



## Central Armed Police Forces

This article is based on [“The crucial expertise of CAPFs”](#) which was published in The Hindu on 06/11/2020. It talks about the challenges and solutions for efficient functioning of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

Under the Indian Constitution, police and public order are state subjects. However, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) assists state governments by providing them support of the Central Armed Police Forces.

Apart from this, the [Central Armed Police Forces \(CAPFs\)](#) performs a multidimensional role like protecting the borders of the nation from external aggression & infiltration, aiding in internal security in combating insurgency, anti-naxalism and counter terrorism.

Further, these forces assist the civil population in various area development programs, community policing programs and disaster management. This can be reflected in the role played by these forces in dealing with [Covid-19 pandemic](#).

However, there are many issues which need to be addressed for efficient working of these forces.

### 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).

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# THE SEVEN CENTRAL ARMED POLICE FORCES



AR



BSF



CISF



CRPF



ITBP



NSG



SSB

## Major Functions of CAPFs

- 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, unauthorized entry into or exit from the territory of India and to prevent any other illegal activity.
- Provide security to sensitive installations, persons at security risk.
- Restore and preserve order in any area in the event of disturbance therein.
- **Other Functions:** Counter Insurgency Operations, Anti Naxal Operations, Internal Security Duties, VIP Protection, Lead Intelligence Agency, Security To Diplomatic Missions Abroad, UN Peacekeeping Operations, Disaster Management, Civic Action Nodal agency for UN Police Missions, etc.

## Associated Issues

- **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.
- **Operational Bottlenecks:** All CAPFs have set up training institutions to meet their training requirements and impart professional skills on specialised topics.
  - However, there is an urgent need to upgrade the curriculum and infrastructure in these training institutes.
- **Impediments to Modernisation:** The MHA has been making efforts to provide modern arms, ammunition, and vehicles to the CAPFs. In this regard, the Modernization Plan-II, for the period 2012-17, was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security.
  - 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 central armed police forces (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 demoralizing 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.

## Way Forward

- **Modernising the CAPFs:** MHA should ensure the bottlenecks in procurement should be identified and corrective action should be taken.
  - Further, the government should engage in negotiations with ordnance factories and manufacturers in the public or private sector, to ensure an uninterrupted supply of equipment and other infrastructure.
  - While purchasing the latest equipment, training needs should also be taken care of, and if required, should be included in the purchase agreement itself.
  - 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.

## Conclusion

CAPF personnel give a semblance of existence of government administration even in the remotest corners of the country. Their versatile experience can be utilised to the nation's advantage. However, there is a need to address the underlying issues that affect the efficient working of CAPFs.

### ***Drishti Mains Question***

Central Armed Forces give a semblance of existence of government administration even in the remotest corners of the country. However, there are many issues that hamper their functioning. Comment.

This editorial is based on [“Just like corn”](#) which was published in The Indian Express on November 05<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Now watch this on our Youtube channel.

