Military Reforms

Why in news?

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The government has approved a host of reforms in the military, with proposals to cut excess deployment and improve financial management.

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Shekatkar committee:

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- Defence Minister has approved most of the proposals of a committee of experts, headed by Lt. Gen. D.B. Shekatkar (Retd), constituted by the Defence Ministry.
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- The committee, set up in 2015 **to recommend measures to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure of the armed forces**, has submitted its final report in December 2016.
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What the committee recommends?

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- **Savings**: The committee has said that if its recommendations are implemented over the next five years, the government can save up to Rs 25,000 crore from the current expenditure.
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- Most of the recommendations are measures to **cut down excessiveness in the Army** to make it lean and agile and increase coordination among the three Services.
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- If the proposal to reduce deployment of active-duty soldiers in avoidable postings were to be implemented, retired officers and jawans will replace serving personnel in the running of the National Cadet Corps (NCC).

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- **Defence budget**: The panel has recommended a **roll-on defence budget** to have enough capital expenditure available for modernisation as against the present practice of surrendering unspent capital budget at the end of each financial year.
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- **Transparency**: The committee has recommended a **performance audit** of the role of non-combat organisations under the Defence Ministry.
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- **Manpower**: The committee has suggested downsizing or rationalisation of manpower in these organisations, which can lead to significant savings.
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- Another recommendation is the setting up of a **joint services war college for training middle-level officers.**
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- **NCC reforms:** Comprehensive reforms in the running of NCC could be rolled out over the next few years.
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- Progressively, the NCC could be run by re-employed or on-contract ex-service personnel.
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- The NCC will be transferred out of the Defence Ministry to the HRD Ministry.
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Source: The Hindu

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