EX-Central Armed Police Force Welfare Association West Bengal (Life in Darkness)





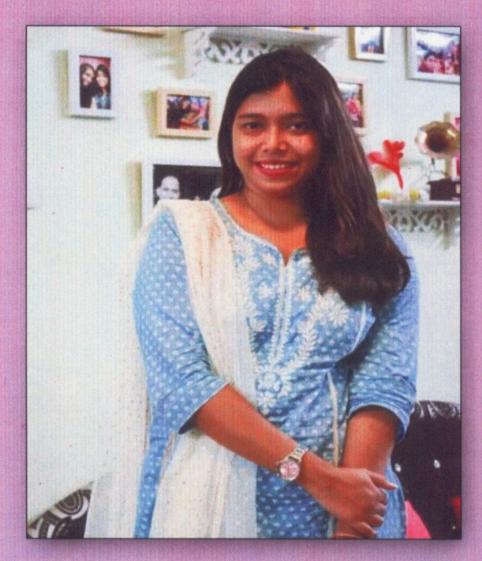








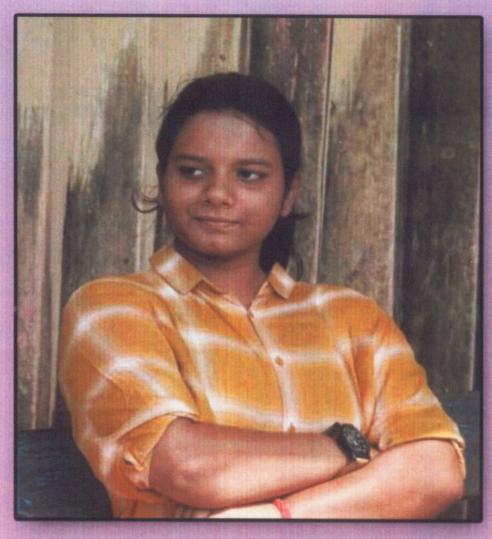
Our Gratitude and Salute.



-Sushmita Bhattacharya

We are immensely grateful to this lady, who have felt our pain, our distress and have spoken up in our favor. In spite of her rigorous schedule, she spared her valuable time for us and wrote this article. We are very thankful to her and our organization salutes this great lady. We wish her a glorifying life ahead.

Our Special Thanks.



-Neha Sharma

Our special thanks to her, who has put tireless effort in initiating and decorating this book and her honorary contribution, is immeasurable. We wish her success in life. It is our appeal to her, to be by our side in future.



Dear friends ex CAPF Welfare association WB is formed to take care the welfare of all retirees of CAPF personnel belongs to ASSAM RIFLES, CRPF, ITBP, SSB, BSF and CISF under Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt of India. All the above CAPF were raised one by one as per requirement.

- Assam Rifle: It came into being in 1835 as CACHER LAVY by the British Government to protect the Tea Estates which was later on renamed as Assam Rifle to deal with insurgency activities in Burma border now Myanmar border.
- ERPF: It came into existence from 27th July 1939 as Crown Representative Police by British Government. After Independence, it was renamed as Central Reserve Police Force wef 28th December 1949.
- ➤ ITBP: After Chinese aggression in 1962, ITBP was raised on 24th October, 1962 to deal with Indo Tibet border, now Indo China border.
- SSB: After Chinese aggression SSB, known as Special Service Bureau came into existence in November 1962 to deal with Pakistan, China, Myanmar and Bangladesh border for special work. In 2001, renames as Sashtra Seema Bal and deployed in Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan Border.
- **BSF**: After Pakistan war in 1965, BSF was raised on 1" December, 1965 and deployed in West and East Pakistan and Indo-Bangladesh Border. Now Indo-Pakistan and Indo-Bangladesh Border.
- ➤ CISF: It came into being in 1969 to protect Government installations and vital Industries. Now covers all Airports also.

In addition to the assigned duty, all CAPF personnel are also deployed in any emergency duty as required by the Central Government.

All the personnel are well trained and are first responder of any threat. They are deployed in most hazardous life risks, difficult terrain and hostile conditions. A lot of personnel died every day due to casualty, injury, illness and accidents but after retirement they are the most neglected. So, Ex-CAPF Welfare Association was formed in different States to raise the demands to the Central Government and simultaneously the State Government to minimize the sufferings. A short note is projected accordingly.

Jai Hind, Jay CAPF.

Sh. Amiya Kumar Nath,
President,
Ex. CAPF Welfare Association, WB.



Recently, during a question-answer session of Parliament, an eminent minister was asked if Central Government is considering OROP, for Paramilitary personnel which includes a larger portion of the personnel of National Security Guard(NSG), National Disaster Response Force(NDRF) and Special Protection Group(SPG) besides, the personnel of BSF, CISF, CRPF, ITBP, SSB & Assam Rifles. While replying, the minister said, that as these personnel are governed by the CCS rule, so, OROP is unlikely for them. We want to ask every member of the Parliament, that our men have sacrificed their life in safeguarding the Parliament. Is it very likely, to govern these force personnel by CCS rule? If the members of the Parliament cannot establish a separate board instead of CCS, then what is your purpose to hold the position? Only to reply? Or to reform? Our men, equipped with arms, ammunitions, mortar and special equipments, safeguarding the nation's border and maintaining the integrity of the nation by indulging themselves in fierce gun battle with terrorists and underground outfits, performing every duty at par army. Is it likely, to govern them by CCS?

Is it likely, to take 24 hours of duty from these men, who are governed by the CCS rule?

Throughout their entire service life, we have never got the opportunity to caste our vote for the democracy. The lower rank personnel of these forces are neither provided with a trade union nor a platform for them to raise their voice. Is it very likely for CCS?

Innumerable death toll, countless disabilities of these force personnel while combating with the miscreants. Is it very likely for CCS?

Throughout the line of control, frequent bomb shells and firing, from the counterpart are faced by the lower rank personnel of these forces. Is it very likely for CCS?

Throughout the service life, we wear the badge, encrypted-"Duty unto Death" and have experienced many vicissitudes in life. We felt, at every step that, Uncertainty of life is the only Certainty. With the time, at the age of 45 to 50 years, our strength both physical and mental decays, and no longer permits for these hazardous and rigorous service. With a little hope, of living a life in peace, many of our men opts for voluntary retirement and unknowingly, we sank into a "Life in Darkness".

Even after bearing so much of pain, disparity and injustice, if our political leaders and the members of the Parliament are blind in serving them justice. Then is it a "Rashtra"?

Mr. Mrinal Mukherjee. General Secretary, WB, Ex- CAPF.



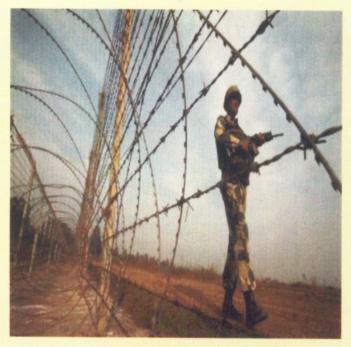
harles Bukowski famously and rightly stated in Ham Ham on Rye that "I guess the only time most people think about injustice is when it happens to them". Possibly we, the people of a so called democratic country, could not find a quote more suited to our situation. We belong to one of the largest democracies in the entire planet.

The word democracy was summed up famously by Lincoln as, "of the people, by the people and for the people". Now we need to ask who these "people" are. By "people" do we mean a section of our society that live closer to the centre and hence is visible and audible and taken into consideration? Are we excluding another mammoth chunk of the population that is residing at the margin and is not being heard? But of course the society thrives on such disparities. A country's foundation is itself built on the fact that there are people who are poor and hungry enough to carry the stones to construct the castle where they themselves will be prisoners.

The wheel of progress runs them over who paved the road of progress. How does a king protect his throne? - By convincing the fellow human beings that he is better than them. How does a rich man stay rich? - By making others to stay poor. The equation of power is simple. Keep it a one-way traffic. Sponge off things of others and get bloated.

We are going to talk about one such section of our country that has never managed to find a mouthpiece. They are the ones who have been carrying on their shoulders the burden of our progress since the inception of independent India. They are the ones who we look at through the rolled down windows of

our luxury vehicles as we pass by hilly mountain roads on our cherished vacations with our beloved families. We see same lonely faces, surfaces as solid as frozen lakes on a winter morning; desperation hidden deep beneath. We are here to talk about them. They are commonly known amongst us as the Paramilitary forces of India. However, the specifications differ and we need to get the specifications right. It is high time we identify correctly those who provide us with the certainty we enjoy without gratitude.



The term "paramilitary forces" in India has not been defined in any acts or authorities officially. However, they are currently referred under the Indian Home Ministry from March 2011 as Central Armed Police Forces. Within this bracket falls the following forces-

Central Reserved Police force.



Border Security Force.



Indo-Tibetan Border Police.



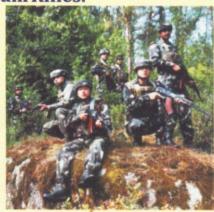
Central Industrial Security Force.



Sashastra Seema Bal



* Assam Rifles.



An approximate of 8.5 lakhs personnel are recruited in the above mentioned sectors and there is very little that has been said about these 8.5 lakhs people. It is now the time we should know who they are and listen to what they have to say.

To begin with, we will have to understand who they are and where they come from. Most young men, who join the BSF or the CRPF or such similar forces, hail from financially weaker, impoverished backgrounds.

Poverty is one of the factors propelling them to choose this life of hardship. The other one is the desire to serve the land they are born into. As Indians, we grow up with patriotic, nationalist ideologies as planted inside us meticulously by state sponsored tools like text books and schools. We are taught to hold sacred the notion of patriotism. These ideologies drive young men into joining these forces where they would be required to internalizing this idea of patriotism with no questions asked. Moving on, they join these forces where they are put through rigorous and strenuous training process. They undergo vigorous physical discipline, emotional and psychological schooling- all aimed towards equipping them to deal with extreme hardships. The process itself is one excruciating journey. Slowly and meticulously they are stripped off all humane weakness. They are initiated into a world to male believe where they look at themselves as a part of the Indian Armed Forces or call themselves Indian Soldiers. The irony of the situation is that despite putting themselves through rigorous hardships, they never, are given the same stature of that of Indian Army. They are never recognized as part of Defense. They remain civilians; civilians who have been put through long drawn, exquisitely painful military training.



BSF personnel on their training.



Personnel on their harsh training.

These young men join their ranks with hopes for a better future. Their naïve hearts aspire and strive for excellence. They are trained for war; they are trained to handle weapons.



Personnel ready for combat.

Right from the beginning they are made to believe that they belong to Indian force and that they would be given the highest honor of fighting for the nation. These raw, promising young bloods are molded into shapes suited to obey their commanders. Their identities itself is one of illusion and make believe. They never belong to the Army. They can never belong to the Civilians either, that leaves them in between space. We could call it a "no man's land".

Putting aside the question of identity, now let us look closely into their journey that begin after their induction. For most people living inside the privileged cocoon of comfort and amenities, the life of these men fall nothing short of nightmare.

Far away from the gleaming city lights, from the bustle of life in towns and suburbs, from the warmth of home and hearth, they spend their endless days and countless nights in solitude unimaginable to most of us. They are deployed to the remotely parts of the country- varying from dense forest and high altitudes to dry deserts and forested wilderness.



Border Security Force performing their duty of safeguarding in dense jungles.



Personnel serving the nation in high altitudes.



Paramilitary forces in dry deserts.



Personnel in their duty

They guard our borders under extreme weather conditions. Somewhere it's freezing cold; somewhere else it blazes and burns. Now we need to ask ourselves that what a man need for survival. The answer would be that the basics are required for any man to survive. These basics include food, accommodation, clothing and companionship. These men are provided with none of the above. Meals at these places are rudimentary and absolutely basic. Transporting and supplying proper provisions to these areas are extremely difficult. As a result, they are often deprived of proper food- the most elementary of man's basic needs. Communication and transportations both are usually terribly sketchy in these areas. Needless to say, their accommodations are severely devoid of every modern amenity. They cannot even hope to lead a normal life like others. They live in these wilderness and from far away observe the stream of life going forward, while they guard and secure our borders. They can never get married, start a family and enjoy a homely life. Their days are spent either at duty or getting themselves ready for the same. A peaceful undisturbed sleep is a luxury for many of them.



BSF jawan Tej Bahadur Yadav was dismissed after his video alleging bad quality food was being served to jawans on border duty went viral.



While We Complain About Lack Of Comfort, Here's What Rest Time Looks Like For Our Soldiers.

Extreme loneness engulfs their existence. Constant vigilance and alertness keep them at their loss. Life, as they know it, is something we cannot envision from our sheltered existence.

These CAPF-"jawans" are not only deployed at the borders, rather they are called upon every time there is a calamity or a crisis in the country. Be it an earthquake, a flood, a draught or a tsunami. Every time a bridge collapses or a landslide disrupts communication, these men are summoned to handle the situation. They work relentless for the nation, for its people. Nowadays they are even deployed at the election booths. They are the ones who provide securities to the Ministers and VIPs. They are used and abused in any way their authorities please. They are reeling under extreme work pressure. While the rest of the country celebrates festivals with their families, these men stand tall at their posts, away from the lights of deepavali or the sweets of Id-ud-Jaha.



Paramilitary forces rescuing people in flood.



Paramilitary forces providing food to the flood victims.



BSF personnel on polling duty.

During the formation of these paramilitary forces, the scenario of the country was different. There were not so many fragmented bodies disrupting the internal peace and quiet. However, since then, India as a nation has gone through sea changes. Gradually, with passing times, the political, social and external relations of India has changed. The rules and regulations of the paramilitary, however remained the same. Post Independence, a huge number of militant outfits were created and raised inside our country. Jammu & Kashmir as well as the Eastern states have underground outfits. A large portion of UP, MP, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal have Maoist infested areas and these factors are continually fighting guerrilla war. Who bears the burnt and attacks of all these terror and militant attacks? The first line of defense, i.e., the CAPF. Every year they are slaughtered like animals at the hand of the militants while the Government

snoozes.

The 40 CRPF jawans got martyred in Pulwama attack. The mutilated bodies of our soldiers being carried.

Since 1986,more than 30,000 jawans got martyred and a lot more became disabled during combat. The battle of the militant & fringe groups is against the Government, but this raging war has become a part of life for the BSF jawans. They lead a life that is debasing and bestial against the backdrop of a continual and persisting struggle.

To add to their woes, they are victimized by their own authorities. Corruption in the upper management prevents them from having any semblance of stability. Many senior management

uses them as pawns. Most of the times, they are abjectly used as personal servants. They are shifted at the whims of their senior officers. They do not even posses the right to question these unfair practices. All they can do is put up with every evil bestowed upon them and go on with their duties.



One of the many soldiers who while fighting with the militants got disabled, lost his employment and is also deprived of any facilities.



The 40 CRPF jawans got martyred in Pulwama attack. The mutilated bodies of our soldiers being carried.

Let us now take a look at their career prospects. The situation is grim. The jawans from lower ranks of the order hardly have a scope of career progression. They can never hope to rise high in their careers. Throughout the span of 20-25 years of relentless service, they are hardly given the opportunity for promotion. So, they are doomed to spend their youth, bravery, energy and dreams on a dead-end job that does not allow them to aspire and excel.

Now the question of identity has to be repeated once again. Does wearing an olive green makes you a part of the Indian Army? The answer is in negative. The CAPF are never given the opportunities and the benefits enjoyed by the army personnel. The disparity is gaping and wide. We only need to look closer and we can see the glaring injustice of the system.

In Indian Defense Service, there is provision for premature retirements and there are many compensatory benefits entailed with it. They are provide with ex- servicemen reservations in Government jobs. They are provided with the benefits of OROP and several other social and economical benefits aimed at making

their retired life comfortable. In case of attaining

martyrdom in service of the country, their families are provided with jobs and financial compensations. The picture is terribly different when it comes to CAPF. The CAPF jawans work under extreme conditions. Once they cross the threshold of fifty, it becomes impossible for after retirement working them to cope with



as a security guard in private sector

such extremities, both physically and mentally. They are then presented with two choices. They can resign from the post and go home or they can continue with their services which they are no longer capable of performing with equal efficiency as before. As a result, they are faced with constant criticism and humiliation from their senior management. Age becomes a huge and crucial factor in active service. Once they are past their primes, they can never be equal to expectations. Thus they basically are compelled to take the first option of resigning. However they do not get any benefits that Defense personnel do. They have no reservations in government jobs, no assured medical assistance for future emergencies. They are treated at par with any other civilian. They are sent home with a pension. Dismissed and disgraced most of them opt for menial jobs in private sectors.

The most disgraceful part is that in case of death during service, the martyred jawan's family is not even properly compensated for. A man gives up his life for the country but the Government does almost

next to nothing to secure the future of the family he leaves behind. If a jawan is disables or crippled during service, he is sent home as "medically unfit" with nothing but a pension. The government shrugs away all responsibilities. The disabled man leads a life of darkness in abject poverty and pain. They shed their blood for the nation. They lose their limbs; they give up the best years of their lives. In return, they are treated with cruelty, disparity and injustice. Despite everything they go through, the Government has never shown the goodwill to treat them at par with the defense personals. In last fifteen years, more than a lakh CAPF jawans have opted for VRS after the completion of minimum 20 years of service. Do we ever ask why these men are resigning from their jobs and going home with a meager pension? No one ever tried to find out the reason why these jawans are pushed to desperation. so much so that no option but to quit. Depression and suicides have been prevalent among the CAPF. No efforts have ever been made to examine the cause and bring relief to them. Politicians are now using the attacks on them to garner votes. The dead jawans are invoked in political speeches to manipulate the emotion of common people. The ,martyred soldiers have become pawns in the game of gaining political vantages.

In a civilized, welfare state, it is hard to believe that such atrocities, such unfairness, such injustice exists. Yet they do exist. It is a failure of the entire system. It is a failure we need to recognize. When cruelty happens to people far removed from the centre it goes unseen. What good is fighting the outside enemy when the evil resides within? The CAPF jawans are living proofs of a systematic exploitation which is endorsed by Government and politicians. The horror of their situation can never be fully perceived by an outsider.

We will end this article with a free question. Who are these people serving in BSF, CRPF and similar other forces? Are they really civilians? Have they not endangered their lives for the safety of their countrymen? Are their sacrifices not good enough to give them the same status as those in Indian Armed Forces? Do they not deserve a life with promises and hopes of respect, security and dignity? Are we going to let politicians use our young jawans as political baits? History will not judge us leniently if we cannot stand in solidarity with these men who ensure our safety and well being each day and everyday.

Having discussed at length the sad state of affairs, we need to ponder upon the plausible, reasons behind the same. First of all, the problem of representation. These people need a mouthpiece that belongs to

them, and not to the higher scale of the hierarchical structure. They need a representative that can actually feel the sad plight from the inside and not just sit on a pedestal and has a bird's eye detached vision. If this is democracy, why are they being denied the right to form an union?

If this injustice is so pervasive, then why do we still call ourselves a welfare state? There is a civic society in country upon which lies the onus of voicing for the people at the margins. Sadly, in case of these people forming the first line of defense, they are eerily silent. Their silence, however, is the loudest proof that the scale of justice has been tipped against these unfortunate souls far beyond repair.

The first and foremost reform would be to provide them with a platform. A platform where people from the inside of CAPF, people from the lower section of the order can unite and speak for their rights.

The internal corruption inside the CAPF needs to be addressed and acknowledged. Power should be de concentrated from the top. Lastly, we would take a look at the charter of demand prepared by them for the much needed Reformation in the force. They are as follows:

- One rank one pension.
- Restoration of old pension scheme.
- Ex-Serviceman status.
- Paramilitary service play.
- CSD Canteen instead of police canteen.
- CGHS dispensary in every city.
- CAPF Welfare board& grievance redressal cell in every state.
- Separate coach in every train for CAPF Personnel.
- Director General of Paramilitary forces must be from cadre only and not on deputation from IPS cadre.

We are going to conclude with an appeal. A desperate appeal to the thinking society of the country to kindly mull over the situation presented before you in the article. The government would only lend ear to an appeal when it becomes a roar. A roar too difficult to ignore. We need your voice and your support to save young promising youths of the country from a destiny of despair. As we began , injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Do stand up in solidarity with us and join us in our journey. It is a difficult path to walk on but the dawn awaits us on the other side. We believe, we shall overcome.



Role Of Media.

The fertile soil of India, has given birth to many intellectual minds and great scholars, but hardly anyone knows or depicts the pain of the paramilitary forces. The citizens of India are oblivious to their pain and struggle. Thus, the only source to know them is the **media**. News channels and newspapers represents them as equivalent as the army personnel but no one throws light to their hellish life. Consequently, most of the citizens including the politicians, ministers and far famed personalities acknowledge them as Army.





These reasons also pushes the lives of the lower rank personnel of these forces into utter darkness.

Nowadays, on every occasion and on every disputea debate is organized or staged by every news channels. Inspite of numerous casualties and uncountable attacks on our

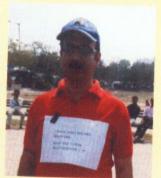
first line defense, none of these channels have taken any initiative to picturize their struggle and pain. Sadly enough, these channels have never given an opportunity to the lower rank personnel to represent or speak up about their reality.

After all these, National Geographic Channel have tried to picturize the life of the BSF personnel up to a certain extent very recently through a short documentary film- "BSF- India's first line of defense", which is appreciable.

"We want Answers!"

Our veteran personnel of the paramilitary forces, who have opted voluntary retirement. We want answers to these questions-

throughout the country"Martyr! Martyr! Martyr!
",but the government has
not yet declared them as a
martyr. Later or sooner, the
government will be bound
to declare them as martyr,
but the question is who are
they who fought shoulder
to shoulder with the "
m a r t y r e d " i n a
battleground and either



became disabled or somehow survived the battle. How will they be recognized?- as a civilian? Please stop mocking.

"Those who die are martyrs. Who are they that survive?"

After the deadliest attack on our security force at Pulwama, the entire nation marched on the roads with candles and placards. But, the truth is, before and after the Pulwama attack, numerous persons of security forces have died in the battlefield, but nobody as well as the government forgot their supreme sacrifice.



It proves, their pain is hypothetical. So, our appeal to our fellow countrymen

"Beforegivingthem shoulder, declare them as soldiers."

Everyone knows. attack from inside or outside of our nation is to destroy our democracy. Even terrorists attacked our Parliament to kill our honourable leaders. In every cases we saved our leaders to save the democracy. But throughout their life, either in service or after retirement, we never noticed what the democracy actually is.



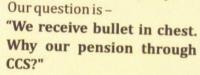
"We save democracy, why dealt with undemocratically?"

This is first time in our history, that the corpses of soldiers in the Pulwama attack terribly used for begging votes. It is very shameful. Our advice to every political party is-

"Before advertising them as soldiers in the media, declare them soldiers in its rightful sense."

"Stop discrimination against paramilitary."

Recently, during question-answer session of Parliament, an eminent minister of home affairs defended them for denying one rank one pension to retired CAPF personnel that they are governed by the Central Civil Service rules (CCS).

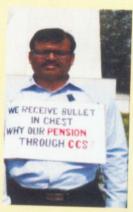


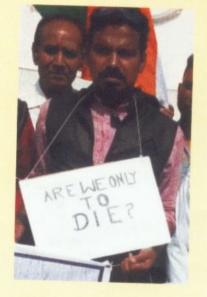
After every incident, momentarily, the word reverberates in the air," Martyr! Martyr! Martyr!", but nobody in this country are raising voice for the colleagues of such martyrs.

"Are we only to die?"

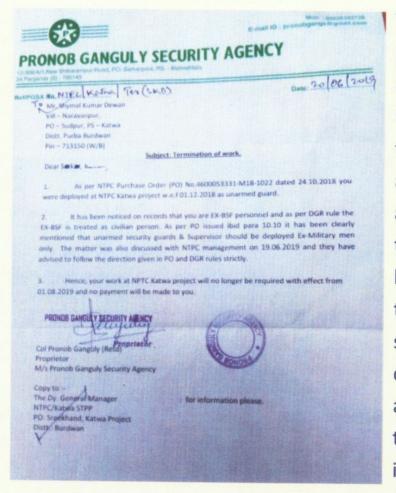








A COMMON AND WIDESPREAD EXPLOITATION.



This has been a common practice by these security agencies, that take duty from us for prolonged period of time, when necessary and abruptly and absurdly issues a termination letter claiming that we are not ex-servicemen but civilians. On this ground, they are purposely creating situation of exploitation. The dealing had of these security agencies are being bribed for their service. Several other institutions such as banks etc., our men are performing the

duty of security guard or arm guard, but when they are recruiting for these posts permanently, they are not even considering our men, as ex-service men. We consider such act as moral exploitation.

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION **Ex-Central Armed Police Force(West Bengal)**

Respected,

Plight full circumstances compelled us to make you acquainted with the injustice and disparity suffered by CAPF personnel. Their entire shelf-life is dedicated safeguarding our nation's border, gun battle with the militants, Maoists and other underground outfits. Their olive green dress brings confidence to the civilian at the time of catastrophe. Politicians, ministers, institutions are guarded by them and also maintenance of law and order as well as conducting peaceful election throughout the country at their shoulder. To perform and maintain these services, approximately 35000 personnel made the supreme sacrifice and numberless became disabled. Those who are on duty always equipped themselves 24 hours with arms and ammunitions. Hazardous climatic condition is also a threat to their life. Under the pressure of these harsh circumstances, with a little hope for the survival, more than a lakh personnel have opted for voluntary retirement and have compromised with the menial life. Even after sacrificing everything in the line of duty, they are governed by the rules of central civil service. Are they civilians? Are the performing only 8 hours of duty in a day? Are they provided with employee union to uphold their needs? Where is the platform for the lower tier personnel of these forces to speak up? Even before the inception of militancy and extremist activities, they were governed by CCS, but for prolonged time militants are equipped with modern weaponry and wily stratagem. They want to destroy our democracy, so they are attacking and slaughtering our first line of defense i.e., paramilitary personnel. Now war is incessant for the paramilitary forces. But alas! In the present scenario the newspapers and the news channels are depicting them as if they are the defense personnel. Most of the political leaders and the general public of our country are actually in darkness or unaware of the fact, that according to the government rules, these forces are not considered as army but civilians.

So, on behalf of all the paramilitary forces, we request you humbly to elevate the question of our identity in the Parliament and to consider our demands as mentioned below-

- ✓ One Rank One Pension.
- ✓ Establishment of separate board for CAPF instead of CCS.
- ✓ Ex-serviceman status.
- ✓ CSD canteens instead of police canteen.
- ✓ CGHS dispensary in every city.
- ✓ CAPF Welfare board and grievance redresser cell in every state.
- ✓ Restoration of old pension schemes.
- ✓ Separate coach in every train for CAPF personnel.

MOVEMENT BY THE EX-CAPF WELFARE ASSOCIATION OF WEST BENGAL.





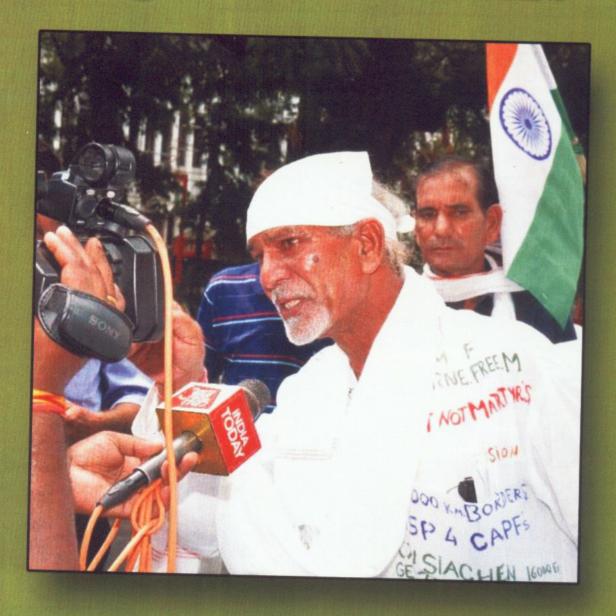








Special Thanks!



We are very thankful to Mr. Ranbir Singh, General Secretary of Confederation of Ex- Paramilitary forces Welfare Association(COEPMFWA), to raise the voice very strongly in New Delhi as well as throughout the nation.

Special Thanks!



We are very thankful to Mr. P.S. Nair, one of the founder member and general secretary of All India Central Para-Military Forces Ex-Servicemen Welfare Association(AICPMFEWA), for raising voices in Delhi and Southern States.