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Police Modernisation Mission: Strengthening State Policing, Technology, Investigation and Institutional Autonomy for Internal Security

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Recent Developments:

- The Union Government has informed the Supreme Court that it has begun implementing a **₹24,000-crore umbrella scheme**, the **Police Modernisation Mission (PMM)**, over the next five years to strengthen policing capabilities through infrastructure, technology, institutional reforms and capacity enhancement.
- The proposed initiative places particular emphasis on **modernisation of police infrastructure and surveillance systems**, including adequate funding for **CCTV cameras in police stations**.
- The development is significant because police modernisation remains constrained by inadequate resources, manpower shortages, outdated investigation systems, limited forensic capacity and concerns regarding operational autonomy.
- The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** continues to support State governments because police and public order are constitutionally assigned to the States, while several States face financial and institutional constraints in modernising their police forces. The MHA's Police Modernisation Division is responsible for matters relating to State police modernisation, Central Armed Police Forces, police communication and police reforms.

Constitutional and Institutional Framework:

Police as a State Subject:

- **Police** and **public order** are State subjects under **Entry 2 of List II of the Seventh Schedule**, making State governments primarily responsible for policing, maintenance of public order and prevention of crime.
- The Union Government nevertheless supplements State efforts because financial limitations and uneven institutional capacity can prevent States from providing modern equipment, infrastructure, training and technological systems.
- This arrangement reflects India's **federal structure**, where effective internal security requires both State-level operational responsibility and Union-level financial, technological and capacity-building support.

Need for Centre-State Coordination:

- Modern threats such as **cybercrime, terrorism, organised crime, financial fraud, drug trafficking and left-wing extremism** increasingly transcend State boundaries, making inter-State coordination and national information-sharing essential.
- Police modernisation therefore requires a balance between **State autonomy**, national security coordination, technological interoperability and common professional standards.

Police Modernisation Mission: Key Focus Areas:

Technology and Infrastructure:

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- The PMM seeks to improve the technological and operational capabilities of State police forces, Central Armed Police Forces and Central Government security and intelligence agencies through targeted investment and technology-led transformation.
- Modernisation includes **surveillance systems, communication networks, mobility, weapons, forensic equipment, secure police stations and digital investigation infrastructure**.
- Expansion of **CCTV infrastructure** can improve transparency, strengthen evidence collection and create an additional accountability mechanism within police stations.

Investigation and Forensics:

- Modern policing requires investigation systems capable of using **digital evidence, forensic science, data analytics and interoperable criminal databases**.
- The quality of investigation directly affects prosecution and conviction outcomes; therefore, modernisation should extend beyond physical equipment to **investigative skills, forensic capacity and specialised training**.

Digital Policing:

- The **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)** was launched in 2009 to interlink police stations through a common digital platform for investigation, data analytics, policymaking and citizen services.
- The **Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)** seeks to integrate data across **police, courts, prisons, forensic laboratories and prosecution**, thereby reducing information silos and improving the timeliness and effectiveness of investigation and trial processes.
- Integration of CCTNS with other criminal-justice databases can support **data-driven policing, artificial intelligence and machine-learning applications**, while reducing dependence on paper-based records.

Major Challenges Facing Police Forces in India:

Manpower and Workload:

- Police personnel frequently perform functions beyond core policing, including **traffic management, disaster response, crowd control and enforcement-related activities**, increasing workload and reducing the time available for investigation and community policing.
- Persistent vacancies contribute to an unfavourable **police-population ratio**, increasing pressure on available personnel and affecting response capacity.
- Police modernisation must therefore combine technological investment with **adequate recruitment, rational deployment and specialised personnel**.

Investigation Deficit:

- Investigation quality is affected by inadequate training, insufficient forensic support, limited specialised expertise and excessive investigative workload.
- The separation of investigation from routine law-and-order responsibilities can allow investigators to develop greater **professional specialisation, continuity and accountability**.

Operational Autonomy:

- Excessive political interference in transfers, postings and operational decisions can undermine police professionalism and public confidence.
- At the same time, democratic policing requires legitimate political oversight and accountability; therefore, the objective should be **functional autonomy with institutional accountability**, rather than complete insulation from elected government.

Infrastructure and Technology Gaps:

- Many police units continue to face shortages of modern vehicles, communication systems, forensic facilities, surveillance equipment and technologically enabled investigation tools.
- Uneven technological capacity among States can also create interoperability problems in tackling crimes that operate across jurisdictions.

Gender Representation:

- Inadequate representation of **women in police forces** can weaken gender-sensitive policing and may discourage victims of certain offences from approaching law-enforcement institutions.
- Greater recruitment, retention, leadership opportunities and gender-sensitive infrastructure can improve both representation and public accessibility.

Existing Government Initiatives:

Assistance to States and Union Territories for Modernisation of Police:

- The **Assistance to States and Union Territories for Modernisation of Police** scheme supplements State and Union Territory efforts by supporting modern equipment, mobility, communication systems, training infrastructure, forensic capabilities and other police infrastructure.
- The broader objective is to improve policing at the operational level and reduce dependence on Central forces for routine internal-security and law-and-order responsibilities.

Modernisation of Police Forces:

- The **Modernisation of Police Forces (MPF)** framework has existed since **1969–70** and has undergone several revisions to respond to changing policing requirements.
- Earlier umbrella arrangements have supported areas such as police stations, training centres, housing, mobility, weapons, communications, surveillance and forensic infrastructure.
- In 2022, the Union Government approved continuation of the umbrella **Modernisation of Police Forces** scheme for 2021–22 to 2025–26 with a total Central financial outlay of **₹26,275 crore**, demonstrating the continuing importance attached to police modernisation.

SMART Policing:

- **SMART Policing** seeks to combine technological capability with professional, responsive and citizen-oriented policing, covering areas such as cybercrime prevention, counter-extremism, drug-related challenges, modern equipment and capacity building.

Supreme Court and Police Reforms:

Prakash Singh Case:

- In **Prakash Singh v. Union of India (2006)**, the Supreme Court issued important directions aimed at reducing arbitrary political influence and strengthening police accountability.
- The framework included institutions such as the **State Security Commission, Police Establishment Board** and **Police Complaints Authority**, along with measures concerning police leadership and operational functioning.
- The judgment remains central to debates on **police autonomy, accountability and institutional reform**.

Paramvir Singh Saini Case:

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- In **Paramvir Singh Saini v. Baljit Singh**, the Supreme Court directed the installation of **CCTV cameras** at important locations within police establishments, including entry and exit points, lock-ups, corridors, reception areas and offices of senior investigating personnel.
- CCTV infrastructure can simultaneously serve objectives of **human-rights protection, institutional accountability, evidence preservation and transparency**.

Second Administrative Reforms Commission: Key Recommendations:

Separation of Investigation:

- The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)** recommended separating crime investigation from other policing functions and creating specialised investigation arrangements to improve professional competence.
- This approach is particularly relevant as modern criminal investigations increasingly require expertise in cyber forensics, financial trails, digital evidence and scientific investigation.

Reduction of Non-Core Burden:

- Functions such as traffic management, disaster rescue and other specialised activities can be assigned to dedicated government agencies or specialised personnel so that regular police can concentrate on **crime prevention, investigation and public order**.

Autonomy with Accountability:

- Police should receive protection from **undue political interference**, while effective mechanisms should ensure accountability for misconduct, unlawful action and poor performance.
- The ARC emphasised that democratic policing requires both **professional autonomy and legitimate governmental accountability**, rather than unrestricted institutional independence.

Merit-Based Leadership:

- Senior police appointments should emphasise **professional competence, merit and transparent procedures**, helping reduce arbitrary transfers and strengthening institutional continuity.

Citizen-Centric Policing:

- Police reforms should place citizens at the centre through improved accessibility, responsiveness, community engagement and trust-building.
- Modernisation should therefore be understood not merely as procurement of equipment but as a transformation towards **professional, accountable, technology-enabled and citizen-centric policing**.

Way Forward:

From Equipment-Centric to Capability-Centric Reform:

- The PMM should integrate **infrastructure, manpower, training, investigation, forensic science, digital systems and institutional reforms** rather than treating modernisation as equipment procurement alone.
- States should receive incentives for measurable improvements in investigation quality, response time, forensic utilisation, citizen satisfaction and police diversity.

Strengthening Federal Cooperation:

- The Union should provide financial and technological support while allowing States sufficient flexibility to address local policing requirements.

- Common standards for **data interoperability, cybersecurity, communications and digital evidence** can improve coordinated responses to inter-State and national-security threats.

Institutionalising Police Accountability:

- CCTV systems, complaints authorities, internal disciplinary mechanisms and independent oversight should operate together so that increased police autonomy is accompanied by robust accountability.
- Reform should aim to establish **rule-of-law-based policing**, where operational decisions are guided by law, evidence and professional standards.

Value Addition for UPSC:

- **Key Constitutional Linkages: Seventh Schedule**, State List, Entry 2, federal division of responsibilities and cooperative federalism.

Key Judicial Linkages: Prakash Singh v. Union of India (2006) and Paramvir Singh Saini v. Baljit Singh.