

29-03-2024

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)

Why in News?

- The Centre has extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in eight districts of Nagaland and three districts of Arunachal Pradesh with effect from 1st April 2024.
- It has also been extended to 21 police stations in five other districts of Nagaland and three police stations in another district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Assam government has also extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 in four districts for six months starting from April 1, 2024.

More About AFSPA

- The Act came into force in the context of increasing violence in the Northeastern States decades ago, which the State governments found difficult to control.
- The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Bill was passed by both the Houses of Parliament and it was approved by the President on

September 11, 1958. It became known as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958.

- The Act empowers security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without any prior warrant. It also gives a certain level of immunity to the security forces in case of misplaced operations.
- In simple terms, AFSPA gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas". They have the authority to prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area, can use force or even open fire after giving due warning if they feel a person is in contravention of the law.
- If reasonable suspicion exists, the army can also arrest a person without a warrant; enter or search a premises without a warrant; and ban the possession of firearms.
- A disturbed area is one which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA. An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional



groups or castes or communities.

- The Central Government, or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area. A suitable notification would have to be made in the Official Gazette. As per Section 3, it can be invoked in places where "the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary".
- The Ministry of Home Affairs would usually enforce this Act where necessary, but there have been exceptions where the Centre decided to forego its power and leave the decision to the State governments.

Army Commanders' Conference 2024

Why in the News?

- Army Commanders' Conference, first for the year 2024 will be organized in hybrid mode with the conference in virtual mode scheduled on 28th March 2024 and thereafter physical mode in New Delhi on 01st and 02nd April 2024.



Indian Army Kicks Off Annual Army Commanders' Conference in Hybrid Format

More About the News

- The Army Commanders' Conference serves as a pivotal forum for apex leadership of the Indian Army to brainstorm conceptual issues, review and assess the overall security situation. It also aimed at ensuring that Indian Army remains progressive, forward-looking, adaptive and future-ready.
- A reassessment of the deployment in the Army's Northern Command as well as tri-service integration will be among the key issues to be discussed during the Army Commanders' Conference.

- The deployment changes in eastern Ladakh as well as in areas south of the Pir Panjal range in J&K will be discussed and plans are likely to be finalized in the conference.
- The sessions will be aimed at enhancing operational effectiveness, importance of fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability and investing in training and development programmes to ensure readiness for future challenges.
- The brainstorming session will also encompass issues concerning welfare of service personnel aimed at enhancing the quality of life for soldiers and their families.
- This will be followed by a meeting of the Investment Advisory Committee of the Army Group Insurance, chaired by the COAS, and attended by several experts in the field of financial management. The committee will deliberate on various welfare measures and schemes for financial security of serving soldiers, veterans and their families.

India at G20 2nd Employment Working Group Meeting at Brasilia

Why in the News?

- The two day 2nd Employment Working Group (EWG) meeting under the Brazilian Presidency commenced today in Brasilia. The G20 EWG's mandate is to address labour, employment and social issues for strong, sustainable, balanced and job-rich growth for all.

More About the News

- As India is a member of the G20 Troika, represented by Ms. Sumita Dawra, Secretary, Labour & Employment, India is co-chairing the 2nd EWG meeting, along with Brazil and South Africa.
- The focus areas for the 2nd EWG meeting is on (i) creating quality employment and promoting decent labor; (ii) addressing a just transition amidst digital and energy transformations; (iii) leveraging technologies to enhance the quality of life



for all; (iv) the emphasis on gender equity and promoting diversity in the world of employment for inclusivity, driving innovation and growth.

- On the first day of the meeting, deliberations were held on the over-arching theme of promotion of gender equality and promoting diversity in the workplace.
- The Indian delegation emphasized the need for creating inclusive environments by ensuring equal representation and empowerment for all, irrespective of race, gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic background.
- Indian delegation elucidated significant strides taken by India in promotion of (i) gender equality in the workplace and beyond; (ii) steps taken for migrant workers; (iii) promoting reemployment of senior citizens, (iv) participation in work force of the differently abled and the marginalized.

Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Samudra Paheredar

Why in the News?

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar visited Indian Coast Guard ship (ICGS) Samudra Paheredar, which is in Manila Bay in the Philippines as part of an overseas deployment to the ASEAN countries.

More About the News

- Indian Coast Guard Ship Samudra Paheredar, also known as ICGS Samudra Paheredar, is a specialized Pollution Control Vessel (PCV) operated by the Indian Coast Guard.
- ICGS Samudra Paheredar is primarily

designed and utilized for pollution response at sea. Its main mission is to mitigate and control oil spills and other environmental pollutants in maritime areas.

- The vessel was constructed by ABG Shipyard, located in Surat, India. It is a product of Indian shipbuilding expertise, tailored to meet the specific needs of coastal pollution control.
- It is stationed on the East Coast of India, based in Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. This strategic location allows for swift deployment and response to pollution incidents along the eastern maritime borders of India.
- The vessel is equipped with state-of-the-art pollution response and control equipment. This includes containment gear such as hi-sprint booms and river booms, as well as recovery devices like skimmers and side sweeping arms.
- The vessel features an integrated platform management system, which provides centralized control and monitoring of various shipboard systems.
- A robust power management system is integrated into the vessel's infrastructure, ensuring reliable and uninterrupted power supply for onboard operations, including pollution control activities.
- The vessel has the capability to accommodate one twin-engine ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter) or Chetak helicopter.

About ASEAN

- Formed in 1967, ASEAN united Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, who sought to create a common front against the spread of communism.
- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional grouping that aims to promote economic and security cooperation among its ten members: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

- The group has played a central role in Asian economic integration, joining negotiations to form the world's largest free trade agreement and signing six free trade deals with other economies in the region.
- ASEAN is headed by a chair-a position that rotates annually among leaders of member states-and is assisted by a secretariat based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

India TB Report 2024

Why in the News?

- The Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry has released the India TB Report 2024, recently.

More About the News

- India's efforts to ensure early tuberculosis detection and treatment initiation, along with a host of community engagement efforts has resulted in a decline of 16% in TB incidence (new cases emerging each year) and a 18% reduction in mortality due to TB, since 2015.
- The incidence rate in India had fallen from 237 per lakh population in 2015 to 199 per lakh population in 2022, while the mortality rate had declined from 28 per lakh population in 2015 to 23 per lakh population in 2022.

- The country has set 2025 as the target for eliminating the disease.
- According to the data released in the report, while the overall notification of TB cases has improved by over 50% in the last nine years on an annual basis, Uttar Pradesh saw the highest jump in notifications (by 21% compared to the previous year) followed by Bihar (15%).
- The Centre added that after the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) embarked on a journey towards accelerating TB elimination, guided by the National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2017–25.
- The NTEP continued providing free diagnostic services, conducting approximately 1.89 crore sputum smear tests and 68.3 lakh nucleic acid amplification tests (NAAT) in 2023.
- The Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana continued to provide financial support to TB patients, with approximately Rs 2,781 crore disbursed to approximately one crore beneficiaries.



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