

Senior Command Structure in CAPFs

Mains: GS II - Polity and Governance

Why in News?

Recently, there were developments in the Supreme Court, Parliament, and the Ministry of Home Affairs regarding who gets to command top positions in India's Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

What is the central institutional dispute in the CAPF leadership structure?

- **Core Issue** - The tussle over whether top command positions in the Central Armed Police Forces (BSF, CRPF, CISF, ITBP, and SSB) should be reserved for directly recruited CAPF cadre officers or occupied by Indian Police Service (IPS) officers on central deputation.
- **Key Arguments of CAPF Cadre Officers** -
- **Promotion Bottlenecks** - Earmarking top posts (DIG, IG, ADG, DG) for IPS deputation creates a severe structural glass ceiling for officers entering as Assistant Commandants (ACs).
- **Flawed NFFU Implementation** - Non-Functional Financial Upgradation (NFFU) benefits are constrained by rigid recruitment rules that require prescribed years in each rank, creating financial stagnation despite initial court orders.
- **Operational Familiarity** - Directly recruited officers who spend decades in border security and counter-insurgency zones argue they possess better field-level tactical awareness than temporary deputationists.
- **Key Arguments of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and IPS Advocates** -
- **Inter-Agency Coordination** - IPS officers provide a crucial institutional link between the Central Government and State Police establishments during internal security deployments.
- **Operational Distinctiveness** - MHA contends CAPFs perform specialized armed functions under strict command mechanisms, making them distinct from standard civil services.

- **Cross-Organizational Experience** - Senior IPS leadership brings broader policy, intelligence, and administrative exposure across states and law enforcement agencies.

Evolution of Judicial Rulings vs. Statutory Framework

Milestone	Judicial Event	Key Directive
Delhi HC (2015) and SC (2019)	Landmark Decisions on Cadre Status	Recognized CAPFs as Organised Group A Services (OGAS) and granted NFFU benefits to executive cadre officers.
Supreme Court (May 2025)	Judgment on Cadre Progression and Deputation	Mandated treating CAPFs as OGAS for all cadre purposes. Directed a progressive reduction of IPS deputation posts up to Senior Administrative Grade (DIG/IG) within 2 years.
CAPF (General Administration) Act (2026)	Parliamentary Legislation	Created an umbrella law governing recruitment and service conditions across the 5 forces. Introduced an explicit <i>non-obstante</i> clause overriding judicial decrees.
Statutory Deputation Quotas (2026 Act)	Fixed Deputation Percentages	Earmarked 50% of IG posts, at least 67% of ADG posts, and 100% of Special DG and DG posts for central deputation (primarily IPS).



What are the primary operational and structural challenges?

- **Legislative vs. Judicial Friction** - The 2026 Act's *non-obstante* clause sets up a direct constitutional confrontation over the doctrine of separation of powers and the Supreme Court's 2025 judgment.
- **IPS Deficit in Central Deputation** - While senior posts are statutorily reserved for the IPS, states are often reluctant to release IPS officers, creating persistent vacancies in command slots.
- **Demoralization of Cadre Personnel** - Prolonged promotional stagnation and perceived institutional bias at the higher echelons adversely impact morale among career CAPF officers.
- **Measures Required for Resolution**
- **Transparent Cadre Reviews** - Implement comprehensive cadre reviews to align eligibility rules with actual qualifying service rather than purely vacancy-based rank progressions.
- **Graduated Deputation Framework** - Adopt a phased approach that lowers deputation caps at the DIG and IG levels while maintaining IPS leadership at top strategic tiers (ADG/DG) for Centre-State coordination.
- **Institutionalized Lateral Entry and Merit-Based Selection** -

Establish merit-based screening for top command roles, allowing eligible CAPF cadre officers to compete alongside IPS officers for higher directorate positions.

Reference

[Indian Express | CAPF](#)

