

40 percent pay hike recommended for defence personnel

The Sixth Pay Commission has recommended a 40 percent across-the-board pay hike for defence personnel, and has suggested a fixed monthly salary of Rs.90,000 for the heads of the army, navy and air force.

In its report submitted to Finance Minister P. Chidambaram Monday, the commission has for the first time recommended Rs.6,000 per month as military service pay for all defence personnel till the rank of brigadier and equivalent.

For Military Nursing Service personnel, the service pay will be Rs.4,200 per month, while personnel below officer rank (PBOR) will get Rs.1,000 per month.

'The commission has taken adequate care while devising the military service pay to ensure that not only the element of edge over civilian pay scales currently enjoyed by the defence forces is maintained but also that the genuine aspirations of the defence forces officers are met,' the report says.

Justice B.N. Srikrishna headed the three-member panel that was established in October 2006 and was given 18 months to submit its report - a target it met.

The report will now go to the cabinet for its consideration.

According to the commission, the military service pay 'shall count as pay for all purposes except for computing the annual increment(s). However, the status of the defence forces officers would be determined by the grade pay attached to their post as is the case with civilians.

'This will meet the two major demands of the defence forces - parity with civilian posts with a distinct edge to compensate for hardships specific to defence service, and grant of military service pay,' the report adds.

In real terms, the recommendations translate into a take-home package of Rs.25,760 for officers at the entry level of lieutenants and equivalent and rising to a maximum of Rs.65,090 for lieutenant generals and their equivalents.

The vice chiefs of the three services and army commanders and equivalents - also three-star officers - will get a fixed salary of Rs.80,000 per month.

In the case of personnel below officer rank, the commission has recommended that at the entry level, sepoy and their equivalents receive a minimum of Rs.7,860 rising to a maximum of Rs.40,600 for subedar majors and their equivalents.

The panel has also suggested that the existing rates of allowances be doubled in the case of both defence personnel and civilians.

It says that the encashment of earned leave by defence personnel should be de-linked from the number of years of service and that all defence personnel should be eligible for encashment of up to 300 days at the time of retirement or discharge.

The panel has also suggested the lateral movement of defence personnel - short service commission officers and PBORs - in the central police organisations and central paramilitary forces.

The commission was 'of the view that running pay bands on par with those recommended for civilian officers needs to be introduced' for the defence forces as well.

The introduction of the running pay bands for the defence forces was also necessary to give effect to the recommendation for the absorption of all short service commissioned officers and PBORs in the central police organisation and paramilitary forces, the commission said.

'This absorption will not be feasible unless identical or at least similar pay scales are introduced for civilians as well as the defence forces,' it added.

The commission has estimated the annual financial implications of its recommendations at Rs.63.86 billion.

Of this, fitment in the new scales would account for Rs.16.40 billion, the military service pay for Rs.19.96 billion and the increased allowances for Rs.17.50 billion.

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