

24 September, 2024

AFSPA

Context: Manipur recently reviews AFSPA due to ongoing ethnic violence

➤ Overview:

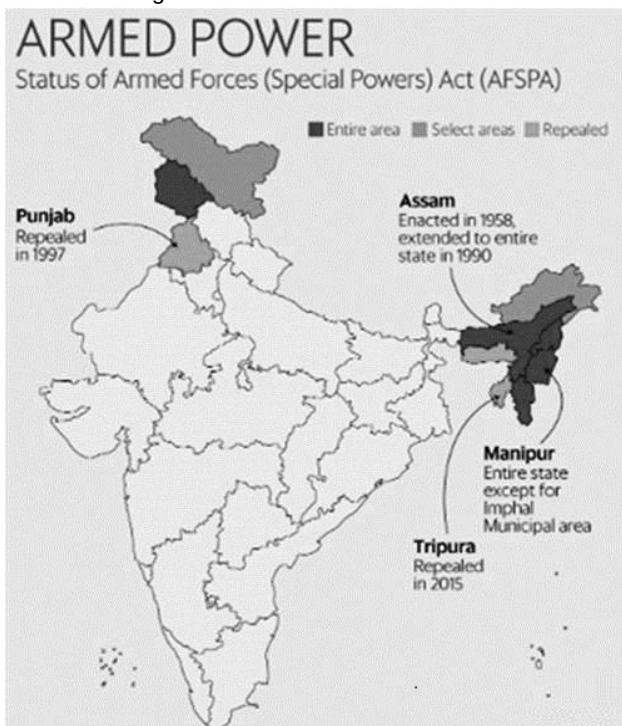
- The periodic six-month extension of the AFSPA in Manipur comes to an end in September.
- At least 237 people have died in ethnic violence between Kuki-Zo and Meitei groups.
- The valley districts are where the Meitei people are concentrated, while the Kuki-Zo and the Nagas live in the hills.

➤ What is AFSPA?

- The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) is a law enacted in India that grants special powers to armed forces and Central Armed Police Forces in areas declared as "disturbed."
- It allows for actions such as the use of force, arrest without a warrant, and search of premises without a warrant, aimed at maintaining public order in conflict zones.

➤ Historical Background

- **Colonial Roots:** AFSPA has its origins in a 1942 ordinance by the British to suppress the Quit India movement.
- **Post-Independence Context:** The Act was introduced in 1958 to address rising violence in the northeastern states, particularly due to insurgencies.
- **Expansion:** Similar laws were enacted for Jammu and Kashmir in 1990, reflecting ongoing security challenges.



➤ Disturbed Areas

- A "disturbed area" is designated by notification under Section 3 of AFSPA, indicating that military assistance is needed for civil power.
- Once declared 'disturbed' under **The Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976**, a region remains so for three months, with state input allowed.
- The declaration can stem from ethnic or communal conflicts and is reviewed periodically.

➤ Supreme Court's Guidelines on AFSPA

In its 1998 ruling in **Naga People's Movement of Human Rights v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court made several key conclusions:

- **Suo-Motto Declaration:** The central government can declare an area 'disturbed' but should consult state governments first.
- **Authority Limitations:** AFSPA does not allow unrestricted designation of disturbed areas; there must be valid reasons.
- **Time Frame and Reviews:** Declarations must have a defined duration and require reviews every six months.
- **Use of Force:** Authorized officers should use minimal force necessary and follow army "Dos and Don'ts" guidelines.
- **Constitutional Validity:** The Court affirmed that AFSPA is constitutional, with powers under sections 4 and 5 being neither arbitrary nor unreasonable.

Election commission of India

Context: Recently, An ECI delegation, led by CEC of India, reviewed assembly poll preparations in Ranchi.

➤ Overview:

- The ECI team during its visit will interact with all the national and regional political parties along and will hold meetings with government officials to review the preparedness before the polls.
- The visit of the ECI team will focus on assessing preparedness.

The ECI is an **autonomous** constitutional authority responsible for administering Centre and State election processes in India.

➤ Establishment

- Established on 25th January 1950
- celebrated as National Voters' Day.

➤ Responsibilities

- Administers elections for:
 - Lok Sabha
 - Rajya Sabha
 - State Legislative Assemblies
 - Offices of the President and Vice President

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➤ Limitations

- The ECI does not oversee elections for panchayats and municipalities in the states.
- A separate State Election Commission is provided for these elections by the Constitution of India.

➤ Structure of ECI

- Initially comprising a single election commissioner, the ECI became a multi-member body following the Election Commissioner Amendment Act of 1989. The current structure includes:
 - **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)**
 - **Two Election Commissioners (ECs)**

(At the state level, the Chief Electoral Officer assists the ECI)

➤ Provisions Governing the ECI

The ECI operates under **Part XV** of the Indian Constitution, which includes Articles 324 to 329:

- **Article 324:** Establishes the ECI's authority over election superintendence and control.
- **Article 325:** Ensures no discrimination in electoral rolls based on religion, race, caste, or sex.
- **Article 326:** Mandates that elections be based on adult suffrage.
- **Article 327:** Empowers Parliament to legislate on elections to legislatures.
- **Article 328:** Allows state legislatures to legislate on elections within their jurisdictions.
- **Article 329:** Bars judicial interference in electoral matters.

➤ Appointment & Tenure

- The **President of India** appoints the CEC and ECs based on the CEC and Other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.
- They have a fixed tenure of **six years** or until they reach **65 years of age**, whichever comes first.
- Their salary and service conditions are equivalent to those of a **Supreme Court Judge**.

➤ Removal

- Election commissioners can resign or be removed from office.
- The CEC can only be removed through a parliamentary process similar to that for Supreme Court judges, while ECs can be removed on the CEC's recommendation.

➤ Limitations

- The Constitution does not specify qualifications for ECI members (legal, educational, administrative, or judicial).
- The term length for ECI members is not defined.
- Retired election commissioners are not barred from future government appointments.

Deepfakes

Context: Recently a survey in India has found a high surge in contents of deepfake and has become a global phenomenon.

➤ Overview:

- Last week, California signed three landmark pieces of legislation considered among the toughest in the U.S. to combat election deepfakes.
- A survey by McAfee found that over 75% of Indians have viewed some deepfake content in the last 12 months, and at least 38% have been targeted by a deepfake scam
- The issue has become so pervasive that the Delhi High Court urged the Indian government to regulate AI and deepfake technologies, citing societal risks.



- **Deepfakes** are synthetic media created using artificial intelligence (AI) techniques that manipulate or generate visual and audio content, often with the intention of deceiving or misleading viewers.

➤ How are Deepfakes Created?

- Deepfakes are a subset of Deep Synthesis, utilizing technologies like deep learning and augmented reality to generate text, images, audio, and video for virtual scenes.
- Deepfakes are primarily made using **Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs)**, which consist of two competing neural networks:
 - **Generator:** Creates fake images or videos attempting to look realistic.
 - **Discriminator:** Distinguishes between real and fake content.
- The generator improves its outputs based on feedback from the discriminator, refining its ability to create convincing deepfakes. This process requires substantial data, often sourced from the internet or social media without consent.

➤ Applications of Deep Learning in Deepfake Technology

Despite their potential for misuse, deepfake technology has beneficial applications:

- **Augmented Reality (AR):** Enhancing user interaction and immersion in gaming and virtual environments.
- **Medical Training:** Generating realistic medical images and scenarios for improved training efficiency.

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- **Restoration of Lost Voices:** Reviving historical figures or enhancing artistic expressions in film, music, and gaming.
- **Synthetic Avatars:** Helping individuals with disabilities express themselves online.

➤ Concerns Regarding Deepfakes

- **Erosion of Trust:** Undermining confidence in institutions, media, and democratic processes.
- **Misinformation:** Facilitating the spread of propaganda and fake news.
- **Manipulation of Public Opinion:** Influencing elections and societal perspectives.
- **Blackmail and Extortion:** Targeting individuals and organizations for malicious purposes.

The technology can violate individual privacy and dignity, often disproportionately affecting women.

➤ Detection Methods

To identify deepfakes, consider the following strategies:

- Look for **visual and audio inconsistencies**.
- Use **reverse image searches** to find original sources.
- Employ **AI-based tools** to analyze authenticity.
- Implement **digital watermarking** or **blockchain** for source verification.
- Educate yourself and others on the implications of deepfake technology.

Global Approaches to Deepfake Regulation

➤ India

- **No Specific Laws:** India lacks dedicated regulations for deepfakes, though existing laws can address some related issues (e.g., defamation).

- **Digital Personal Data Protection Act:** Offers protection against misuse of personal data.
- **Call for Global Framework:** Advocates for an international approach to ethical AI tools.

➤ Global Initiatives

- **AI Safety Summit 2023:** Countries like the US, China, and India recognized the need for global action against AI risks, including deepfakes.
- **Bletchley Park Declaration:** Addressed the intentional misuse of AI technologies.

➤ European Union

- **Code of Practice on Disinformation:** Requires tech companies to combat deepfakes, with penalties for non-compliance.

➤ United States

- **Deepfake Task Force Act:** A bipartisan initiative to support the Department of Homeland Security in countering deepfake technology.

➤ China

- **Comprehensive Regulation:** Implemented in January 2023 to curb disinformation, requiring clear labeling and traceability of deep synthesis content.

➤ Tech Company Responses

Major tech firms, including Meta and Google, are developing measures to combat deepfake content:

- **Google:** Introduced tools for identifying synthetic content, including watermarking and metadata to provide context.
- Despite these efforts, vulnerabilities remain, highlighting the ongoing challenges in managing deepfake technology effectively.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Clade 1B M-pox



Recently, the country's first Clade 1B M-pox case was detected in a youth who arrived from the UAE to Kerala last week, according to health ministry sources.

About Clade 1B M-pox:

- Clade 1B is a **specific genetic variant of the Mpox** (Monkeypox) virus, distinguished by its unique genomic characteristics.
- Clade 1B exhibits symptoms similar to those of other Mpox strains, including fever, rash, and swollen lymph nodes, but it may present with increased severity, leading to more serious health outcomes.
- The Clade 1B strain has a **mortality rate of approximately 3%**, which is significantly higher than the 0.2% mortality rate associated with the Clade 2b strain.
- In August, **Thailand reported its first case of Clade 1B**, involving a 66-year-old European man who had traveled from an unnamed African country.
- This case marked the second instance of Clade 1B being reported outside of **Africa**, following its detection in **Sweden**.

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Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam

App

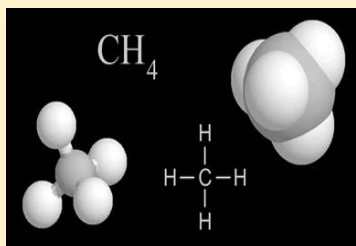


Recently, Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia launched the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' app at the National Media Centre, New Delhi.

About Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam App:

- Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam App is a unique platform which aims to **encourage individuals to plant and dedicate trees in honour of their mothers, promoting environmental sustainability** and awareness.
- The app **allows users to easily upload and track images of trees** planted as a tribute to their mothers.
- It **records the location, latitude, longitude** and timestamp of each dedicated tree.
- **Users can track the carbon credits** they have earned, promoting eco-conscious behaviour.
- The app allows users to upload images of the tree's growth every **30 days**, ensuring continuous monitoring.
- Users are encouraged to share tree images on social media platforms to spread awareness and inspire others to participate.

Methane



Recently, a methane gas explosion at the Madanjoo coal mine in Tabas, eastern Iran, killed at least 51 people, according to state media.

About Methane:

- Methane (CH₄), also **known as marsh gas or methyl hydride**, is a **colorless, odorless** and **flammable** gas and is the main component of **natural gas**.
- It is a **powerful greenhouse gas** that traps heat in the atmosphere and is the **second-largest contributor** to climate change **after carbon dioxide**.
- It is more than 28 times more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide, but it has a shorter **lifespan of around 7 to 12 years** compared to carbon dioxide's hundreds of years.
- It is **found naturally** below ground and **under the seafloor** and is formed by geological and biological processes.
- Human activity has caused the concentration of methane in the atmosphere to increase by about **160% since 1750**.
- **China, the United States, Russia, India, Brazil, Indonesia, Nigeria** and Mexico are estimated to be responsible for nearly half of all anthropogenic methane emissions.

Place in News

Palestine

Recently, Prime Minister of India met Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in New York, expressing concern over the Gaza humanitarian crisis and reaffirming India's support for peace and stability.

Palestine (Capital: Ramallah)

Location: Palestine, officially known as the State of Palestine is a country in the Levant region of West Asia.

Boundaries: Palestine shares its borders with **Jordan** (East), **Israel** (West and North) and **Egypt** (Southwest).

Physical Features:

- The highest point in Palestine is **Mount Gerizim**, located near the city of Nablus in the northern West Bank.
- Palestine lacks major perennial rivers, with only seasonal streams and wadis like **Jordan River, Wadi al-Far'a** and **Wadi Gaza** providing water flow during the rainy season.
- Palestine has limited mineral resources, with some deposits of **limestone, clay, gypsum** and possibly small reserves of natural gas and oil.
- Palestine generally experiences a Mediterranean climate.

Membership: Palestine **holds observer status** in several international organizations, including the **United Nations (UN)**, and is a member of various regional bodies such as the **Arab League, the G77**, the International Olympic Committee and the Union for the Mediterranean.



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POINTS TO PONDER

- Parasitic meningoencephalitis is caused by which type of organism? – **Amoeba**
- Koodiyattam dance is from which state ? – **Kerala**
- Which game are Gukesh Dommaraju and Harika Dronavalli associated with? – **Chess.**
- When is Earth Overshoot Day ? – **August 4.**
- Which country did India conduct Exercise Eastern Bridge VII with? – **Oman.**

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