The Push for Police Reforms

Why in news?

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- DGPs from all over the country have currently gathered for an annual conference in Gwalior, and significantly, the PM would be participating.
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- Despite the importance given, significant police reforms hasn’t caught up.
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What is needed?

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- There are about 24,000 police stations and outposts across the country, and the total strength of the state police forces is nearly 2.26 million.
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- Manpower and infrastructure shortages and lack of functional autonomy are the major challenges, and calculated structural changes are needed.
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- The force needs to modernize and become accommodative of the democratic aspirations of the people.
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- The country’s democratic structure and economic progress is largely reliant on neutrality and efficiency of the police forces, which needs to be preserved.
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What is the current situation?

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- After Supreme Court’s directives, union government piloted the draft of a “Model Police Act” for reforming the force in 2006, but it was never legislated.
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- While more than a decade has passed and SC’s monitoing of the case has cooled off, the states continue to drag their feet in this issue.
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- Due to the absence of a model law, most states issued directives that ensured status quo in violation of the spririt of Supreme Court’s 2006 directives.
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- This result is utter confusion at the ground level as most state governments had issued executive orders and passed laws that weren’t very different.
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- Resultantly, the internal security situation continues to be grim and the police performance leaves are also very low.
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- While the current PM has been regularly engaging with police leaders, initiatives to reform the colonial police structure has been lacking.
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- Notably, steps that are absolutely essential to strengthen the security apparatus are not being taken and only cosmetic improvements are made.
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How has the recognition for policing been?

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- Despite constrains, police forces had significant succeeses in the past.
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- Notable among them is the crushing of multiple insurgencies on Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Tripura and the Terai regions.
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- While police duties is tough in any country, India is an exceptional case as more policemen die on the line of duty here than in the entire of Europe.
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- Yet, there has been a lack of recognition for these efforts, which is demoralising and severely constrains their performance.
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- If the police force is to meet expectations in upholding law and order, it must be insulated from external pressures and rewarded accordingly for its work.
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What are the challenges?

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- The failures of police reforms has largely been attributed to “law & order” falling under the state list.
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- As tremendous changes has take place in the domain of internal security, a concurrent role for the Centre in police matters has arisen.
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- Hence, a constitutional arrangement in this regard has to be pushed through for better centre-state coordination in policing.
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Source: The Indian Express

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