The Gradual transformation of Ministry of Home Affairs

Mains : GS-II: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government

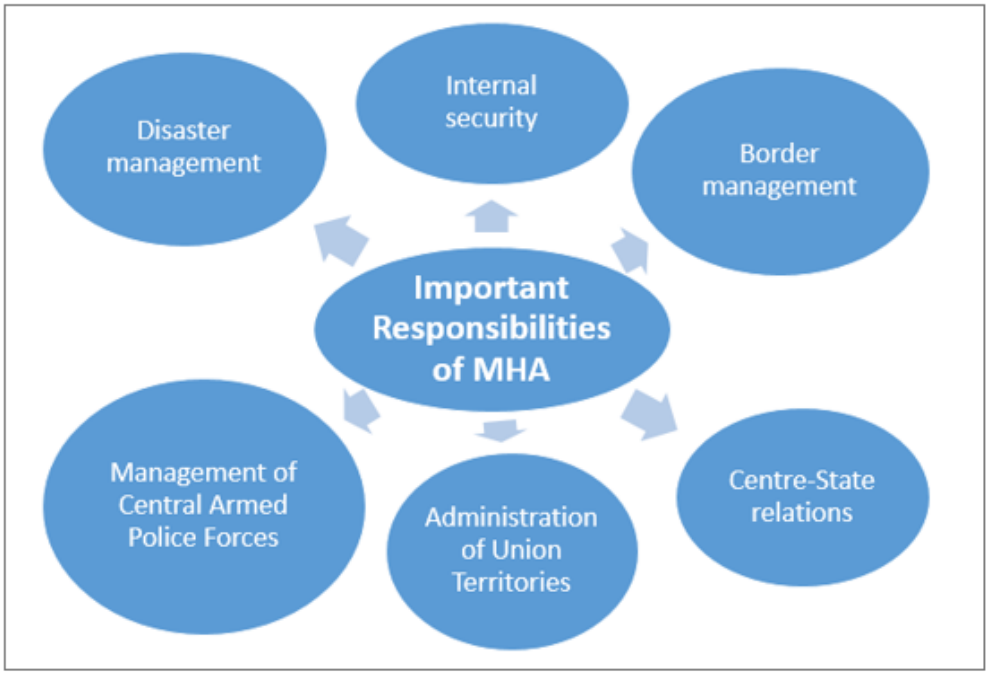
GS-III: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate**.**

Why is in News?

The recent transformation of Ministry of Home Affairs by shifting from reactionary interventions to strategic reforms has strengthened India's internal security architecture and built a future-ready governance framework.

What is basis of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)?

- **Role** – It is the *backbone of India's internal security and federal governance.*
- Unlike many countries, it integrates security and governance and thereby making it a critical pillar of national stability.
- **Functions** – It discharges multifarious responsibilities dealing with security and interstate relations.



In terms of Entries 1 and 2 of List II 'State List' in the 7th Schedule to the

Constitution of India, 'public order' and 'police' are the responsibilities of States.

- **Powers in states of India** – The Indian Constitution empowers the MHA through *Articles 355, 256, and 356*, ensuring Centre-State coordination on security matters.
- ***Article 355*** of the Constitution enjoins the Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the Government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.
- It continuously monitors the internal security situation, issues appropriate advisories, shares intelligence inputs, extends manpower and financial support, guidance and expertise to the State Governments for maintenance of security, peace and harmony without encroaching upon the constitutional rights of the States.
- **Important priorities** –India's 3 major security hotspots, i.e., Kashmir, the North-East, and Central India (Naxal areas) dominated the MHA's priorities for nearly 4 decades.

What are the factors that led to evolution of MHA's role?

- The MHA's growth has largely been *shaped by security challenges* of the day.
- **Rise of terrorism and insurgency**- It is upward trajectory since the 1980s that led to increased security spending.
- **Incapacity of states** – Punjab's militancy, Kashmir's terrorism, and Maoist violence required direct intervention, *as State police struggled* to contain these threats.
- **Reliance on central forces** - Many States were slow to modernise their police forces, increasing their dependence on the Central Armed Police Forces or the CAPFs
    - Reliance on the Rapid Action Force (RAF) of the CRPF for riot control is one example.

Central Armed Police Forces
• Assam Rifles (AR) • Border Security Force (BSF) • Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) • Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) • Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) • National Security Guard (NSG) • Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

- **Industrial unrest** – The 1970s-80s industrial unrests had some role in the creation of the CISF, particularly in West Bengal and Kerala.
- **Administrative restructuring**
    - **Separation from MHA** - North-east affairs and the Department of Justice.
    - **Addition to MHA** - Disaster Management and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) were added.

What are the challenges of MHA?

- **Narrowed focus** – It mainly dealt with insurgency, terrorism and border security, thereby other critical areas such as police modernisation, agency coordination, narcotics control, technology adoption, disaster management and federal governance have received less attention.
- **Frequent leadership changes** – It have historically affected the Home Ministry's policymaking.
    - Former Indian PM Indira Gandhi's 3rd term and Rajiv Gandhi's tenure saw 4 Home Ministers, leading to instability in internal security reforms.
- **Lack of proactive policies** – On the legislative front as well, its earlier responses were largely event-driven short-sighted and temporary.
- **Crisis ministry** – Earlier it used step in when riots erupted, insurgencies escalated, or States faced governance failures.
- Its interventions were often reactive, tackling unrest rather than preventing it through institutional reforms.
    - The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, or TADA, was enacted after the Punjab insurgency
    - The Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) after the 2001 Parliament attack
    - The National Investigation Agency (NIA) was formed after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

What are the recent reforms taken of MHA?

- **Increased budgetary allocation** – In 2019, for the 1st time, the MHA budget crossed 1 lakh crore.
- The 2025 Budget allocation *has surged to 2.33 lakh crore*, reflecting the government's focus on internal security and modernisation.
    - The expenditure on the Central Paramilitary Forces has also risen, from Rs.38,000 crore in 2013-14 to Rs.97,000 crore in 2024-25.
- **Legislative reforms** – Start from since 2019, *over 27 legislative reforms have established* a strong security jurisprudence, shaping law enforcement and national stability.
- These include transformative changes in terror jurisprudence, Kashmir integration and the criminal justice system.
- **Strengthened terror jurisprudence** – It was strengthened by amending the NIA Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, or UAPA, by *defining terrorism* in Indian criminal law.
- It also aiming to financially choke terror groups.
- **Complementary reforms** – Strengthening and expanding the NIA, creating technology databases, revamping the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC), and *promoting a 'duty to share' intelligence* culture.
- **Maintaining stability at the MHA** - It is maintained in a reinforcement of a long-term vision for internal security and governance.
- **Reforms in criminal justice system** – 3 new criminal laws (the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam) have been enacted.

- National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) was established.
- Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) was fully implemented.
    - It integrates 17,130 police stations, courts, jails and forensic laboratories
- States are now encouraged to separate investigation from forensics, further strengthening the justice system.

What are the significances of recent reforms?

- The dilution of Article 370, peace deals in the North-East, and a dual strategy of a filling up of security and development vacuums in Naxal-affected regions have collectively transformed India's internal security landscape.
- Violence across these 3 major hotspots has *declined by 70%.*
- Incidents of *stone pelting in Kashmir have declined*.
- *Insurgency in the North-East has weakened*.
- Naxal strongholds are witnessing social transformation.
- Political stability and economic growth in conflict-prone areas are observed.

What lies ahead?

- **Institutional Coordination -** Proper training can be imparted for efficient coordination between Centre, States, police, and judiciary.
- Reforms can be implemented to reduce political influence and improve efficiency.
- **Strengthening federal role –** States can be supported with funds and training.
- Joint command centers can be built to develop a shared, cooperative approach to internal security.

Reference

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