

**Union Home Minister chairs 12th meeting of Standing Committee of Inter-State Council****Union Home Minister chairs 12th meeting of Standing Committee of Inter-State Council****Shri Rajnath Singh says Harmonious Relations with States a priority of the Central Government**

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh chaired the 12th meeting of the Standing Committee of Inter-State Council (ISC), here today.

Addressing the meeting, Shri Rajnath Singh said that a number of steps have been taken in recent years by the Central Government to promote cooperative federalism. He said that the meeting of the Inter State Council, which was held in July, 2016, happened after a gap of 10 years. Subsequent to that, meetings of the Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council are being periodically convened to lend speed and purpose to the process of harmonizing Center State relations, he said. He expressed satisfaction over the fact that the meetings of the Zonal Councils have now become regular and periodical. He also said that our effort is to see that at least one meeting of all the Zonal Councils is convened annually. He mentioned that a number of important State-to-State and Centre-State issues that are raised at these meetings find resolution. In 2015 such 82 issues were resolved and 140 issues were resolved in 2016.

Shri Rajnath Singh expressed satisfaction over the fact that the Inter State Council and the Standing Committee have been rejuvenated. He said that it is important for us to promote the spirit of cooperation with greater zest and zeal and expressed satisfaction over the deliberations held today in harmonious and congenial atmosphere for arriving at consensus on some complex issues that have been covered in the agenda notes.

The Home Minister said that Volumes-I & II were discussed during the eleventh meeting of the Standing Committee in April this year and Volumes-VI and VII will be discussed during the next meeting of the Standing Committee. Shri Rajnath Singh said that the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Punchhi Commission's report will then be placed before the Inter-State Council, headed by the Prime Minister.

The subjects discussed at the meeting included : Matters related to financial transfers from the Centre to the States; Goods and Services Tax; Structure and devolution of functions to local bodies; District Planning; Special provisions for Fifth and Sixth Scheduled Areas; Maintenance of communal harmony; Deployment of Central Forces; Migration issues; Police reforms; Criminal justice system and other internal security issues. The Standing Committee at its meeting considered 118 recommendations contained in Volumes-III, IV and V and finalised its recommendations.

The Punchhi Commission was set up by the Government under the chairmanship of Justice (Retd.) Madan Mohan Punchhi, former Chief Justice of Supreme Court of India in 2005. The Punchhi Commission submitted its report in 2010 containing 273 recommendations in 7 volumes. The 11th meeting of the Standing Committee of ISC was held on 9th April this year after a gap of 11 years and 69 recommendations of the

Punchhi Commission relating to the Constitutional provisions on various subjects such as the role of Governors, the Inter-State Council, assent to bills passed by Legislative Assemblies etc. were discussed. The convening of the Standing Committee meetings twice in the same year reflects the importance attached to the promotion of harmonious Centre-State relations.

The meeting of the Committee was attended by the Union Ministers of Finance and Corporate Affairs Shri Arun Jaitley; Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawar Chand Gehlot, the Chief Minister (CM) of Chhattisgarh Dr Raman Singh, CM Odisha Shri Naveen Patnaik, CM Rajasthan Smt Vasundhara Raje Scindia and CM Tripura Shri Manik Sarkar as members. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister for law and Justice, Shri Hardeep S Puri, Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development were present as special invitees. States of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh were represented by their ministers.

Representatives of 30 Union Ministries/Departments and 7 State Governments were also present to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

KSD/SB/NK/PK

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