



Central Armed Police Forces Reforms

For Prelims: Type of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), Assam Rifles (AR), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), National Security Guard (NSG), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

For Mains: Major Functions challenges and Solutions regarding CAPFs, Various Security Forces & Agencies & Their Mandate

Why in News?

Recently, the **Government of India told the Lok Sabha** that nearly **1,200 paramilitary troopers died by suicide in last 10 years.**

- Also, more [Central Armed Police Force \(CAPF\)](#) personnel died by suicide in the [Covid-19 pandemic](#) years of 2020 and 2021.
- **Domestic problems, illness and financial problems** are some of the contributory factors among others behind the incidents of suicide.

What are Central Armed Police Forces?

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** maintains seven CAPFs:
 - The [Central Reserve Police Force \(CRPF\)](#), which assists in internal security and counterinsurgency.
 - The **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)**, which protects vital installations (like airports) and [public sector undertakings](#).
 - The [National Security Guards \(NSG\)](#), which is a special counterterrorism force.
 - Four border guarding forces, which are the [Border Security Force \(BSF\)](#), [Indo-Tibetan Border Police \(ITBP\)](#), [Sashastra Seema Bal \(SSB\)](#), and [Assam Rifles \(AR\)](#).

What are Major Functions of CAPFs?

- **Border Security:** Safeguard the security of borders of India and promote a sense of security among the people living in border areas.
 - Prevent trans-border crimes, smuggling, unauthorised entry into or exit from the territory of India and to prevent any other illegal activity.
- **Industrial Security:** Provide security to sensitive installations, persons at security risk.
- **Other Functions:** Counter Insurgency Operations, Anti Naxal Operations, Internal Security Duties, VIP Protection, Lead Intelligence Agency, Security To Diplomatic Missions Abroad, [United Nations \(UN\) Peacekeeping Operations](#), Disaster Management, Civic Action Nodal Agency for UN Police Missions, etc.

What are Associated Issues with CAPFs?

- **Working Conditions:** The **Standing Committee on Home Affairs** in the year 2017 had

- expressed concern over the **working conditions of personnel of the border guarding forces.**
- The Committee observed that they had to **work 16-18 hours a day, with little time for rest or sleep.**
 - The personnel were also **not satisfied with medical facilities** that had been provided at border locations.
 - In addition, the Standing Committee observed that personnel of the CAPFs have **not been treated at par with the Armed Forces,** in terms of pay and allowances.
- **Impediments to Modernisation:** The MHA has been making efforts to provide modern arms, ammunition, and vehicles to the CAPFs.
- The Plan aims to provide financial support to CAPFs for modernisation in areas of arms, clothing, and equipment.
 - However, the [Estimates Committee](#) observed that the **procurement process under the Plan was cumbersome and time consuming.**
- **Burdened By States' Responsibilities:** There is heavy dependence of states on CAPFs, even for everyday law and order issues.
- This affects the **anti-insurgency and border guarding operations,** besides curtailing the training needs of these forces.
- **Cadre Management Issue:** Each of the seven has its own cadre of officers, but they are **headed by officers of the Indian Police Service.**
- This has a demoralising effect on the officers of the CAPFs, and **impacts the effectiveness of the forces.**
 - In addition, there was frustration in CAPFs due to stagnation in promotions and lack of cadre review.
- **Increasing Cases of Fratricide:** There have been more than **25 incidents of fratricide** (killing of one's brother or sister) **reported in the forces since 2019.**

What can be the Way Forward for CAPFs?

- **Modernising the CAPFs:** MHA should ensure the **bottlenecks in procurement should be identified** and corrective action should be taken.
 - Moreover, given the evolution of **hybrid warfare,** the contents of training should be a mix of conventional matters as well as latest technologies such as ICT, and cyber security.
- **Augmenting States' Capacity:** States must develop their own systems, and augment their police forces by **providing adequate training and equipment.**
 - The central government should supplement the efforts of state governments by providing financial assistance and other help needed by states for capacity building of their forces.
- **Corrective Measures in Cadre Policy:** Citing the dissatisfaction in **Cadre policy, Joshi Committee recommended** that top positions should be filled from the respective cadre of the CAPF.
 - Further, the Committee recommended that **cadre review of all the CAPFs should be carried out within a defined timeline.**
 - It is high time to implement these recommendations as soon as possible.
- **Personnel Reforms:** Workshops on **stress management** should regularly be undertaken, and yoga and meditation be made part of the daily exercise for CAPF personnel.
 - Further, the provision of accommodation near the deployment of the respective force, to enable personnel to meet their family members, can also be explored.

Source: IE