

AFSPA lifted from more areas in Northeast States

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Why in news?

- The Centre has decided to further reduce the jurisdiction of 'disturbed areas' under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) in Assam, Nagaland and Manipur.

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 [AFSPA]

What is Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 [AFSPA]?

- The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act was enacted in 1958 to bring under control what the government of India considered disturbed areas.
 - Enacted by Parliament in September 1958, AFSPA was first implemented in the Northeast, and then in Punjab.
- Under its provisions, the armed forces have been empowered to open fire; enter and search without warrant, and arrest any person who has committed a cognisable offence.
- Prosecution of the officer on duty needs prior permission of the Central Government.

What are the States where AFSPA is in effect?

- **AFSPA can be implemented in an area after it has been declared as disturbed.**
- Before the March 2023 notification, States under AFSPA included:
 - Assam, Nagaland, Manipur (excluding seven assembly constituencies of Imphal),
 - Arunachal Pradesh (only the Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts plus a 20-km belt bordering Assam), and Jammu and Kashmir.
 - It was completely **lifted from Meghalaya** in April 2018. It was **repealed in Tripura** in 2015

What is a Disturbed Area?

- A disturbed area is one which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA.
 - Section (3) of the AFSPA Act empowers the governor of the state or Union territory to issue an official notification on The Gazette of India.
 - Following which the centre has the authority to send in armed forces for civilian aid.
- The state or central government considers those areas as disturbed by reason of differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- Once declared 'disturbed', the region has to maintain status quo for a minimum of three months, according to The Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976.
- The state governments can suggest whether the AFSPA is required to be enforced or not.
 - But under Section (3) of the APSPA, their opinion can still be overruled by the governor or the centre.

What are the Controversial provisions of AFSPA?

- **Section 3** – It empowers the Centre to declare any area as Disturb Area without taking consent of the concerned state.
- **Section 4** – Accords certain power to an authorised officer which also include power to open fire at any individual even if it results in death.
 - Under this section, the officer has also been given the power to (a) arrest without a warrant; and (b) seize and search without any warrant any premise.
- **Section 7** – It mandates prior executive permission from central or state authorities for prosecution of a member of the security forces.

News Summary: AFSPA lifted from more areas in Northeast states

- The Centre has further reduced the number of areas in Assam, Nagaland and Manipur that were declared disturbed areas under the AFSPA due to an improvement in the security situation.
 - Both State and Central governments can issue notifications regarding the AFSPA.
 - Currently, the MHA issues periodic 'Disturbed Area' notifications to extend the AFSPA only for Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.
 - The notifications for Manipur and Assam are issued by the respective State Governments.
- With the latest decision, starting April 1, the Disturbed Areas notification will be lifted from:
 - one more district in Assam,
 - four more police stations in Manipur and
 - three more police stations in Nagaland.
- On the other hand, one police station in Arunachal Pradesh — Chowkham — was declared a Disturbed Area under the Act.

Significant improvement in the security situation in the Northeastern states

- Compared to the year 2014, there is a reduction of 76 per cent in the extremist incidents in the year 2022.
- Similarly, the deaths of security personnel and civilians have come down by 90 per cent and 97 per cent respectively during this period.
- Several peace accords had been implemented in the northeast States in the past four years and as a result, most extremist groups had laid down arms.
 - Since 2014, around 7,000 insurgents had surrendered.

Q1) What is Chicken Neck Area?

“Chicken Neck” is a colloquial term used to refer to a narrow strip of land that connects the northeastern region of India with the rest of the country. The area is also known as the “Siliguri Corridor,” after the town of Siliguri in West Bengal, which is situated in this narrow strip of land.

Q2) Where is Assam geographically located?

Assam is a state located in northeastern India. It is situated in the Brahmaputra Valley and is bordered by the states of Arunachal Pradesh to the north, Nagaland and Manipur to the east, Mizoram and Tripura to the south, and Meghalaya, West Bengal, and Bangladesh to the west. The state has a total area of 78,438 square kilometers (30,285 square miles) and is home to diverse ethnic and linguistic groups.

Source: [After 2022, AFSPA further reduced in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland due to improved security situation: Amit Shah](#) | [Indian Express](#) | [The Hindu](#)

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