

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE SIGNS MOU TO ONBOARD PENSION SERVICES UNDER SPARSH ACROSS OVER FOUR LAKH COMMON SERVICE CENTRES PAN INDIA

Relevant for: null | Topic: Important Schemes & Programmes of the Government

Defence Accounts Department (DAD) of Ministry of Defence has signed an MoU with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, to onboard pension services under the System for Pension Administration (Raksha) {SPARSH} initiative across more than four lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs) all over the country. The MoU was signed by Controller of Defence Accounts (CDA) Pensions Shri Sham Dev and CEO of CSC e-Governance Services India Limited Shri Sanjay Kumar Rakesh in the presence of Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar in New Delhi on February 24, 2022.

The MoU will provide last mile connectivity to pensioners, especially those who reside in remote areas of the country and those who do not have the means or technical wherewithal to log on to SPARSH. For these pensioners, the Service Centres will become an interface for SPARSH and provide an effective medium for pensioners to perform profile update requests, register grievances and seek redressal, digital annual identification, pensioner data verification or simply fetch detailed information regarding their monthly pension.

An MoU was also signed with Kotak Mahindra Bank, under which they would be setting up service centres across 14 branches located in areas with high ex-servicemen density. These Centres would further augment the existing network of more than 161 DAD offices and nearly 800 State Bank of India (SBI) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) branches, which are acting as service centres to assist and facilitate pensioners to use SPARSH. The access to these service centres would be provided free of cost to the pensioners, with nominal service charges being borne by the Department.

The Defence Secretary lauded CGDA for ensuring efficiency, responsiveness and transparency in pension administration through the SPARSH initiative, adding that the MoU will promote ease of living and resolve pension-related issues in a time-bound manner. He said, the partnership with CSC will deliver pension services digitally to the farthest corners of the country and ensure that no pensioner is deprived of their rightful benefits due to technological or geographic difficulties. Secretary (Ex-Servicemen Welfare) Shri B Anand, Financial Advisor (Defence Services) Shri Sanjiv Mittal, Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) Shri Rajnish Kumar and other senior officials of Ministry of Defence were present on the occasion.

SPARSH is an initiative of Ministry of Defence which aims at providing a comprehensive solution to the administration of pension to the defence pensioners in line with the Government's vision of 'Digital India', 'Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)' and 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'. The system is administered by DAD through the Principal Controller of Defence Accounts (Pensions), Prayagraj and caters to all the three Services and allied organisation. The system on roll-out is initially catering to the new retirees and subsequently being extended to cover the existing defence pensioners. The system caters to all activities of the pension cycle namely: Initiation and Sanction, Disbursement as well as Revision.

SPARSH has been designed keeping defence pensioners at the centre, who will be given a completely transparent view of their pension account, through an online portal (<https://sparsh.defencepension.gov.in/>). It captures and maintains a complete history of events

and entitlements of the pensioner – right from the date of commencement of pension to the date of cessation of pension due to the last eligible beneficiary.

SPARSH has fundamentally re-engineered the process of pension disbursement – from generation of the Pension Payment Orders (PPOs) to Direct Benefit Transfer of pensions, with the motto of right pension delivered at the right time. A recent example of effectiveness of SPARSH was the release of more than Rs 196 crore of additional gratuity within just 30 days for 43,370 pensioners, a mammoth exercise which would have taken more than six months to process through the legacy system of disbursement. The additional gratuity was a result of announcement of DA increase for veterans who retired between June 2021 to January 2022. Thus, SPARSH embodies the spirit of 'Digital India', effectively dovetailing the tools of technology with the needs of governance reform.

ABB/Nampi/Savvy

Defence Accounts Department (DAD) of Ministry of Defence has signed an MoU with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, to onboard pension services under the System for Pension Administration (Raksha) {SPARSH} initiative across more than four lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs) all over the country. The MoU was signed by Controller of Defence Accounts (CDA) Pensions Shri Sham Dev and CEO of CSC e-Governance Services India Limited Shri Sanjay Kumar Rakesh in the presence of Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar in New Delhi on February 24, 2022.

The MoU will provide last mile connectivity to pensioners, especially those who reside in remote areas of the country and those who do not have the means or technical wherewithal to log on to SPARSH. For these pensioners, the Service Centres will become an interface for SPARSH and provide an effective medium for pensioners to perform profile update requests, register grievances and seek redressal, digital annual identification, pensioner data verification or simply fetch detailed information regarding their monthly pension.

An MoU was also signed with Kotak Mahindra Bank, under which they would be setting up service centres across 14 branches located in areas with high ex-servicemen density. These Centres would further augment the existing network of more than 161 DAD offices and nearly 800 State Bank of India (SBI) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) branches, which are acting as service centres to assist and facilitate pensioners to use SPARSH. The access to these service centres would be provided free of cost to the pensioners, with nominal service charges being borne by the Department.

The Defence Secretary lauded CGDA for ensuring efficiency, responsiveness and transparency in pension administration through the SPARSH initiative, adding that the MoU will promote ease of living and resolve pension-related issues in a time-bound manner. He said, the partnership with CSC will deliver pension services digitally to the farthest corners of the country and ensure that no pensioner is deprived of their rightful benefits due to technological or geographic difficulties. Secretary (Ex-Servicemen Welfare) Shri B Anand, Financial Advisor (Defence Services) Shri Sanjiv Mittal, Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) Shri Rajnish Kumar and other senior officials of Ministry of Defence were present on the occasion.

SPARSH is an initiative of Ministry of Defence which aims at providing a comprehensive solution to the administration of pension to the defence pensioners in line with the Government's vision of 'Digital India', 'Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)' and 'Minimum Government, Maximum

Governance'. The system is administered by DAD through the Principal Controller of Defence Accounts (Pensions), Prayagraj and caters to all the three Services and allied organisation. The system on roll-out is initially catering to the new retirees and subsequently being extended to cover the existing defence pensioners. The system caters to all activities of the pension cycle namely: Initiation and Sanction, Disbursement as well as Revision.

SPARSH has been designed keeping defence pensioners at the centre, who will be given a completely transparent view of their pension account, through an online portal (<https://sparsh.defencepension.gov.in/>). It captures and maintains a complete history of events and entitlements of the pensioner – right from the date of commencement of pension to the date of cessation of pension due to the last eligible beneficiary.

SPARSH has fundamentally re-engineered the process of pension disbursement – from generation of the Pension Payment Orders (PPOs) to Direct Benefit Transfer of pensions, with the motto of right pension delivered at the right time. A recent example of effectiveness of SPARSH was the release of more than Rs 196 crore of additional gratuity within just 30 days for 43,370 pensioners, a mammoth exercise which would have taken more than six months to process through the legacy system of disbursement. The additional gratuity was a result of announcement of DA increase for veterans who retired between June 2021 to January 2022. Thus, SPARSH embodies the spirit of 'Digital India', effectively dovetailing the tools of technology with the needs of governance reform.

ABB/Nampi/Savvy

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS