

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1

There exists a case for an intensive de-novo review of the requirements of land in both existing and new stations and disposal of surplus lands in the best public interest. The Ministry of Defence and Services HQ should take into account the problems of management of vast tracts of uninhabited land in their custody and reconsider continuous holding of excess land.

Recommendation 2

Accurate land records being of utmost importance for efficient and effective land management, the Ministry should immediately set up a task force comprising the Services and DGDE to update and reconcile land records in respect of all types of land. Responsibilities for maintenance of land records should be clearly laid down and the work of updating and subsequent maintenance of records should be monitored at the highest level in the Ministry.

Recommendation 3

The project of computerization of land records should be completed as soon as possible. Adequate attention should be paid to ensure that the data fed into the system is updated and accurate. Reasons for delay in computerization of land records in the Defence Estates Organisation should be identified and responsibilities fixed.

Recommendation 4

The Ministry should set up a taskforce to undertake special drive to get all the land mutated in its name as early as possible.

Recommendation 5

The Ministry should immediately develop modalities for carrying out land audit at regular intervals as per the assurance given to the Parliamentary Standing Committee. Reports of such land audit and action taken thereon by the agencies concerned should be put in the public domain.

Recommendation 6

The Ministry should review position of acquired land and work out a strategy to deal with surplus and/or unutilised land in the best interest of the Government.

Recommendation 7

The Ministry should frame rules for commercial exploitation of Defence land and ensure implementation of them strictly and in all seriousness. Information about beneficiaries of shopping complexes should be placed in public domain on the

Performance Audit Report on Defence Estates Management

website of the Ministry. Revenue generated in the form of rentals and licence fees should be credited to the Government account. Violation of rules should invite punitive action.

Recommendation 8

The Ministry should frame policies with regard to abandoned lands and implement them strictly to put such lands to better public use in a time bound manner. The progress in this regard should be monitored by the Ministry.

Recommendation 9

The Ministry should streamline and put in place an effective and transparent system for land use. The responsibilities/accountabilities at different levels should be clearly delineated.

Recommendation 10

The Ministry should take serious view of officers turning a blind eye to the illegal use of Defence land for years on end. It should monitor the cases closely so that due to administrative lethargy, Defence land is not encroached upon or allowed to be misused by private bodies. Strict disciplinary action should be taken against the delinquent officials/officers after fixing responsibility for the same.

Recommendation 11

The Ministry should institute a mechanism for monitoring the timely renewal of leases. The rent due but not recovered should be worked out and recovered in a time bound manner. Eviction proceedings for unauthorized occupation, construction, utilization, non-payment of rent, etc. should be followed up and taken to a logical conclusion in a time bound manner. Duties and responsibilities should be specified and the officers concerned should be made accountable for any lapse on their parts.

Recommendation 12

Considering that almost all Old Grant sites are prime real estate, all cases of unauthorized construction on and/or sale of Old Grant Bungalows should be investigated through independent investigative agencies as the possibility of collusion, corruption and malpractices cannot be ruled out.

Recommendation 13

A definite time frame should be prescribed to ensure speedy resumption of OGBs, where it had been decided to do so.

Powers to issue NOC to private parties for use of Defence land within the Cantonment for commercial purposes, being an extremely sensitive issue, should not be delegated to lower authorities. It should be exercised by the authorities at apex level to avoid misuse of delegated powers.

Recommendation 14

In order to bring about more focus and professionalism in management of Defence Land and to overcome the problems of co-ordination among the multiple agencies entrusted with the responsibility of management of Defence land, it is necessary that a single independent authority is established with overall responsibility of management of all Defence land. Considering that such an authority must function with all Services as also other agencies like Cantonment Boards etc. it should be an Inter Service Organization with a Board representing all Services and the Ministry of Defence. The Authority should function on the lines of an autonomous Body and should preferably be headed by Raksha Mantri. DGDE should function under the control of this Authority. All powers of local military authorities and Defence Estates Offices to dispose of land including issue of NOCs in any form or manner should be withdrawn and vested with the Defence Land Management Authority.

Recommendation 15

In the interest of transparency in management of Defence land, details of land holdings including Old Grant sites should be in public domain on the website. Any transaction on them like issue of NOC, de-hiring of buildings, etc. should be put in the public domain within 15 days of such transaction.