

**INTERNAL SECURITY****Manipur extends AFSPA**

**IN CONTEXT:** Recently, the Manipur government extended the imposition of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in hill districts for 6 months.

**About:**

- ✓ Background & withdrawal of AFSPA: Since 1981, AFSPA has been applicable in Manipur, a former Union Territory which attained Statehood in 1972.
- ✓ AFSPA also existed in the Naga-dominated areas of the erstwhile UT of Manipur since 1958.
- ✓ Since 2022, AFSPA has been gradually withdrawn from the valley districts, which are dominated by the Meitei community, due to a “significant improvement” in the security situation.
- ✓ Rationale behind the extension: The state government stated that it opted for “status quo” in the light of the prevailing law and order situation.
- ✓ It is applicable for six months, following which it can be periodically extended by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) after assessing the situation in Manipur.
- ✓ ‘One district, one force’: The State government is now mulling a “one district, one force” deployment of security forces, for better operations.
- ✓ Other than the State police, around 40,000 Central security forces, including the army, have been deployed in the State.

**Unrest in Manipur**

- ✓ Reasons of unrest: Unrest has been brewing among the hill tribes of the state for a number of reasons.
- ✓ A major reason for the discontent has been the state government’s notices since August 2022 claiming that 38 villages in the Churachandpur-Khoupum Protected Forest area (in Churachandpur and Noney districts) are “illegal settlements” and its residents are “encroachers”.
- ✓ Following this, the government set out on an eviction drive which resulted in clashes.
- ✓ At least 175 people have been killed since ethnic violence between the majority Meitei and the tribal Kuki people erupted in the State.
- ✓ Tribal Solidarity March: March was called to oppose the longstanding demand that the Meitei community be included in the list of the state’s Scheduled Tribes (ST), which received a boost from a recent order of the Manipur High Court.
- ✓ Presence of Terror outfits: The insurgent groups, mostly operating from Myanmar, advocate the secession of Manipur from India. They are trying to exploit the current ethnic unrest in the state.

**About the Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA)**

- ✓ Origin of AFSPA: The Act in its original form was promulgated by the British in response to the Quit India movement in 1942.
- ✓ The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, enacted in the year 1958, grants extraordinary powers and immunity to the armed forces to bring back order in the “disturbed areas”.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Provisions: Under the Act, 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.
- ✓ 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 Act gives the Army powers to search premises and make arrests without warrants, to use force even to the extent of causing death, destroy arms/ammunition dumps, fortifications/shelters/hideouts and to stop, search and seize any vehicle.
- ✓ It stipulates that arrested persons and the seized property are to be made over to the police with the least possible delay.
- ✓ It offers protection of persons acting in good faith in their official capacity.
- ✓ The prosecution is permitted only after the sanction of the Central Government.

**Rationale behind imposition of AFSPA**

- ✓ Effective functioning of Security Forces: Armed Forces are deployed in counter-insurgency / terrorist operations when all other forces available to the State have failed to bring the situation under control.
- ✓ Armed forces operating in such an environment require certain special powers and protection in the form of an enabling law.
- ✓ National Security: The Act plays a crucial role in maintaining law and order in disturbed areas. Thus, protecting sovereignty and security of the nation.
- ✓ Boosting morale of Forces: AFSPA boosts the morale (mental well-being) of the armed forces for ensuring the public order in the disturbed areas as removal of the Act would lead to militants motivating locals to file lawsuits against the army.

**Arguments against AFSPA**

- ✓ Violation of the Human Rights: The exercise of these extraordinary powers by armed forces has often led to allegations of fake encounters and other human rights violations by security forces in disturbed areas while questioning the indefinite imposition of AFSPA in certain states.
- ✓ Human rights violations in AFSPA areas are not inquired into and followed by adequate action. Thus, it is against the principle of natural justice.
- ✓ Violation of the right to remedy: Section 6 of the Act “immediately takes away, abrogates, frustrates the right to constitutional remedy which has been given in article 32(1) of the Constitution.
- ✓ AFSPA was outside the powers granted in the Constitution since it was declaring a state of emergency without following the Constitutional provisions for such a declaration.
- ✓ Ineffectiveness of the Act: Critics argue that this act has failed in its objective of restoring normalcy in disturbed areas although being in existence for about 50 years.

**Way ahead:** Issue of declaration of ‘disturbed area’ status is very sensitive and may likely attract public criticism and resistance if proper care is not taken while implementing it.

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Odisha wants to have its own tiger census:**

**In Context:** After it announced a tiger census of its own, questioning the findings of the All-India Tiger Estimation (AITE) 2022, the Odisha government has unveiled how it plans to carry out the exercise.

**Key details:**

- ✓ The AITE report had said more than half the tigers Odisha had in 2016 have vanished, with one of its two notified tiger reserves, the Satkosia Tiger Reserve, left with none.
- ✓ It said Odisha has 20 tigers, down from 45 in 2006.
- ✓ The number at the other reserve, the Similipal Tiger Reserve, has doubled from 8 in 2018 to 16 in 2022.
- ✓ Disagreeing with the AITE’s methodology, the Odisha government began preparing for a census of its own.

**Odisha’s contention:**

- ✓ Odisha Forest department officials said the figures depicted in AITE-2022 might not be an accurate reflection of the presence, habitat occupancy and number of tigers in Odisha, as the sampling intensity was relatively low.
- ✓ They said though the AITE protocol mandates that the phase-I survey be carried out in all forest beats and phase-III in all potential tiger-bearing forest blocks, in Odisha, it was carried out only in limited areas.
- ✓ The state claimed a total of 733 camera traps were deployed in Odisha, as against 6,894 and 4,872 in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra respectively.

**Odisha Tiger Reserve:**

**1. Debrigarh Tiger Reserve**

- ✓ Recently, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) approved Odisha’s Proposal to declare Debrigarh a Tiger Reserve.

**About Debrigarh Tiger Reserve:**

- ✓ Located near the Hirakud dam at Sambalpur, spread over an area of 347 sq km Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the famous tourist destinations of western Odisha.
- ✓ It will become the third tiger reserve in Odisha after Similipal and Satkosia.
- ✓ It was declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 1985 and situated in the Bargarh district of Odisha near Hirakud dam (Mahanadi River).
- ✓ It finds a special mention because of noted freedom fighter veer Surendra sai. During his rebellion against the British Veer SurendraSaimade his base at ‘Barapathara” located within the sanctuary.
- ✓ Fauna: A wide varieties of animals including leopard, wild boar, bison, sambar, chital and Four-horned antelope are sighted in the sanctuary.

**2. Similipal Tiger Reserve:**

- ✓ Similipal derives its name from ‘Simul’ (silk cotton) tree.
- ✓ It was formally designated a tiger reserve in 1956 and brought under Project Tiger in the year 1973.
- ✓ It was declared a biosphere reserve by the Government of India in June, 1994.
- ✓ It has been part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserve since 2009.
- ✓ It is part of the Similipal-Kuldiha-Hadgarh Elephant Reserve popularly known as Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve, which includes 3 protected areas i.e. Similipal Tiger Reserve, Hadagarh Wildlife sanctuary and Kuldiha wildlife sanctuary.

**3. Satkosia Tiger Reserve:**

- ✓ Satkosia Tiger Reserve, Bhubaneswar comprises two adjoining sanctuaries of central Odisha named as Satkosia Gorge Sanctuary and Baisipalli Sanctuary.
- ✓ These two sanctuaries together covering an area of 963.87 sq km were notified as Tiger Reserve in December 2007.

- ✓ Lying in a transitional zone extending between the Chhota Nagpur Plateau and the Deccan Plateau, the tiger reserve exhibits endemic life forms of both biotic provinces.



**What does Odisha aim for with its own survey?**

- ✓ The idea is to have a more realistic estimation of the number of tigers in the state and of the forest blocks/habitats occupied by them, for closer monitoring and protection.
- ✓ The state government has also said it will carry out the counting more frequently than the AITE, which is done every four years.
- ✓ It claimed that because of the four-year interval, only adult tigers are counted in each cycle.
- ✓ This leads to the exclusion of sub-adults, which would have reached adulthood before the next AITE is due.

**Where will the survey be carried out?**

Except for the four coastal districts, where tigers are not known to be present, the survey will be carried out in the rest of Odisha by dividing the state into two categories: tiger reserves and forest blocks outside tiger reserves.

**How will the survey be done?**

- ✓ The survey aims to arrive at a yearly estimate of tigers through camera-trapping and DNA analysis of scats, and to prepare a tiger occupancy map for the state based on primary field data.

**Phase I:** The survey will be carried out in phases, including a preparatory phase during which secondary information about tigers is being collected from various sources, and the divisions, ranges and forest blocks to be taken up for the 'sign survey' are being finalised.

**Phase II:** The actual survey starts on the field in phase-II, as part of which information collected from secondary sources is validated on the ground. During the sign survey, indirect evidence like pug marks and scats, scratch marks on the trees, rake marks, animal kills and the alarm call by prey animals will be collected along the pre-determined trails inside a census unit. Genetic analysis of the scat samples will also be done for identification of species and sex of the big cats.

**Phase III:** After the sign survey leads to identification of beats with tiger presence, phase-III will start, with deployment of camera traps.

**Phase IV:** In the fourth and final phases, analysis of camera trap images and DNA findings from scats will be done before compilation of numbers.

**Conclusion:**

- ✓ The state government had taken a good step towards getting a more realistic estimation of big cats.
- ✓ The pugmark method will help the forest department in better deployment of camera traps, judicious deployment of forest personnel, and in creating micro plans for tiger conservation.



- ✓ The census move is welcome, but the success of it will depend on the sincerity of the forest officers during different phases of the survey.
- ✓ Instead of the four-year gap in case of AITE, the state's survey should take place annually.

**PRELIMS FACTS****1. A language spoken by only 1,600 people in regions of West Bengal bordering Bhutan is getting a dictionary.****Concerning Toto Language**

- ✓ Toto is a member of the Sino-Tibetan language family's Kiranti branch. Toto is a tribal language spoken by the Toto people and written in Bengali script.
- ✓ It is primarily spoken in Totopara, a village in West Bengal's Alipurduar district in the northeast of India. Toto speakers can also be found in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri area.
- ✓ Toto, which is listed as a severely endangered language, had approximately 1,400 speakers in 2014. Most families speak Toto at home, but their children are educated in Bengali at school, and Bengali and Nepali are becoming more widely spoken by the public.
- ✓ The dictionary is a step toward preserving the language, which has previously only been spoken, by putting its vocabulary in print.
- ✓ According to a 2018 UNESCO research, 42 Indian languages are on the verge of extinction. Less than 10,000 persons pronounced these words. According to UNESCO standards, any language spoken by fewer than 10,000 people is potentially endangered. The majority of vanishing languages come from indigenous tribal populations distributed over India.
- ✓ Language is more than just a means of communicating ideas and feelings; it also carries cultural values and indigenous knowledge. Language extinction will only lead to a reduction in cultural diversity and an increase in cultural uniformity.

**2. World Heart Day:**

**IN CONTEXT:** Every year on September 29th, World Heart Day is commemorated to promote awareness about heart disease and preventive actions that can help prevent and manage cardiovascular illnesses.

**World Heart Day 2023's theme is "Use Heart, Know Heart."**

- ✓ The World Heart Federation (WHF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) established World Heart Day in 1999.
- ✓ World Heart Day was originally observed on the final Sunday of September, with the first commemoration taking place on September 24, 2000.
- ✓ According to the World Heart Federation, World Heart Day educates people throughout the world about CVD, including heart disease and stroke, which claims 18.6 million lives each year, and promotes the activities that individuals may take.
- ✓ It tries to motivate individuals to take action by educating them on how risk factors such as cigarette use, poor diet, and physical inactivity can prevent at least 80% of premature deaths from heart disease and stroke.

**3. Global Innovation Index 2023**

**In context:** India retains 40th rank out of 132 economies in the Global Innovation Index 2023 rankings.

**About Global Innovation Index 2023:**

- ✓ It is published by the World Intellectual Property Organization.
- ✓ It is a reliable tool for governments across the world to assess the innovation-led social and economic changes in their respective countries.
- ✓ This year, the NITI Aayog, in partnership with the CII and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), is hosting, virtually, the India Launch of the GII 2023 on 29th September 2023.

**Key findings**

- ✓ The Global Innovation Index is built on a rich dataset – the collection of 80 indicators from international public and private sources – going beyond the traditional measures of innovation since the definition of innovation has broadened.
- ✓ Top 5 countries: Switzerland, Sweden, United States, United Kingdom (4th) and Singapore (5th).
- ✓ It listed India as among the 21 economies that outperformed for a 13th consecutive year on innovation relative to level of development.
- ✓ It states that India, Iran, Philippines, Turkiye, Vietnam and Indonesia are among the economies within the GII top 65 that climbed fastest in the ranking over the last decade.
- ✓ India holds top ranking within the Central and Southern Asia region for Human capital and research (48th), Business sophistication (57th) and Knowledge and technology outputs (22nd).
- ✓ Strong indicators include ICT services exports (5th), Venture capital received (6th), Graduates in science and engineering (11th) and Global corporate R&D investors (13th).

**Key facts about the World Intellectual Property Organisation**

- ✓ It works with the vision of encouraging creative activity and promoting the protection of Intellectual Property throughout the world.
- ✓ WIPO is one of the 15 specialised agencies of the United Nations.
- ✓ Currently, there are 193 members of the World Intellectual Property Organisation.
- ✓ Headquarter: Geneva

**ANSWER WRITING**

**Q. Mesolithic rock cut architecture of India not only reflects the cultural life of the times but also a fine aesthetic sense comparable to modern painting. Critically evaluate this comment. (15/1/2/12½)**

**Ans.** Depiction of animals, hunting scenes, the Mesolithic sites have also painting of social life, sexual activity, child birth, rearing of children and burial ceremony. The symmetry of artifacts, evidence of attention to the detail of tool shape, activities etc. In archaeology, rock art is humanmade markings placed on natural stone; it is largely synonymous with parietal art. A global phenomenon, rock art is found in many culturally diverse regions of the world. Indian rock-cut architecture is mostly religious in nature. It has been produced in many contexts throughout human history, although the majority of rock art that has been ethnographically recorded has been produced as a part of ritual.

**Such artworks are often divided into three forms:**

- Petroglyphs, which are carved into the rock surface, pictographs, which are painted onto the surface, and earth figures, engraved into the ground. The oldest known rock art dates from the Upper Palaeolithic period, having been found in Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa. Archaeologists studying these artworks believe that they likely had magico-religious significance.
- Singrauli is the 50th district in the state of Madhya Pradesh, which covers a region comprising of the eastern part of the Sidhi district in Madhya Pradesh and the adjoining region in Sonbhadra district in UP. Historically Singrauli belonged to the princely state of Rewa, a part of the Baghelkhand region. Singrauli has a history spanning from the emergence of prehistoric man to the present age of industrialization. It is a region with abundance of natural and mineral resources. Due to abundance of mineral resources and thermal power plants it is nicknamed as Urjanchal - the land of energy. While modern industries dominated the region today, the history of Singrauli is as colourful and interesting as its promising future.
- The Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra are 30 rock-cut Buddhist temples that span 6 centuries, beginning in the 1st century BCE. They are carved into the vertical side of a gorge located in the hills of the Sahyadri mountains. Similar to the Barabar Caves, the Ajanta Caves are situated close to main trade routes. A great deal of decorative sculpture— intricately carved columns and reliefs, including cornices and pilaster—are found here.
- The Ellora caves were built between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 10th centuries. These caves are made up of twelve Buddhist, seventeen Hindu, and five Jain rock-cut temples, excavated out of the Charanandri hills. etc.
- The Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka are a repository of rock paintings within natural rock shelters with archaeological evidences of Indian Art and Culture 3 habitation and lithic industry, from the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods through the Chalcolithic to the Mediaeval period. They are located within the designated Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary, in an area of abundant natural resources and shelter. The shelters exhibit the earliest traces of human life in India, its rock paintings are among the world's oldest.
- The topmost architectural element of a building, projecting forward from the main walls, originally used as a means of directing rainwater away from the building's walls. A rectangular column that projects partially from the wall to which it is attached; it gives the appearance of a support, but is only for decoration. A medium used to bind pigments in painting, as well as the associated artistic techniques. There are more than 1,500 rockcut temples in India, most of which are religious in nature, adorned with decorative paintings and exquisite stone carvings reflecting a very high level of craftsmanship. Bhimbetka is an ideal location to view rock paintings of mesolithic man. People really interested in this part of history, when visiting bhimbetka, must also visit places around this region where also more such specimens are available within Raichur district. Its worth it.
- The Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka are in the foothills of the Vindhyan Mountains on the southern edge of the central Indian plateau. Within massive sandstone outcrops, above comparatively dense forest, are five clusters of natural rock shelters, displaying paintings that appear to date from the Mesolithic Period right through to the historical period. The cultural traditions of the inhabitants of the twenty-one villages adjacent to the site bear a strong resemblance to those represented in the rock paintings.

**MCQs**

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| <p>1. With reference to Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), consider the following statements</p> | <p>1. It gives powers to the army, state and central police forces to shoot to kill, search houses and destroy any property that is "likely" to</p> |
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be used by insurgents in areas declared as "disturbed" by the home ministry.

2. It is of a colonial origin.
3. The Disturbed Areas Act (DAA) is the mini version of AFSPA as it confers the same powers to the armed forces to take control of the state in order to curb violence.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) **Only 3**
- d) None

2. The State of World Population Report is released by

- a) World Health Organisation
- b) United Nations Development Programme
- c) **United Nations Population Fund**
- d) UNESCO

3. Considered the following statement regarding India Ageing Report, 2023

1. Published by – United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) India, in collaboration with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS).
2. Indian population aged 80+ years will grow at a rate of around 279% between 2022 and 2050.

Which of the following statement is/are correct?

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) **Both 1 and 2**
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

4. Considered the following statement:

1. Ammonia is a pungent gas that is widely used to make agricultural fertilisers.
2. Green ammonia production is where the process of making ammonia is 100% renewable and carbon-free.

Which of the following statement is/are correct?

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) **Both 1 and 2**
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

5. Consider the following statements with respect to Travel for Life Program

1. The program is a sectoral program under Mission LiFE.
2. The program is launched by the Ministry of Culture.
3. It will be implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and the United Nations Environment Programme.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) **Only two**
- c) All Three
- d) None of the above

6. Consider the following statements with respect to India Ageing Report, 2023

1. India has the world's highest old age population.
2. Kerala has the lowest old age population in India.
3. It is jointly released by Niti Aayog and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All Three
- d) **None of the above**

7. Which one of the following is the best description of 'Manis Mysteria', that was in the news recently?

- a) It is a newly discovered medicinal plant.
- b) It is an invasive alien species.
- c) **It is a newly discovered Pangolin species.**
- d) It is a bacterial disease.

8. Consider the following statements with respect to World Heart Day.

1. Every year on September 28th, World Heart Day is commemorated to promote awareness about heart disease.
2. World Heart Day 2023's theme is "Use Heart, Know Heart."

Which of the following statement is/are incorrect?

- a) **Only 1**
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

9. Consider the following statements:

1. Toto is a member of the Sino-Tibetan language family's Kiranti branch.
2. Toto is a tribal language spoken by the Toto people and written in Bengali script.

Which of the following statement is/are incorrect?

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) **Neither 1 nor 2**

10. M S Swaminathan, father of India's Green Revolution, passes away at the age of 98

1. He is known as 'Father of India's Green Revolution.
2. He was also awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1971 and the Albert Einstein World Science Award in 1986.

Which of the following statement is/are correct?

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) **Both 1 and 2**
- d) Neither 1 nor 2