

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

29 June, 2019

Union Home Minister asks NDRF to work for making India number one in disaster response in the world

Shri Amit Shah cautions on growing incidents of forest fires in hilly regions and asks NDRF to be better prepared to meet the threat

Home Minister calls for indigenous manufacture of equipment used in disaster rescue and relief operations

Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah today exhorted all those working in Disaster response and mitigation sectors to make India number one in this field.

Addressing the “Annual Conference on Capacity Building of SDRFs, Civil Defence, Home Guard and Fire Services” organised by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) in New Delhi, Shri Amit Shah said the nation came a long way over the last two decades in its response to disasters and improved its capabilities in minimising loss of human lives and damage to economy. He cited the Orissa cyclone in 1999 in which more than 10,000 people had died in comparison to the recent cyclone “Foni” that claimed 64 lives, which reflected the huge capabilities built in Disaster Response mechanisms. But we should not rest till we make our country number one in the world in mitigating and responding to natural disasters, he added.

The Home Minister assured that the Government would provide all necessary resources and equipment to realise this objective and suggested that the personnel in Disaster response forces should be trained to display compassion and commitment at the ground level during rescue and relief operations.

While cautioning that India is prone to multiple disasters, Shri Amit Shah pointed out that frequent forest fires breaking out in hilly regions is a growing threat which needs to be responded to effectively.

He directed NDRF, SDRF and other agencies concerned to conduct systematic analysis after each operation to identify possible weaknesses and measures to rectify them.

The Home Minister exhorted NDRF to coordinate with agencies such as DRDO in order to get the disaster relief equipment manufactured indigenously.

He urged NDRF to explore enlisting the assistance of PSUs and private enterprises in procuring disaster relief equipment which could be used in rescue and relief operations during disasters in that area.

Recalling his experience in disaster rescue and relief work at the ground level, Shri Amit Shah asked the officials to lay down clear chain of command for quick and effective response during emergencies.

Speaking at the event, Minister of State (Home) Shri Nityanand Rai praised the contribution of NDRF and compassion of its personnel displayed in rescue and relief operations during disasters. He recalled that during a flood in Bihar some time ago, a NDRF jawan had not only rescued a boy from a tree top but also saved a snake which took shelter on the tree. He said the Centre was committed to providing all necessary resources so that NDRF could live up to growing expectations.

In his welcome address, Shri S N Pradhan, Director General, NDRF said the Force has saved lives of more than 1,15,000 people in over 2,600 operations. With the addition of four more battalions, the strength of NDRF would go up to 16 by 2020. He said the NDRF is constantly upgrading its capabilities through training, and foundation for a new training academy in Nagpur would be laid soon.

The event was attended among others by Shri Rajiv Jain, Director IB, Lt Gen (Retd) N.C. Marwah, member NDMA, Shri Kamal Kishore, Member NDMA, Shri Sanjeev Jindal, JS MHA, heads of CAPFs and SDRFs, Home Guards and Fire Services.

BB/NK//SS