Prelim Bits 28-09-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Extension of AFSPA

Recently, Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) was extended for another 6 months in parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur.

- **Introduced -** The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act was enacted in *1958*.
- **Aim -** It granted certain special powers to the members of the armed forces in disturbed areas.
- **Powers** – It gives unbridled power to the army and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)
  - to *kill anyone* acting in contravention of the law;
  - to *arrest people and search of any premises* without a warrant;
  - to *prohibit a gathering of five* or more persons in an area
- **Notification** - Under *Section 3* of the AFSPA, *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.
- **Disturbed Area** – An area that are disturbed or in dangerous condition that the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary.
- An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- **State Governments** - The ***Ministry of Home Affairs*** would usually enforce this Act but there have been exceptions where the Centre decided to forego its power and leave the decision to the ***State governments***.

History of AFSPA
• The Act in its original form was promulgated by the British in response to the *Quit India movement* in 1942. • After Independence, Indian government notified it as an Act in 1958. • AFSPA for Northeastern states was initially implemented in Assam and Manipur. • After amendment in 1972, it was also implemented in Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh. • ***Punjab*** was the first state from where it was repealed, followed by Tripura and Meghalaya in 2015 and 2018 respectively. • It still remains in force in *Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, J&K, and Arunachal Pradesh*. • However, the ***Ladakh*** region, which is now a separate Union territory and ***Mizoram*** has never been kept under AFSPA.

References

1. IE| Extension of Disturbed Area status

2. IE| AFSPA

India Ageing Report, 2023

According to UNPFA's India Ageing Report, Indian population aged 80+ years will grow at a rate of around 279% between 2022 and 2050 with a predominance of widowed and highly dependent very old women.

- **Published by** – ***United Nations Population Fund*** (UNFPA) India, in collaboration with the ***International Institute for Population Sciences*** (IIPS).
- **About** - The report sheds light on the challenges, opportunities and institutional responses surrounding elderly care in India.
- **Source of Data** - It uses the Longitudinal Ageing Survey in India (LASI), 2017–18, Census of India, Population Projections by the Government of India (2011–2036), and World Population Prospects 2022 by the UN DESA.

Population ageing is associated with a rise in the proportion of population termed as 'old', usually at 60 or 65 years and above.

Highlights of the report

- **Prospects of elderly** - Persons aged 60 years and above comprises around 10.5% of the country's population in 2022 and the share will ***double to 20.8% by 2050***.
- By the end of the century, the elderly will constitute over 36% of the total population of the country.
- **Ageing Index** - It measures the number of person aged 60+ years per 100 children population (below 15 years) and the index score increases as the population ages.
- There are 39 older persons per 100 children in India according to 2021 population estimates.
- By 2046, elderly population will surpass the population of children.
- **State differentials** - Central and North Eastern regions have the younger group of States.
- Most of the states in the southern region and select northern states such as Himachal Pradesh and Punjab reported a higher share of the elderly population than the national average in 2021.
- **Old-age dependency ratio** - It is the ratio of number of elderly people per 100 persons (15-59 years). The higher the ratio, the greater the old age-related dependency.
- It is higher than the national average in the southern region.
- **Life expectancy** - Life expectancy at 60 years reflects the average number of years that a person of 60 years could expect to live.
- At 60 years, a person in India may expect to live another 18.3 years, which is higher in case of females at 19 years as compared to males at 17.5 years.
- **Poorest population** – More than 40% of the elderly comes under this category.
- **Inherently gendered** - Poverty is inherently gendered in old age when older women

are more likely to be widowed, living alone, with no income and fully dependent on family for support.

United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030) is a global collaboration that aims to improve the lives of older people, their families and the communities in which they live.

References

1. UNFPA | India Ageing Report 2023
2. The Hindu| India Ageing Report

Android Earthquake Alert System

Google India introduced its Android Earthquake Alerts System, based on smartphone accelerometer data to provide early warning alerts to users.

- **Working mechanism** – Android smartphones' *accelerometers* can act as *mini seismometers* which can detect the beginning of a quake when the phone is plugged in and charging.
- When a phone is connected and charging, it has the capability to detect the initial tremors of an earthquake.
- When many phones pick up the tremors, the company's server collects the data and process it to confirm the earthquake and send alerts to other phones nearby.
- **Early alerts** - *Internet signals travel at the speed of light*, much faster than the propagation of earthquake shaking through the ground.
- So, the alerts often reach phones several seconds before severe shaking does.
- **Two Alerts**
  - **Be Aware Alert** – When users experience MMI 3 & 4 shaking with a magnitude 4.5 or greater.
  - **Take Action Alert** – When users experience MMI 5+ shaking with a magnitude 4.5 or greater.

The Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI) estimates the shaking intensity from an earthquake at a specific location by considering its effects on people, objects, and buildings.

- **Collaborative Institutions** - It was launched in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the National Seismology Centre (NSC).
- **Mobile Compatibility** - *Android 5 and above*.
- **Language alerts** – *Indian languages* which are already supported by Android.

References

1. The Hindu | Android Earthquake Alert System
2. IE | Smartphone Accelerometers

e - Cabinet System

Tripura has launched an e-cabinet system to promote digital infrastructure development and digitisation of government services and information.

- **E - Cabinet** - A software portal for state governments to conduct Cabinet meetings electronically.
- **Developed by** - National Information Centre (NIC), Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY).

Tripura has become the 4th state - and 2nd in the Northeast - after Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh, to have introduced an e-cabinet system.

- **Unique Features-**
  - Automate work flow activities before, during and after Meetings.
  - Enhanced level of Security, with Push & Pull features.
  - Build institutional memory & knowledge repository, enabling quick search & retrieval.

- **Advantages -**
  - Saves huge resources of Paper, fuel and manpower.
  - Reduces carbon footprint and environmental degradation.
  - Bolster e-governance and Digital India initiative.
  - Eliminate delays.
  - Increase transparency, efficiency and accountability.

References

1. IE| Tripura launches e-Cabinet system
2. NIC| e-Cabinet app

Compulsory Retirement

Recently, the IAS officer who got transferred for allegedly misusing the facilities at the stadium in Delhi, now compulsorily retired by Government.

- **Fundamental Rules** – Union Government has the power to retire any government officials prematurely on the ground of *lack of integrity and ineffectiveness and in*

public interest.

- **Power to retire** – The power has been conferred under *Fundamental Rules 56(j) and rule 48* of Central Civil Services (CCS) Pension Rules, 1972.
- **FR 56 (j)** – Appropriate authority have absolute right to retire any government servant by giving him notice of not less than 3 months in writing or 3 months' pay and allowances in lieu of such notice.
- **Rule 48** – Retirement on completion of 30 years qualifying service either voluntarily or by an order of appropriate authority.
- **Issuing authority** – By *Department of Personnel and Training* (*DOPT*), as it is the cadre controlling authority for IAS officers in general.
- But the power to retire is vested with the *Union Ministry of Home Affairs* for officers from the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, and Mizoram and Union Territories (AGMUT) cadre.
- **Central Civil Services (CCS) Pension Rules, 1972** – It was 1st drafted in 1972 and have been amended 47 times.
- It regulates the pension and gratuity of the employees retiring from Central Government Departments.

References

1. IE| Compulsory retirement of IAS officer
2. The Hindu| Government's control over civil servants
3. CCSPR| CCS Pension and Gratuity Rules

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