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# CAPF (General Administration) Act, 2026: India's First Unified Paramilitary Law

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# CAPF (General Administration) Act, 2026: India's First Unified Paramilitary Law

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## WHY IN NEWS

The **Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Act, 2026** was gazetted after receiving Presidential assent in April 2026 — marking India's first unified administrative statute covering all five Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). The Act creates a common administrative framework without replacing the individual force Acts.

## WHAT IS THE CAPF (GENERAL ADMINISTRATION) ACT, 2026?

The Act is an **umbrella administrative legislation** that creates a single, unified framework for the general administration of all five CAPFs — covering service conditions, recruitment standards, inter-force deputation, promotion norms, and disciplinary procedures.

### The Five Forces Covered

FORCE	FULL NAME	INDIVIDUAL ACT	YEAR
<b>BSF</b>	Border Security Force	BSF Act	<b>1968</b>
<b>CRPF</b>	Central Reserve Police Force	CRPF Act	<b>1949</b>
<b>CISF</b>	Central Industrial Security Force	CISF Act	<b>1969</b>
<b>ITBP</b>	Indo-Tibetan Border Police	ITBP Act	<b>1992</b>
<b>SSB</b>	Sashastra Seema Bal	SSB Act	<b>2007</b>

*The CAPF Act 2026 is an **umbrella administrative law only**. It does **NOT** replace or supersede any of the five individual force Acts. BSF Act 1968, CRPF Act 1949, CISF Act 1969, ITBP Act 1992, and SSB Act 2007 **remain fully in force**. This distinction is likely to be tested.*

## WHAT DOES “UMBRELLA ADMINISTRATIVE LAW” MEAN?

An umbrella law adds a unified layer for administration without disturbing the operational and structural framework of the individual Acts.

### What the CAPF Act 2026 Does

- ❶ **Harmonises service conditions** — common pay scales, promotion timelines, and leave rules across all five CAPFs
- ❷ **Enables inter-force deputation** — unified rules for transfers and deputation between forces
- ❸ **Standardises disciplinary procedures** — common framework for charge-sheets, enquiries, and appeals
- ❹ **Streamlines recruitment** — common entry-level standards; reduces fragmentation in MHA’s administrative load
- ❺ **Central database** — single personnel management system for all five forces

### What the CAPF Act 2026 Does NOT Do

- Does NOT give any CAPF new operational mandates (those remain in individual Acts)
- Does NOT change the fundamental structure of any force (BSF still guards borders; CRPF still handles internal security)
- Does NOT give CAPFs police powers beyond what their individual Acts provide
- Does NOT merge any two or more forces
- Does NOT affect the NSG (National Security Guard) — NSG is not a CAPF

## MINISTRY AND COMMAND STRUCTURE

### Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

All five CAPFs operate under the **Ministry of Home Affairs** — both the individual Acts and the CAPF Act 2026 place administration under MHA.

### Director General (DG) Structure

Each force continues to have its own Director General. The CAPF Act 2026 does not create a single “CAPF DG” or unified command structure.

### Deployment Authority

- Deployment of CAPFs (e.g., for elections, flood relief, anti-insurgency) continues to be authorised by MHA
- State governments can request CAPF deployment through MHA

## WHY WAS THIS ACT NEEDED?

Before the CAPF Act 2026, the five forces operated under entirely separate legislative frameworks written in different eras:

- **CRPF Act 1949** — predates independence; arcane provisions
- **BSF Act 1968** — written for a force newly constituted after 1965 war
- **CISF Act 1969** — written for industrial security context
- Varying leave rules, pay scales, and promotion timelines across forces created HR management challenges

Problems this caused:

- ❶ **Inter-force deputation friction:** A BSF officer posted to CRPF operated under different service rules
- ❷ **Inconsistent disciplinary procedures:** Appeals in one force could take different timelines than another
- ❸ **Recruitment fragmentation:** Each force ran separate recruitment drives under separate rules

The CAPF Act 2026 solves the administrative coordination problem without requiring constitutional amendments or legislative repeal of the individual Acts.

## FORCES NOT COVERED

Several central forces are **not** covered by the CAPF Act 2026:

FORCE	REASON NOT INCLUDED
<b>NSG</b> (National Security Guard)	Under MHA but counter-terrorism mandate; NSG Act 1986
<b>NIA</b> (National Investigation Agency)	Investigative, not armed police; NIA Act 2008
<b>SPG</b> (Special Protection Group)	Protective; under Cabinet Secretariat; SPG Act 1988
<b>Assam Rifles</b>	Under Ministry of Defence (operational control: Army)
<b>NDRF</b> (National Disaster Response Force)	Drawn from CAPFs; not a separate force

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT — INDIA'S PARAMILITARY EVOLUTION

PERIOD	DEVELOPMENT
Pre-1947	Crown Representative's Police (CRP) → became CRPF in 1949
1965 war	BSF constituted (1965) to guard borders; formalised by BSF Act 1968
Post-Emergency	CISF expanded; ITBP formalised (1992 Act)
2001	SSB reoriented to border guarding; SSB Act 2007
2026	CAPF Act 2026: first unified admin framework

## UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS2 — Polity	Internal security institutions; MHA structure; paramilitary vs police
GS2 — Governance	Legislative framework for security forces; umbrella vs force-specific Acts
GS3 — Security	Role of CAPFs; border guarding; internal security
Prelims	Force Acts and their years; which forces are CAPFs; NSG exclusion
Interview	“Should India merge CAPFs under a single unified force?”

*Forces covered:* **BSF + CRPF + CISF + ITBP + SSB** | *Ministry:* **MHA** | *Gazetted:* April 2026 (Presidential assent) | *Nature:* **Umbrella administrative law — harmonises service conditions only** | **Individual force Acts REMAIN in force:** *BSF Act 1968, CRPF Act 1949, CISF Act 1969, ITBP Act 1992, SSB Act 2007* | *Does NOT cover:* NSG, NIA, SPG, Assam Rifles | *Does NOT merge or operationally restructure any force* | **NSG Act: 1986** (not a CAPF) | *GS2:* Polity & Governance; *GS3:* Security & Defence

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