

Home Ministry extended BSF jurisdiction

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In news- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) extended the jurisdiction of Border Security Force (BSF) **up to 50 km from the international border in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam.** Earlier, the powers of the border guarding force were limited to up to 15 km in these states.

Key updates-

- The ministry has **reduced BSF's area of operation in Gujarat** where it earlier exercised its powers up to 80 km from the border, but will now cover only up to 50 km.
- The ministry exercised the powers under the **Section 139 of Border Security Force Act, 1968.**
- As Assam, Punjab and West Bengal have troublesome borders because of rampant smuggling of drugs, cattle and arms and ammunition, the aim is also to make BSF's operational jurisdiction uniform in these states.
- BSF officers will now have the **power to arrest, search, and of seizure to the extent of 50 km** inside three new states sharing international boundaries with Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- As per the new notification, BSF has got the right to take this action **under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), the Passport Act, and the Passport (Entry to India) Act.**
- The new notification also empowers an officer of the rank corresponding to that of the lowest ranking member of the BSF, to **exercise and discharge the powers and duties without an order from a Magistrate, and without a**

warrant.

- However, no boundaries have been set for the five northeastern states of Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, and Manipur and Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh.

About Border Security Force (BSF)-

- It is India's border guarding organisation on its border with Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- It is one of the five Central Armed Police Forces of India, and was raised in the wake of the 1965 War on **1 December 1965**.
- Its motto is "Duty Unto Death"
- It is the only CAPF to have a Full-fledged Water Wing, Air Wing and even an Artillery Regiment of its own.
- The BSF has its own cadre of officers but its head, designated as a Director-General (DG), since its raising has been an officer from the Indian Police Service.
- It currently stands as the **world's largest border guarding force**.
- It has been termed as the First Line of Defence of Indian Territories.

Roles played-

- Prevention trans-border crimes, unauthorized entry into or exit from the territory of India.
- Prevention of smuggling and any other illegal activities on the Border.
- Anti-infiltration duties.
- Collection of trans-border intelligence.
- To promote a sense of security among the people living in the border areas.
- During war time holding ground in assigned sectors.
- Maintenance of Law and Order in enemy territory administered under the Army's control.
- Acting as guides to the Army in border areas.
- Assistance in control of refugees.

- Provision of escorts.

BSF is also employed for Internal Security Duties and other law and order duties on the requisition of the State Government. It maintains a Tear Smoke Unit (TSU), which is unique in India. The TSU is responsible for producing tear gas munitions required for the Anti-Riot Forces.