Syllabus subtopic: Salient features of the Representation of People’s Act.

News: The Rajya Sabha discussed two private members' Bills to do away with the cap on election spending by candidates and to establish a committee on foreign investment to prevent threats to national security.

Prelims and Mains focus: About the key features of the bill, role of black money and other malpractices in Indian elections, ways to address them

Context

Continuing the discussion on the amendment to the Representation of the People Act, 1951, introduced by Congress MP M.V. Rajeev Gowda in the last session, several MPs raised concerns about doing away with the spending limit of ₹70 lakh per candidate.

Concerns raised against the bill seeking removal of limit on election spending

- Increasing the limit would not strengthen democracy.
- The real expenditure on elections is higher than the limits and black money is still prevalent.
- There is money being spent on “illegitimate purposes,” including “paid news” by candidates.
- He said the current limits could be reviewed, with a separate provision for media publicity being allowed.

Meanwhile, a Bill to set up a committee on foreign investment was introduced by Narendra Jadhav.

“This Bill essentially seeks to protect our national security, while promoting foreign direct investment. This is sought to be done by reforming the process by which foreign investments are examined in the light of national security considerations,” he said.

Both Bills would be taken up again, likely in the next session.