

# CAPF Forces Explained: CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISF, SSB - Roles & Responsibilities

India's **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)** play a vital role in ensuring national security, internal stability, and border protection. Managed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the CAPFs consist of **five professional paramilitary forces**—CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISF, and SSB—each entrusted with specialized duties.

Whether you're a defence aspirant, preparing for CAPF AC, or simply curious, this guide provides a **clear and in-depth explanation** of each force, their duties, recruitment processes, and organizational importance.

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## □ What Are CAPF Forces?

The **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)** are India's premier paramilitary forces responsible for:

- **Border Security**
- **Internal Security**
- **Counter-terrorism**
- **VIP Protection**
- **Industrial Security**
- **Disaster Response**
- **Anti-Naxal Operations**

They act as the backbone of national security in both peace and conflict scenarios.

The five CAPF forces are:

1. **CRPF - Central Reserve Police Force**
2. **BSF - Border Security Force**
3. **ITBP - Indo-Tibetan Border Police**
4. **CISF - Central Industrial Security Force**
5. **SSB - Sashastra Seema Bal**

Let's understand each in detail.

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## 1. CRPF - Central Reserve Police Force

### Overview

CRPF is the **largest paramilitary force in India** and the main agency for **internal security**.

### Primary Roles

- ✓ Maintaining **law & order**
- ✓ **Counter-insurgency** operations (J&K, Northeast)
- ✓ **Anti-Naxal & anti-terrorism** operations
- ✓ Election duty nationwide
- ✓ Crowd & riot control
- ✓ VIP security under Special Protection Group (SPG & Z+ categories)

### Special Units

- **COBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action)** - Anti-Naxal
- **RAPID** - Anti-riot
- **Mahila Battalions** - Women-led operations

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## 2. BSF - Border Security Force

### Overview

BSF is India's **first line of defense** along the **Pakistan and Bangladesh borders**.

### Primary Roles

- ✓ Border surveillance and anti-infiltration
- ✓ Preventing trafficking, illegal migration & smuggling
- ✓ Anti-terror duties in border regions
- ✓ Riverine and coastal security
- ✓ Providing support during natural disasters

### Special Features

- Operates **camel patrols** in Rajasthan
  - Maintains **water wings, air wings, and marine commando units**
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### 3. ITBP - Indo-Tibetan Border Police

#### Overview

ITBP is deployed along the **Indo-China border** at high-altitude regions (up to 18,000 ft).

#### Primary Roles

- ✓ High-altitude border security
- ✓ Surveillance of the Line of Actual Control (LAC)
- ✓ Disaster rescue during **earthquakes, avalanches**
- ✓ Support to mountaineering expeditions
- ✓ Maintaining internal security during elections

#### Special Training

- Mountain warfare
  - Skiing
  - Ice-craft and high-altitude survival
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### 4. CISF - Central Industrial Security Force

#### Overview

CISF provides security to India's **critical industrial and strategic installations**.

#### Primary Roles

- ✓ Protection of PSUs, industries & power plants
- ✓ Airport security (all civilian airports)
- ✓ Metro security (Delhi, Bengaluru, etc.)
- ✓ Security to nuclear & space installations
- ✓ Fire wing for emergency management

#### Important Units Protected

- ISRO
- BARC
- Airports Authority of India
- Delhi Metro Rail Corporation
- Oil refineries, steel plants, mines

## 5. SSB - Sashastra Seema Bal

### Overview

SSB guards the **Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders**.

### Primary Roles

- ✓ Prevent illegal migration & smuggling
- ✓ Intelligence-based operations
- ✓ Promoting harmony among border population
- ✓ Counter-insurgency & internal security roles
- ✓ Civic Action Programs for border communities

### Unique Feature

These borders are **open borders**, requiring specialized human-intelligence operations.

## CAPF Forces at a Glance (Comparison Table)

CAPF Force	Main Duty	Border/Area Covered	Special Units
<b>CRPF</b>	Internal security & anti-Naxal ops	Across India	COBRA, Rapid, Mahila Battalion
<b>BSF</b>	Border protection	Pakistan & Bangladesh borders	Water Wing, Air Wing, Camel Force
<b>ITBP</b>	High-altitude border protection	China border (LAC)	Mountaineering Units
<b>CISF</b>	Industrial & airport security	Airports, PSUs	Fire Wing, Quick Reaction Teams
<b>SSB</b>	Open border security	Nepal & Bhutan borders	Intelligence Wing

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## Why Are CAPF Forces Important?

CAPF forces ensure:

- National security from external threats
- Internal peace and stability
- Safe elections in India
- Protection of vital national assets
- Disaster response & humanitarian aid

They act as the **bridge between the military and state police**, maintaining balance in times of crises.

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## □ FAQs: CAPF Forces Explained

### 1. How many forces come under CAPF?

There are **five CAPF forces**: CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISF, and SSB.

### 2. Which CAPF is the largest?

**CRPF** is the largest paramilitary force in India.

### 3. Who controls the CAPF forces?

They are governed by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.

### 4. Which CAPF is best for women candidates?

CRPF, CISF, and SSB have **dedicated women battalions**, making them popular choices.

### 5. Which CAPF has the toughest training?

**ITBP** is known for the toughest **high-altitude training**.

### 6. Which is better: CAPF or Army?

Both have different roles—**Army handles external defense**, while **CAPF manages internal and border security**.

## **7. How can I join CAPF as an Assistant Commandant?**

You need to clear the **UPSC CAPF AC Exam**, followed by Physical Tests and Medical Examination.

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