



Suicide Among CAPF Personnel

For Prelims: [Central Industrial Security Force \(CISF\)](#), [Central Armed Police Forces \(CAPF\)](#), [National Crime Records Bureau \(NCRB\)](#), [Army](#), [Navy](#), [Air Force](#), [New Pension Scheme \(NPS\)](#), [Old Pension Scheme \(OPS\)](#), [Rath Yatra](#), [Mental Health Championship Program](#).

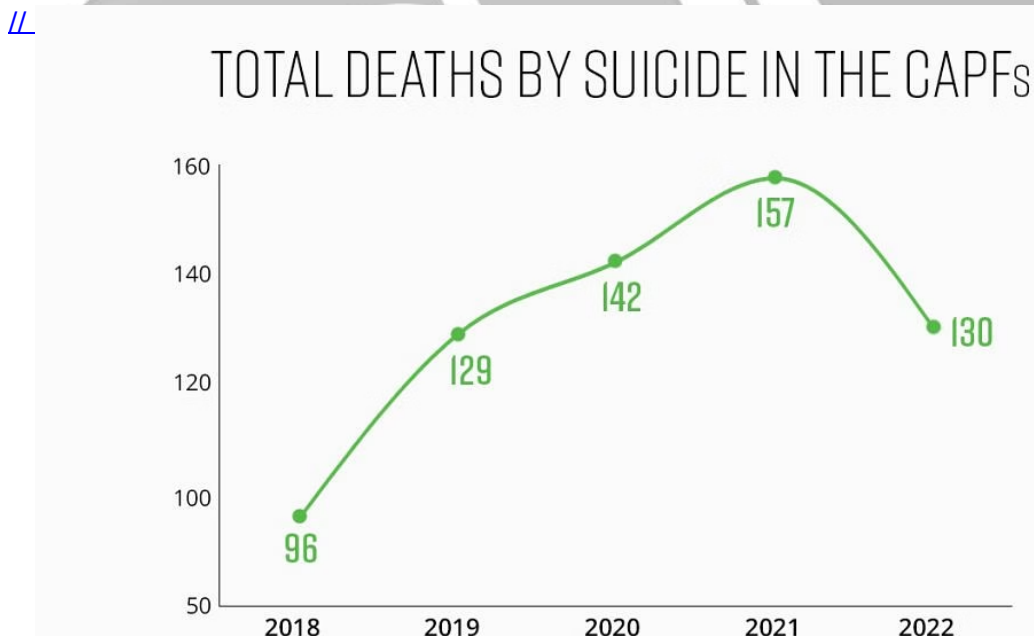
For Mains: Suicide among CAPFs and prevention strategy.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

The [Central Industrial Security Force \(CISF\)](#) has successfully **reduced** its suicide rate by **40%**, from **25 deaths in 2023 to 15 in 2024**.

- According to data from the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, 654 [Central Armed Police Forces \(CAPF\)](#) personnel died by [suicide](#) between 2018 and 2022.
 - There were **230 suicides in the CRPF**, 174 in the BSF, 89 in the CISF, 64 in the SSB, 54 in the ITBP, 43 in the Assam Rifles, and **3 in NSG**.



Source: March 2023 report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs



Note: According to [National Crime Records Bureau \(NCRB\)](#) data 2022, the **national suicide rate** stood at **12.4 per lakh** in 2022.

- The suicide rate is the number of **suicides per 1,00,000 people** in a given population.

What are the Reasons for Suicide Among CAPFs?

- **Stressful Deployments:** Personnel are often stationed in hostile regions such as [Naxal-affected areas](#) and conflict zones like **Jammu and Kashmir** without sufficient breaks.
 - **Lack of "peace postings"** akin to the Army exacerbates mental fatigue.
 - Peace postings means stationing of troops in **relatively stable and non-hostile environments**, as opposed to conflict zones or high-tension areas like borders or insurgency-affected regions.
- **Family Separation:** Long durations away from families result in **emotional strain** and difficulties in addressing family issues like **land disputes or financial management**.
 - More than **80% of troops** those who died by suicide were reported after they **returned home from leave**.
- **Mental Health Challenges:** Seeking psychological help is **stigmatized** in the forces, with limited mental health support systems.
 - Suicide attempts are **lower among female personnel**, as males often avoid sharing problems due to fear of peer ridicule.
 - Many people consider the [Army, Navy, and Air Force](#) as **"real" forces** leading to **further demotivation** among the **CAPF troops**.
- **Career Progression Issues:** There is **limited scope for promotions** among CAPFs. Personnel have had to serve in the **same post for as long as 10 years** in some cases.
 - **Higher ranks** are reserved for [IPS officers](#) and CAPF personnel **feel dejected** contributing to mental stress.
- **Lack of Job Satisfaction:** Army personnel have access to **Army hospitals** in major cities for their **families' health and treatment**, and their families enjoy a broader selection of products from **Army canteens** compared to CAPF personnel.
 - CAPFs are under the [New Pension Scheme \(NPS\)](#) with **lower payouts** compared to the [Old Pension Scheme \(OPS\)](#) for armed forces personnel.
- **Access to Firearms:** Easy access to **service weapons** increases the risk of impulsive acts during periods of distress.

CENTRAL ARMED POLICE FORCES (CAPF)

The CAPF includes the seven security forces in India functioning under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Assam Rifles (AR)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1835, as militia called 'Cachar Levy'
- ↳ **Erstwhile objective:** To protect British Tea estates
- ↳ **Current Objectives:**
 - ↳ Conducting anti-terrorist operations in NER
 - ↳ Ensuring security at India-China and India-Myanmar borders
- ↳ **Imp Role in:**
 - ↳ Sino-India War 1962
 - ↳ Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka (1987)

Due to long association with tribal belts, Assam Rifles are also called 'Friends of the North East'

Border Security Force (BSF)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1965
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Securing land borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh
 - ↳ Also performing Anti-Infiltration in Kashmir Valley
 - ↳ Counter Insurgency in NER
 - ↳ Anti-Naxal Operations in Odisha and Chhattisgarh
- ↳ **Wings:** Air wing, marine wing, an artillery regiment, and commando units

BSF is India's First Line of Defence and the world's largest border guarding force

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

- ↳ **Pre-Independence Origin:** 1939 (Crown Representative's Police)
- ↳ **Post Independence:** 1949 - under CRPF Act, became Central Reserve Police Force
- ↳ **Objective:** Crowd control, riot control, counter militancy/insurgency operations, etc.

CRPF is the principle central police force for internal security

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1962
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Deployed on border from Karakoram Pass (Ladakh) to Jachep La (Arunachal Pradesh) (~3488 km of Indo-China Border)
 - ↳ Manning Border Outposts on altitudes 9000 ft - 18700 ft in Western, Middle and Eastern sectors of Indo-China Border

ITBP is India's specialised mountain force & the first responder to natural disasters

National Security Guard (NSG)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1984 (came into being in 1986), following Operation Blue Star
- ↳ **Objectives:** Counter-terrorism unit/Federal Contingency Force
- ↳ **Task-oriented Force - Two complementary elements:**
 - ↳ Special Action Group (SAG)
 - ↳ Special Ranger Groups (SRG)

Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1963
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Guarding Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders
 - ↳ Enhance border security, curb trans-border crimes, prevent unauthorised entry/exit, halt smuggling, etc.

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)

- ↳ **Origin:** Central Industrial Security Force Act, 1968
- ↳ **Objectives:** Ensuring security of major critical infrastructure installations

CISF is the sole CAPF unit with a specialised fire wing



Drishti IAS

Why Suicide Rate is Higher Among CRPF Personnel?

- **Statistics:** MHA data shows that there were **36 suicides** in the CRPF in **2018**, rising to **40 in 2019**, **54 in 2020**, and **57 in 2021**. The numbers dipped to **43 in 2022**.
- **Over Reliance on CRPF:** State police forces often lack the resources, manpower, and training to handle crises, forcing the CRPF to step in.
 - The CRPF ensures **free and fair elections** and maintains order at events like **Ganesh Chaturthi** in Maharashtra and **Rath Yatra in Odisha**.
 - This **adds to the workload** and **reduces opportunities for rest**.

What are Government Initiatives to Address Suicides Among CAPF Personnel?

- **Task Force Formation:** A task force was set up by **MHA in December 2021** to identify risk

factors, prevention strategies, and conduct research on suicides in CAPFs.

- It has identified **3 main risk factors** contributing to suicides in CAPFs i.e., **working conditions, service conditions, and personal/individual issues**.
- **E-Leave Systems:** The CRPF's **SAMBHAV app** enables personnel to apply for **leave instantly**, with leave approval processed through the **e-leave portal**.
- **Mental Health Support:** The CRPF has brought in **mental health counselors** to support the emotional well-being of troops.
 - In CRPF, **pairs of personnel** are assigned as **“buddies”** to monitor and support each other, acting as an **early warning system** for mental health concerns.
 - **CISF** launched the **Mental Health Championship Program** for supervisors to identify early signs of **mental health issues**.
 - CISF's initiatives are supported by **Project Mann**, a mental health helpline providing **24/7 tele-counseling** and in-person sessions.
 - BSF partnered with AIIMS, New Delhi to provide counselling services, with dedicated budgets allocated.
- **Family-Centric Interventions:** Cases of depression and mental illness are closely monitored, with efforts to **allow family members to stay with affected personnel**.

Way Forward

- **Workload Management:** Ensure that personnel are stationed in **peaceful, non-hostile environments** periodically to **reduce stress**.
 - **Train state police forces** and increase manpower to **handle law enforcement crises** effectively so that CAPFs aren't overburdened.
- **Job Satisfaction:** Improve **promotion opportunities** within CAPFs by creating clearer pathways for advancement and ensuring that senior positions are **not exclusively reserved for IPS officers**.
- **Family Support Programs:** Allow more opportunities for family members to live with personnel or provide **family visits** during assignments.
- **Policy Support:** Ensure that existing policies around **mental health care, leave systems, and career progression** are **more flexible** to accommodate the unique challenges faced by CAPF personnel.
- **Skill Development:** Provide **on the job training** to CAPF personnel to earn a **dignified living** post retirement. E.g., **beekeeping, mushroom cultivation** etc.

Drishti Mains Question:

What factors contribute to high suicide rates in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), and how can these issues be addressed?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. What is “Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)”, sometimes seen in the news? (2018)

- (a) An Israeli radar system
- (b) India's indigenous anti-missile programme
- (c) An American anti-missile system
- (d) A defence collaboration between Japan and South Korea.

Ans: (c)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/suicide-among-capf-personnel>

