

What is CAPF? Complete Guide to India's Central Armed Police Forces

The **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)** are among India's most important uniformed services, responsible for maintaining internal security, guarding borders, combating terrorism, and assisting civil authorities during emergencies.

For lakhs of aspirants preparing for **CAPF AC, SSC, UPSC, and defence exams**, understanding CAPF's structure, roles, ranks, and recruitment process is essential.

This comprehensive guide explains everything you need to know — from CAPF meaning to roles, salary, ranks, training, and career prospects.

□ What is CAPF? (Simple Definition)

CAPF stands for Central Armed Police Forces, a group of **five paramilitary forces** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.

They are responsible for **border protection, internal security, counter-insurgency, VIP security**, and assisting the **State Police** during law-and-order situations.

List of the 5 CAPF Forces

CAPF Force	Full Form	Primary Role
BSF	Border Security Force	Guards India's land borders with Pakistan & Bangladesh
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force	Internal security, riots control, counter-insurgency
CISF	Central Industrial Security Force	Security of airports, metros, PSUs & critical infrastructure
ITBP	Indo-Tibetan Border Police	Guards India-China (LAC) border in the Himalayas
SSB	Sashastra Seema Bal	Guards Nepal & Bhutan borders, counter-insurgency support

Additionally, two other major central forces are often grouped with CAPF:

- **NSG (National Security Guard)** – Counter-terrorism, hostage rescue
- **AR (Assam Rifles)** – Counter-insurgency in the Northeast

However, **officially only BSF, CRPF, CISF, ITBP & SSB** are categorized as CAPF.

Why CAPF Is Important for India

The CAPF are the **backbone of India's internal and border security**. Their key contributions include:

✓ Border Security & Surveillance

Prevent illegal infiltration, trafficking, smuggling, and cross-border terrorism.

✓ Maintaining Internal Security

Handle riots, Naxal operations, elections, civil unrest, and natural disasters.

✓ Securing National Assets

Airports, metros, nuclear plants, PSU factories, government buildings, and VIP protection.

✓ Humanitarian Assistance

CAPF teams provide rescue & relief during floods, earthquakes, and landslides.

✓ International Peacekeeping

Many CAPF personnel serve in **UN Peacekeeping Missions**, enhancing India's global recognition.

CAPF Organizational Structure

1. Head of CAPF

Each force is headed by a **Director General (DG)**, an IPS officer.

2. Cadres

- **Gazetted Officers** (Assistant Commandant and above)
- **Non-Gazetted Ranks** (Sub-Inspector, Constable, etc.)

3. Control

Operated under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, not Ministry of Defence.

CAPF Ranks (Officer & Non-Officer)

Gazetted Officer Ranks

1. **Director General (DG)**
2. **Special DG**
3. **Additional DG**
4. **Inspector General (IG)**
5. **Deputy Inspector General (DIG)**
6. **Commandant**
7. **Second-in-Command**
8. **Deputy Commandant**
9. **Assistant Commandant (AC)** – Entry-level Officer Rank

Non-Gazetted Ranks

- Subedar Major
- Inspector
- Sub-Inspector
- ASI
- Head Constable
- Constable

CAPF Recruitment: How to Join CAPF

There are two major entry routes:

1. UPSC CAPF AC (Assistant Commandant) - Officer Entry Eligibility

- **Nationality:** Indian
- **Age:** 20-25 years (with category relaxations)
- **Qualification:** Graduate in any discipline

Selection Process

1. **Written Exam — Paper 1 & 2**
2. **Physical Efficiency Test (PET)**
3. **Medical Examination**
4. **Interview / Personality Test**
5. **Final Merit List**

Successful candidates become **Assistant Commandants (AC)**—Group A Officers.

2. Non-Officer Entry (Constable, SI Recruitment)

Recruitment handled through:

- **SSC GD** (Constable)
- **SSC CPO** (SI)
- **Recruitment Boards** of CAPFs

CAPF Salary & Benefits (2025)

Assistant Commandant (AC) Salary

- **Pay Level:** Level 10 (₹56,100 – ₹1,77,500)
- Plus allowances:
 - HRA
 - DA
 - Risk Allowance
 - Ration Money
 - Transport Allowance
 - Medical Facilities

Other Benefits

- Pension under NPS
- CSD Canteen facilities
- Housing
- Leave benefits
- Job security
- Quick promotions based on merit

Training of CAPF Personnel

Training focuses on:

- Weapons handling
- Counter-insurgency
- Physical fitness
- Disaster management
- Law and human rights
- Border surveillance systems

Major academies include:

- **BSF Academy, Tekanpur**
- **CRPF Academy, Kadarapur**
- **ITBP Academy, Mussoorie**
- **CISF Academy, Hyderabad**
- **SSB Academy, Bhopal**

Difference Between CAPF, Paramilitary & Army

Feature	CAPF	Paramilitary (e.g., Indian Army Assam Rifles)
Control	Ministry of Home Affairs	Dual control (MoHA & Ministry of Defence MoD)

Feature	CAPF	Paramilitary (e.g., Assam Rifles)	Indian Army
Function	Internal security	Counter-insurgency	External & internal security
Recruitment	UPSC, SSC	Various	NDA, CDS, TES
Uniform	Distinct for each force	Slight variations	Olive green

Career Growth in CAPF

Career progression for officers:

Assistant Commandant → Deputy Commandant → Commandant → DIG → IG → ADG → DG

High-performing officers can be deputed to:

- RAW
- IB
- NSG
- Anti-Naxal Operations
- UN Peacekeeping Forces

Conclusion

The **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)** play a critical role in protecting India. For aspirants, a CAPF career offers:

- Discipline
- Leadership
- Adventure
- Financial stability
- A chance to serve the nation

Whether you aim to join through **UPSC CAPF AC**, **SSC GD**, or **SSC CPO**, CAPF promises a rewarding and honorable career.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the full form of CAPF?

CAPF stands for **Central Armed Police Forces**.

2. How many CAPF forces are there in India?

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

3. Who controls the CAPF?

The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** controls and administers the CAPF.

4. What is the highest rank in CAPF?

Director General (DG) is the highest rank.

5. Which exam is required to become a CAPF officer?

You must clear the **UPSC CAPF AC Examination** to become an officer.

6. What is the difference between Army and CAPF?

Army handles **external defence**, while CAPF handles **internal security & border guarding**.

7. What is the salary of a CAPF Assistant Commandant?

Approx **₹56,100 - ₹1,77,500** plus allowances.

8. Is CAPF a government job?

Yes, CAPF is a prestigious **Central Government Group A & B service**.

9. Are women eligible for CAPF?

Yes, women can join CAPF in both officer and non-officer roles.

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