

## INDIAN EX-SERVICES LEAGUE

Recognised by the Government (Registered under the Societies Registration Act),  
as the Central League to which all the State Ex-Service League are affiliated

**Patron-in-Chief**  
**Defence Minister**

### PATRONS

Chief of Defence Staff  
Chief of the Army Staff  
Chief of the Air Staff  
Chief of the Naval Staff



### PRESIDENT

Brig Kartar Singh (Retd.)  
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Ref. No. IESL/105/2022

24 May 2022

Shri Narendra Modi  
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India  
Prime Minister's Office  
South Block, Raisina Hills  
New Delhi-110011

*Respected Prime Minister ji, Jaihind.*

1. Indian Ex-Services League (IESL) is a Govt of India recognized association of Veterans, Family Pensioners and Next-of-kin of Armed Forces personnel who gave their lives in the service of the Nation. It was quite disheartening and worrisome to read in a section of the media that the Government plans to remove the defence services from the ambit of the Right to Information Act, 2005.

2. The RTI has remained a powerful tool with the Veterans and serving community and their families to obtain information and documents concerning their service and pensioner issues and also to move the authorities into action with respect to routine grievances. It has also ensured maximum transparency in official establishments dealing with such issues. Even innocuous documents such as medical board proceedings concerning disabled soldiers and old service records of Veterans are only made available through the RTI Act. Many of the 25 lakh military pensioners have not be able to obtain correct pension because of certain known shortcomings that have not been attended to either by the PCDA (Pensions), located at Prayagraj or counterparts for Navy and Air Force or by respective directorates for military veterans such as the Adjutant General's Branch of Army and equivalent branches of the Navy and the Air Force and the

Record Offices where most communications remain filed and un-attended for long periods of time. The system of redressal of grievances remains in shambles, to say the least, though surely you would have been informed otherwise. The burgeoning number of cases in the Armed Forces Tribunal and other Courts is a direct pointer to this reality.

3. The only way to know our fate and processing of our claims is to approach the above offices through RTI Act, 2005 because of the time limit for replies or refusal of information imposed by the Act, whereas on the other hand, applications to various government offices and Headquarters of the Defence Services often do not elicit replies, as stated above, forcing veterans and widows to approach Tribunals and Courts by hiring lawyers whose fee many cannot afford. In fact, the introduction of transparency through the RTI Act has resulted in a massive reduction of litigation wherein many issues get resolved after disclosure under the Act, thereby obliterating the requirement of approaching Courts.

4. It is therefore requested that the Defence Services may not be placed in Schedule 2 of the RTI Act, 2005, as adequate protection is already available in Sections 8 and 9 of the RTI Act, 2005 to hold back information related to operational and security related issues. Denying such a right of a powerful public-oriented tool to military personnel, veterans, military widows and their families would place them at a sharp disadvantage vis-à-vis other citizens and would also result in a massive increase in litigation with such affected persons approaching judicial forums for minor issues thereby involving the Government and the Defence Services eternally into unnecessary red-tape, manpower and financial burden. It would also attract adverse publicity since other democratic and developed countries with whom India seeks a place in the international arena do not have such exemptions for their Defence Forces. For exemple, in the USA – <https://open.defence.gov/transparency/foia.aspx>. and in the UK – <https://www.army.mod.uk/freedom-of-information/>

5. In the interest of maintaining the image of India as a modern, democratic country whose Govt has Transparency as one of its Key Result Areas, It is hoped you would nip this short-sighted, wrongly projected and ill-conceived move in the bud.

With deep regards,

Sincerely, Yours

Kartar Singh

Brig Kartar Singh, V (IA)  
President Indian Ex-Services League