Siachen Glacier

What is the issue?

\n\n

While India and Pakistan have been unable to resolve the Siachen dispute, the new enemy is global warming.

\n\n

Where is Siachen?

\n\n

\n
- It is located in the eastern Karakoram range in the Himalaya Mountains, just northeast of the point NJ9842 where the Line of Control between India and Pakistan ends.
\n
- It forms part of the Leh district of the Ladakh division in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

What is the history of Siachen?

\n\n

\n
- In 1984, India launched Operation Meghdoot to capture the 76.4 km-long glacier on the Saltoro ridge.
\n
- The operation continues till date, making it the longest continuing one of its kind in the world.
\n
- But there has been no shooting following the 2003 ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) across the Siachen.
\n

- Siachen is a legacy of Partition.
\n
- While the LoC was delineated and accepted by India and Pakistan up to point NJ9842, the glacier was left unmarked.
\n
- India claims the area based on the Jammu and Kashmir Instrument of Accession (1947) and the Karachi Agreement of 1949, which define the ceasefire line beyond NJ9842 as “running Northwards to the glaciers”.
\n

\n\n

Why the issue has not been resolved yet?

\n\n

\n
- Siachen is expected to be sorted out by both sides before addressing the Kashmir question.
\n
- But it may not be that simple for historical, operational and practical reasons.
\n
- India has shown willingness for demilitarisation on the condition of first authenticating the 110-km AGPL, which is the current position on the glacier.
\n
- But Pakistan refuses, which means that once India vacates the posts, Pakistan may try to occupy them.
\n
- India currently has the advantage of height as it commands higher ground, holding the highest posts at heights of 21,000 ft.
\n
- Any demilitarisation without proper delineation and acceptance of the current positions would be disastrous.
\n
- Retaking once-occupied peaks is near impossible.
\n

\n\n

What are the recent problems?

\n\n

\n
- The biggest enemy on the glacier has always been the weather.
\n

- The Indian Army has learnt to adapt.
  \n
- However, the series of recent untimely avalanches on the glacier and the resultant spikes in casualties show that the challenge of changing weather patterns is new.
  \n
- Studies have been initiated to access the rate of glacier melt, and the Army is re-assessing the vulnerable posts in an attempt to shift some of them.
  \n
- These need to be accelerated and technology infused to save the soldier.
  \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n

