



Administration of Assam Rifles

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Why in News

Recently, the Delhi High Court has directed the Centre to take a decision on the issue of **bringing Assam Rifles out of the dual control of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD).**

Key Points

- **Background:**

A petition was filed by the **Assam Rifles Ex-Servicemen Welfare Association** seeking direction to the government for **placing Assam Rifles under one control**, preferably under the MoD.

- **Issue:**

- The **administrative control of the Assam Rifles is with the MHA** and the **operational control of Assam Rifles rests with the MoD.**

This duality of administrative control and operational control leads to **problems of coordination.**

- The objectives and functions of Assam Rifles are that of military and paramilitary force and considering it anything less than that **is arbitrary, unreasonable and in violation of the rights of Assam Rifles personnel.**
- There is a **disparity in the pay scale** between the Assam Rifles personnel operating alongside the Army on similar duties.

- **Delhi High Court's Direction:**

- The issue has been **pending for nearly three years** and now the **Centre should resolve it within 12 weeks with cooperation** from all the stakeholders.
- It noted that "The matter **involves servicemen/ex-servicemen and whose interest is not only to be paramount** but is proclaimed from various platforms of the Government, to be paramount".

- **Centre's Stand:**
 - The in-principle decision, that Assam Rifles like other **Central Armed Police Forces** (CAPFs) **should come under the exclusive control of MHA**, appears to have already been taken but the final decision has not been made official yet.
 - The Centre has asked for a period of **further six months** as the process has been **affected by the Covid-19 pandemic**.

Assam Rifles

- Assam Rifles is a **Central Paramilitary Force** under the **Central Armed Police Forces**.
- It came into being in **1835**, as a **militia called the 'Cachar Levy'**, to primarily **protect British Tea estates and their settlements** against tribal raids.
- It significantly **contributed to the opening of Assam region to administration and commerce** and over time it came to be known as the **“right arm of the civil and left arm of the military”**.
- **Major role post-Independence:**
 - Conventional combat role during the **Sino-India War 1962**.
 - Operations in a foreign land as part of the **Indian Peace Keeping Force to Sri Lanka** in 1987 (**Operation Pawan**).
 - Peacekeeping role in the North-Eastern areas of India.
- In November 2019, **MHA proposed to merge it** with the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)**.
 - ITBP is a specialized mountain force, raised in October 1962.
 - It is deployed on border guarding duties from **Karakoram Pass in Ladakh to Jachep La in Arunachal Pradesh** covering 3488 km of Indo-China Border.

Source: TH