

# Reforms needed in Central Armed Police Forces

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## Manifest Pedagogy:

CAPF plays a very important role in the domain of internal security of the Nation. Even in the farthest reaches of the nation, CAPF members provide a veneer of government administration. Their broad experience can be used for the benefit of the country. However, it is important to address the underlying problems that prevent CAPFs from operating effectively.

In News: The Centre has extended the Modernisation Plan For Central Armed Police Forces Till 2026.

Placing it in Syllabus: Security

## Static Dimensions

- About CAPF
- Major functions of CAPFs

## Current Dimensions

- Issues with the Central Armed Police Forces.
- About modernisation programme of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)
- Suggestions to reform the Central Armed Police Forces

## Content

### About CAPF

- 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)**.
- India's CAPFs are not meant to be paramilitary in nature. They operate under the MHA, rather than the Ministry of Defence.
  - Their mandate is to assist the state police organisations under special circumstances like **communal riots, insurgency and border skirmishes**.

### **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 crimes**— 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.

### **Issues with the Central Armed Police Forces**

- **Deployment of CAPFs:** 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.
- **Training of CAPFs:** There is an urgent need to update the curriculum and infrastructure in training institutes for CAPFs.
- **Huge Vacancy-**A total of **84,405 posts** are vacant in six Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).
- **Modernization of CAPFs:** The Modernization Plan II (2012-17), approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security, aims at providing financial support to CAPFs for modernising arms, clothing, and equipment.
  - The procurement process under the Plan was cumbersome and time consuming.
- **Promotion of CAPFs:** The top positions in CAPFs are occupied by IPS officers. This has a demoralising effect on the officers of the CAPFs, and impacts the effectiveness of the forces.
  - In addition, there is frustration in CAPFs due to stagnation in promotions and lack of cadre review.
- **Housing for CAPFs:** During the 12th Five Year Plan, as against the target of 24,206 houses for CAPFs, only 11,884 houses were constructed till March 31, 2016 (49%).
- **Working Conditions:** It is observed that they had to work 16-18 hours a day, with little time for rest or sleep.
  - The personnel are also not satisfied with medical facilities that are being provided at border locations.
  - Between 2010-2013 over 47,000 personnel at various levels in the CAPFs either took voluntary retirement or resigned. The highest attrition rate was seen in the CRPF and BSF. It was also higher among the lower levels.
- **Intelligence gathering:** There is an urgent need to improve the intelligence gathering mechanism, which should be strengthened and modernised within the

shortest possible time frame.

- **Stress among CAPF personnel:** A number of personnel among the CAPFs have committed suicide.
  - The Government of India recently told the Lok Sabha that approximately **1,200 paramilitary troopers died by suicide** in the last ten years.
  - In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic years of 2020 and 2021, more Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) personnel died by suicide.
    - Domestic problems, illness, and financial problems are some of the contributing factors to suicides.
- **Left Wing Extremism (LWE):** Casualty of security forces in LWE affected areas are taking place due to mine blasts. There is non-availability of technology to detect deeply planted mines.

### **About modernisation programme of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)**

- The scheme—Modernisation Plan-IV— for CAPFs has been approved with a total financial outlay of **Rs 1,523 crore**.
- Vision of equipping the CAPFs with modern state-of-the-art weapons and equipment as per their operational requirement, keeping in view their deployment pattern in different theatres.
- Upgraded IT solutions will also be provided to CAPFs under the scheme

### **Suggestions to reform the Central Armed Police Forces**

- **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

- **Modernisation**– While purchasing state-of-the-art equipment, the government should ensure that training needs are taken care of and if needed, it may be included in the purchase agreement itself.
  - Further the training should be a mix of conventional matters and latest technology like IT, cyber security, and cyber crime.
  - Bottlenecks in procurement should be identified and corrective action must be taken.
  - The Ministry of Home Affairs and CAPFs should hold negotiations with ordnance factories and manufacturers in the public or private sector to ensure uninterrupted supply of equipment and other infrastructure.
- **Cadre Management**-The top positions should be filled from the respective cadre of the CAPF.
  - Cadre review of all the CAPFs should be carried out within a defined timeline.
  - **Joshi Committee** recommended that top positions should be filled from the respective cadre of the CAPF.
- **Intelligence**– Agencies involved in intelligence gathering should be given autonomy in the recruitment of their personnel.
  - An effective intelligence gathering mechanism should be developed, with synchronisation between agencies and no delays in sharing of information.
- **Stress management**– Workshops on stress management should regularly be undertaken, and yoga and meditation be made part of the daily exercise for CAPF personnel.
  - The need for accommodation near the deployment of the respective force, to enable personnel to meet their family members.
- **Housing**-The Ministry of Home Affairs and CAPFs should hold regular consultations with state governments, and impress upon them the need for allocation of land for

construction of houses for CAPF personnel.

- **Technology**– The government should take up the matter with concerned research organisations, like Defence Research and Development Organisation, to develop technology to counter threats in LWE affected areas.

### **Conclusion**

The much needed reforms in CAPF will improve the overall operational efficiency/preparedness which will positively impact the internal security scenario in the country.

### **Mould your thoughts**

Q Discuss the challenges being faced by CAPF which hurts its efficiency thus impacting the internal security scenario in the country. Also suggest measures to improve the overall preparedness of CAPF. (250 words).

### **Approach to the answer**

- About CAPF and its mandate
- Issues and challenges with respect to CAPF
- Suggestions to overhaul functioning of CAPF
- Way Forward and Conclusion.