



VIP Security in India

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Why in News

Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has provided Y-plus category of CRPF security to an actress.

Key Points

- **VIP Security:**

- This protection is informally called “VIP security”, and it is generally given only to someone who holds a position of **consequence either in the government or in civil society**.

Certain individuals, by reason of positions they hold in government, are automatically entitled to security cover. They include:

- The Prime Minister and his immediate family.
 - The Home Minister.
 - Officials such as the National Security Advisor.
- In **cases where the central government decides to extend security to an individual**, the level of security needed by any individual is **decided by the MHA**, based on inputs received from intelligence agencies which include the **Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW)**.
 - **Confidential Inputs:** The intelligence inputs that these agencies generate, particularly in cases where VIP security is involved, is **neither put out in the public domain nor is it open to scrutiny** by any other agency.
 - **Concern due to lack of Accountability:**
 - Indian intelligence agencies are **not accountable to any statutory body**, and are subject only to the internal oversight of the MHA and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
 - Because of this opacity in functioning, and the fact that there is virtually no accountability except to the government in power, VIP security is open to manipulation by the executive.
 - A large number of protectees, it has been alleged, are under security cover purely for **political** or “**prestige**” reasons, and not necessarily because of any genuine threat.

- **Levels of Protection:**

- There are broadly **six categories** of security cover: X, Y, Y-plus, Z, Z-plus, and **SPG (Special Protection Group)**.
- The **SPG is meant only for the Prime Minister and his immediate family**, other protection categories can be provided to anyone about whom the Centre or state governments have inputs of a threat.
- There are various kinds of security cover even within these levels. These include
 - Security of residence,
 - Mobile security,
 - Office security, and
 - Inter-state security.
- The number of personnel guarding the protectee differ from category to category.
 - **The X category** on average entails just one gunman protecting the individual. The X category is the most basic level of protection.
 - **Z-plus category** protectees have 10 security personnel for mobile security, and two (plus 8 on rotation) for residence security.

- **Different Forces Involved:**

- Protectees get residence security from state police, but mobile security from a **Central Armed Police Force (CAPF)**.

Central Armed Police Forces of India is a group of forces (under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**) for internal security. It includes the CRPF, CISF, ITBP, etc.

- For VIPs other than the PM, the government has mandated the **National Security Guard (NSG)**, **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** and the **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)** to provide security cover.

- The government has intended over the years to reduce the burden of VIP security on **the NSG, because the core function of the NSG is counter-terrorism operations**, not providing VIP security.
- It is for this reason that the Home Minister and NSA have been given CRPF and CISF cover respectively.

- **Paying for the Protection:**

- **On Assessment by the Intelligence Agencies:** Anyone to whom the government provides security after assessment by intelligence agencies, gets the protection for free.

However, those who have an elaborate security cover such as those in the Z and Z-plus categories, may have to consider accommodation for these security personnel on their own.

- **Private Individuals:** Those who apply for the security but their case is not having consequences on the government and civil society, the government can charge a private individual for their security cover even after assessing a threat to them.

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