb any movement challenging the political and territorial legitimacy of India. In 2018, AFSPA was

“**Remnants of colonial-era laws in the 21st century have failed to understand and accommodate the lifestyle of local communities which are centred on forest produce, in effect alienating them from the rest of the country**”

lifted from all areas of Meghalaya and a few areas of Arunachal Pradesh⁸. It is important to note here that conflicts in the North-East arise from challenges related to lack of accessibility, connectivity issues and weak channels of communications, rough terrain,

along with disputes along the borders, of which ninety-eight per cent are international. (Upadhyay 2006). The complex interweaving of multi-ethnic, religious and linguistic identities of the region has also rendered the security

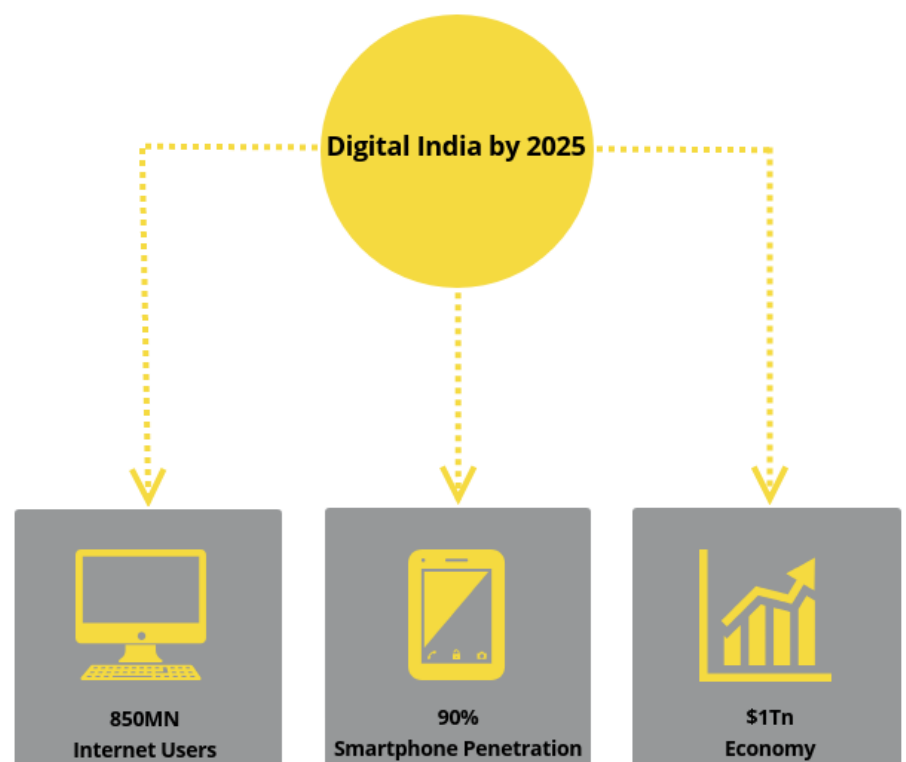
situation as a rather complicated one. The diversity of the region in terms of tribe, language, caste and religion has accentuated the need for self-identification and ethnic mobilization.

Cyber Security

According to "India's Trillion Dollar Opportunity", a joint report issued by Kalaari Capital and IBM in May 2018, the Digital India campaign is projected to achieve 850 million internet users and 90% smartphone penetration to help India become a trillion-dollar economy by 2025 (Pramanik 2018). Given such rapid developments, adopting "[...] robust cybersecurity policies are crucial to secure India's future progress and growth" (Samuel and Sharma 2016). Although cyber security was mentioned for the first time in the Information and Technology Act, 2008, which acknowledged the rise of cyber-attacks, threats, and vulnerabilities in India⁹, cyber-related crimes increased from 142 in 2006 to 9,622 in 2014. (NCRB 2016) This indicates the growing dangers it poses to internal security. In response to leaks suggesting that the US National Security Agency was conducting surveillance on India's domestic

politics and commercial interests, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology issued the National Cyber Security Policy on 2 July 2013¹⁰. To strengthen the framework put in place by MeitY, the Standing Committee on

Information Technology presented its report on Cyber Crime, Cyber Security, and Right to Privacy on 12 February 2014 that issued a number of recommendations, including the establishment of



CYBER-RELATED CRIMES INCREASED FROM 142 IN 2006 TO 9,622 IN 2014

a National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre to field cyber-attacks. (Shankar 2014). Rising cases of data theft and security breaches, especially related to private data under the Aadhar scheme (World Economic Forum 2018) prompted the Ministry of Home Affairs to issue a press release on 31 July 2018¹¹ that highlighted a number of steps taken to check incidents of hacking and cyber-crimes. Moreover, the rise of 'fake news' highlights social media platforms' associations

with triggering violence and spreading misinformation. Recently, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey was asked to appear before a parliamentary standing committee on 'Safeguarding citizen rights on social/online news media platforms' as the company was accused of harbouring an "anti right-wing attitude" by conservative stakeholders. This also raises pertinent issues regarding online surveillance and free speech. Meanwhile, a committee of experts headed

by Justice (retd.) BN Srikrishna submitted its report on data protection to MeitY that will now be tabled in the form of a bill¹² in the Parliament in June 2019. In addition, giving strategic preference to cyber security, MeitY issued an order in July 2018 preferring cyber security products in public procurement procedures based on Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) Order of 2017¹³.

Drugs and Narcotics Trafficking

The Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in 2018¹⁴ highlighted India's vulnerabilities to drug trafficking in spite of law enforcement agencies seizing psychotropic substances and carrying out destruction of illicit cultivation of cannabis and opium across the country in 2017. The 'Golden Crescent' to the West (Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan) and 'Golden Triangle' (Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar) to the East are the two largest opium producing regions in the world and are a major gateway for the smuggling of illicit narcotics. A rise in regional production of narcotics has led to a proportional increase in the number of opium seizure cases in India that have nearly

doubled since 2014, with the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) accounting for less than 15% of all seizures (NCB 2017). However, following the arrest of 332 foreign nationals for their involvement in drug trafficking, India has signed 37 bilateral agreements for better coordination, and constituted a Narco-Coordination Centre in November 2016. As

illicit trade and narco-terrorism pose a significant threat to India's financial security, the government has even scheduled seven new substances into the list of narcotic drugs in 2017, facilitated the development of a Seizure Information Management System, and constituted a National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse.

“
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”

Environmental Degradation

According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2019, India has been ranked the 14th most vulnerable nation. As per 2017 estimates, there were 2,726 deaths in India which were directly related to extreme weather-related events—heat waves, storms, floods and droughts, with an estimated economic loss of about USD 13.8 billion. Across the region and in India, rising sea levels and coastal flooding pose progressively graver risks to arable-land-rich coastal areas and the high number of people who live there. In 2018, the Kerala floods reflected an unusual monsoon phase that defied normal rainfall pattern. According to IMD, Kerala received 2,346.6 mm of rainfall against a normal of 1,649.5 mm since the beginning of June—an excess of 42 per cent. The two heavy spells of rainfall in August – first between August 8 and 10, and then between August 14 and 17 – forced the administration to release water from the dams as they could not hold more water. The IMD also stated that the percentage of extremely heavy rainfall and dry days has shown an increasing trend in the past few decades, while the frequency of light to moderate and very light rainfall is decreasing in India. More than 300 people died due to this heavy rainfall, rendering thousands



India has been ranked the
14th most vulnerable nation
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In 2017, **2,726** deaths in India were directly related to extreme weather-related events



Estimated Economic Loss: **US\$ 13.8 Billion**



homeless and causing damage to 45,000 hectares of farmland. The state government estimated the damage at approximately Rs. 20,000 crore¹⁵. This is estimated to be more than the economic loss from flooding across the country in the previous year. A 2019 comprehensive assessment report of the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development has revealed that a third of the region's glaciers will likely melt by the year 2100. The report, which is a result of the research undertaken by more

than 300 scientists over the course of four years, also predicts that if the current rate of emissions continues, two-thirds of the glaciers will be wiped out. Glacial melting will also cause global sea level to rise. It would threaten the water resources of close to 1.9 billion people worldwide. The HKH region provides ecological resources to sustain the livelihood of 240 million people who inhabit the region, out of which 76.9 million live in India. This region remains geologically fragile, and climate change coupled with factors like globalization,

urbanization, migration, and tourism have further exacerbated the situation. With India's climate risk profile growing and the communities becoming

increasingly vulnerable, there is a link that is now being drawn to issues of reduced agricultural production leading to rapid urbanization which in turn leads to

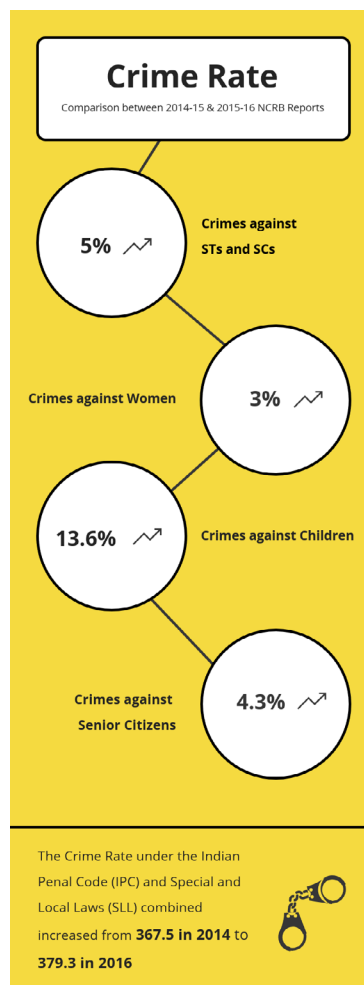
stress on urban resources and the increased incidence of crime.

Crime Rate and Law and Order

Despite undergoing fundamental changes in its economic and political landscape over the last century, India continues to battle the persistence of discrimination and violence directed against its marginalized communities. Castes that traditionally suffered discrimination based on untouchability have been identified and incorporated in the 'schedules' of the constitution. Notwithstanding the existence of constitutional safeguards, crimes against the historically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (i.e. former untouchables and marginalized tribes) continue to rise. The total crimes reported in 2015-16 against members of SC and ST communities rose by 5 per cent in comparison to the year 2014-15. (NCRB 2016). The socio-economic-cultural landscape also remains gender skewed – a combination of family, caste, religion and community continue to reinforce patriarchal values. The vulnerability of women in India is highlighted through continued discriminatory practices and crimes

committed against them, including dowry, domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment. Crimes reported against women in 2015-16 witnessed an increase by 3 per cent in comparison to the previous year. According to the NFHS-4 Survey, 30 per cent of women have experienced physical violence since age of 15. There also remains the challenge posed by unreported

cases of violence against women. Further, crimes committed against children and the elderly are also steadily increasing. Compared to the previous year, crimes against children increased by 13.6 percent and against senior citizens rose by 4.3 per cent in 2015-16. The Crime Rate under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Special and Local Laws (SLL) combined has been 367.5 in 2014, 374.1 in 2015, and 379.3 in 2016. To improve efficiency, coordination, and enforcement of law and order, the Supreme Court had issued seven directives for state governments¹⁶ to undertake with respect to police reforms in 2006. Yet, there has not been a single case of full compliance registered so far. Notably, even though 26 out of 28 states have constituted State Security Commissions (SSCs), only Andhra Pradesh has made the recommendations of the SSC binding¹⁷. It is pertinent to also note that the NCRB has not released any data after their 2015-16 report.



Endnotes

- 1 The UNSCR 47, adopted on April 21 1948, provided a resolution to the Kashmir conflict and instructed to create proper conditions for a free and impartial plebiscite to decide whether the State of Jammu and Kashmir is to accede to India or Pakistan. Read more at <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/47>
- 2 The Simla Agreement signed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan on 2nd July 1972 sought to reverse the consequences of the 1971 war (i.e. to bring about withdrawals of troops and an exchange of PoWs). Under the Simla Agreement both countries undertook to abjure conflict and confrontation which had marred relations in the past, and to work towards the establishment of durable peace, friendship and cooperation. Read more at <https://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?19005/Simla+Agreement+July+2+1972>
- 3 According to the Jammu and Kashmir Economic Survey 2016, Unemployment Rate (UR) is 24.6 per cent using UPS approach and 23.8 per cent using UPSS approach. In the age group 18-29 years UR is highest among females i.e. 45.1 per cent and 44.6 per cent using UPS and UPSS approaches respectively. UR for males of age group 18-29 years is 17.8 per cent and 16.9 per cent using UPS and UPSS approaches respectively. Read more at <http://ecostatjk.nic.in/ecosurvey/Economic%20Survey%202016%20PDF.pdf>
- 4 This paper uses left-wing extremism, Naxal-led violence and Maoist violence interchangeably.
- 5 Ministry of Home Affairs, (2018), Annual Report 2017-2018, Delhi, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India; <https://mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/MINISTRY%20OF%20HOME%20AFFAIR%20AR%202017-18%20FOR%20WEB.pdf>
- 6 Press Information Bureau, (March 14, 2018), "Districts affected by Naxal Violence, Press Information Bureau", accessed on February 13, 2019; <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177450>, accessed on February 13, 2019
- 7 The North-East is a generic term used in reference to the eight states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura and Manipur.
- 8 Press Information Bureau, (December 2018), "Year End Review 2018- Ministry of Home Affairs", accessed on February 13, 2018; <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=186405>
- 9 Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs 2008
- 10 National Cyber Security Policy, 2013. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2 July 2013. Available at: http://meity.gov.in/writereaddata/files/National_cyber_security_policy-2013_o.pdf. Accessed on 23 January 2019.
- 11 Press Information Bureau, (July 31, 2018), "Cyber Security", accessed on February 13, 2019; <http://www.pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1540827>
- 12 To see the draft of the bill, see http://meity.gov.in/writereaddata/files/Personal_Data_Protection_Bill%2C2018_o.pdf and http://www.prsindia.org/sites/default/files/bill_files/Legislative%20Brief_Draft%20PDP%20Bill_vF.pdf
- 13 PTI, (2018), "Govt to give preference to cyber security products by domestic firms", Deccan Chronicle, 15 July 2018; <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/business/in-other-news/150718/govt-to-give-preference-to-cyber-security-products-by-domestic-firms.html>
- 14 Press Information Bureau, (March 24, 2018), "Shri Rajnath Singh addresses the closing ceremony of the National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement", accessed on February 13, 2019; <http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1526315>. Accessed on 23 March 2018.
- 15 Nandi, Jayashree (2018), "Climate change caused deadly Kerala rains: IMD", Hindustan Times, November 24, 2018; <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/climate-change-caused-deadly-kerala-rains-imd/story-YEg7ZHY2Mkaf3LhROY724O.html>
- 16 Ordered in the court's judgment in Prakash Singh and Others vs. Union of India, 2006 (8) SCC 1
- 17 According to the directive on State Security Commissions as part of the Model Police Act, 2006, the purpose of a SSC is to "ensure that the state government does not exercise unwarranted influence or pressure on the state police".



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