Police Reforms – The Challenges

Why in news?

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- Union Cabinet has envisioned massive funds for upgrading the security infrastructure of states.
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What is the roadmap?

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- An umbrella scheme for ‘Modernisation of Police Forces’ has been proposed.

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- Over the next 3 years, centre plans to contribution Rs.18,600 crores which is 75% of total & the states will pitch in the rest.
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- These funds will be used for enhancing weaponry of the forces along with transport, communications and forensic support among others.
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- Under the scheme, Jammu & Kashmir, the North-eastern States and those affected by Maoist violence are to receive special focus.
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Does increased weaponry mean better policing?

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- While, Naxal violence is on the decline since 2013 but a 122% increase in violent neutralisation of ‘Maoist’ has been reported.
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- Maoist arrests & arms recoveries have also increased, indicating that leftist unrest is still strong.
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- Whether further militarising of police could address the probolem hasn’t been thought through.
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- The executive has been viewing encounters as a legitimate crime-fighting strategy, despite Supreme Court direcvtives against it.
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- There is a glaringly opacity in accounting for deaths caused by police action.
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How effective has fund utilisation been?

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- Notably, only 14% of modernisation funds were spent in 2015-16.
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- Underutilisation of existing funds and the state’s capacity to absorb huge funds needs to be studied.
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- The Union Home ministry has mandated every state to furnish an utilisation certificate for modernisation funds annually.
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- Finance Ministry has stressed that unless previously sanctioned funds are completely used subsequent funding will not be released.
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What are the structural issues?

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- It has been 11 years since the SC directives on police reforms that focused on establishing accountability.
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- While both the centre & states embrace big-ticket technical and infrastructural advancement, they still squarely snub demands greater checks and balances.
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- Only few States provide security of tenure to their police chief and key field officers.
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- Independent shortlisting of candidates for posting is also rarely done & DGPs are usually handpicked by CMs.
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- Adjudicating members on “police complaints bodies” are mostly taken force itself, disregarding conflict of interest.
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What is need?

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- This infusion of funds could enable police organisations to overcome endemic shortages of operational resources.
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- However, there is a greater need for structural reforms to democratise the police force & establish proper accountability.
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Source: The Hindu

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