

24th Sept, 2024

1. India Reports First Case of New Mpox Strain GS 2 (Health)

- **Why in News:** India has confirmed its first case of a **new strain of mpox**, known as **clade 1b**, which has prompted a public health emergency alert from the **World Health Organization (WHO)**. This variant is highly transmissible and is linked to recent outbreaks in Africa.
- **About Mpox**
 - The WHO declared mpox a public health emergency in **August 2023** due to its spread, particularly the more dangerous clade 1b variant.
 - Mpox is a viral infection caused by the monkeypox virus, a species of the genus Orthopoxvirus.
 - There are two variants of mpox that are distinct in nature that influence the severity of the disease and its impact on affected populations.
 - **Symptoms:** Previously known as monkeypox, mpox can lead to painful skin lesions and other symptoms, including: **Fever, Muscle aches, Swollen lymph nodes, Body lesions**
 - If untreated, mpox can be serious and potentially deadly.
 - **Transmission of Mpox:** Mpox spreads from animals to humans and can also be transmitted between people through:
 - Close contact, including skin-to-skin interaction
 - Sexual contact
 - Breathing or talking closely with an infected person
- **What is clade 1b?**
 - These strains are:
 - **clade 1b** (The Central African (Congo Basin) strain)
 - **clade 2** (West African strain)
 - The clade 1b strain is known for its higher virulence, leading to more severe symptoms and complications.
 - Patients infected with the Central African strain are at greater risk of experiencing serious health issues, including a higher mortality rate of up to 10%.

Kerala reports case of Clade 1b Mpox strain

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

India has reported its first case of the Clade 1b strain of Mpox which, according to Health Ministry sources, has been confirmed in a 38-year-old man who landed in Kerala last week from the United Arab Emirates.

The man was admitted to the Government Medical College Hospital in Malappuram district of the State last week after he de-

veloped symptoms of the disease.

The WHO declared Mpox a global public health emergency again in August this year due to the spread of a new and deadlier strain of the virus, Clade 1b. The earlier case of Mpox that emerged in Delhi was of a 26-year-old resident of Haryana's Hisar district who had tested positive for the previous West African Clade 2 strain earlier this month.

2. AFSPA in Manipur GS 2 (Security)

- **Why in News:** As ethnic violence continues, the Centre and the Manipur government are set to review the scope of the **Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)** in the northeastern State.
- **What is AFSPA?**
 - The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act was enacted in 1958 to bring under control what the government of India considered 'disturbed' areas.
 - Under the Act, an area is declared as "**disturbed**" for the convenience of security forces.

Centre, State set to review scope of AFSPA in Manipur

Vijalta Singh
NEW DELHI

As ethnic violence continues, the Centre and the Manipur government are set to review the scope of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in the northeastern State. The six-month extension of the AFSPA in Manipur comes to an end on September 30.

The Union government and the State have differing views on the inclusion of more areas under the AFSPA. While the "disturbed area" status continues in all hill districts, the Act was gradually withdrawn from all valley districts from 2022 following a "significant improvement" in the security situation. The pro-

visions of the Act were withdrawn from the Imphal municipal area in 2004.

A senior Union government official told *The Hindu* that a huge increase in the number of armed men in the State was a cause of concern and the rising cases of extortion and abductions were also being taken into consideration.

While the presence of armed men or village volunteers is prevalent in both valley and hill districts, the absence of the AFSPA in the valley districts makes it difficult for the armed forces to operate smoothly, officials said. A State government official, however, said, "The situation here is not like



Keeping watch: Security personnel conduct a search operation in the vulnerable areas of hill and valley districts in Manipur. ANI

what existed in the 1990s. Extortion and abductions are there, but we are also controlling the situation. The police are active and making arrests." In the past 16 months, 533 arrests have been made. At least 237 people have been killed since ethnic violence between the tribal Kuki-Zo and the Meitei people erupted in the State on May 3, 2023. The valley districts are where the Meitei people are concentrated, while the Kuki-Zo and the Nagas live in the hills.

According to data from the Union Home Ministry, 136 security-related incidents and 57 abductions were reported in Manipur from January 1 to July 31 this year, while 205 "extremists" were arrested. The ethnic violence is said to have helped insurgent groups gain a foothold in the region. The groups, mostly operating from Myanmar, advocate secession of Manipur.

The Kuki-Zo militant groups are in a suspension of operations pact with the Home Ministry. Eight Meitei insurgent groups have been banned by the Ministry. In November 2023, the Pambai faction of the United National Liberation Front, the oldest valley-

based armed group, signed a peace agreement with the Home Ministry and the Manipur government.

The National Investigation Agency registered a suo motu case on July 19 last year to investigate transnational conspiracy by the Myanmar-based leadership of terror outfits to wage a war against the government by "exploiting the current ethnic unrest."

On August 8, Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh told the Assembly that after May 2023, he was under pressure from Central agencies to impose the AFSPA in the valley areas too. He said the imposition of the AFSPA could not guarantee ideal law and order conditions.

- The government (either the state or centre) considers those areas to be 'disturbed' "by reason of differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- **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.
- 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**.

3. **Robotic Mules and High-Altitude Innovations** **GS 3 (Science and Tech)**

- **Why in News:** The Indian Army is making significant strides in logistics capabilities, particularly in high-altitude areas, with the introduction of **100 robotic mules** and new high-altitude tents. These innovations were showcased at the **Himtech symposium** in Leh.
- **Robotic Mules**
 - The Army has procured **100 robotic mules** as part of an emergency procurement initiative.
 - The robotic mule is designed for diverse environments and can operate in extreme temperatures, ranging from **-40 to +55 degrees Celsius**.
 - These robotic mules are crucial for enhancing logistical support in remote and rugged terrains, especially following tensions with China in **Eastern Ladakh**.
 - **Key features include:**
 - **High endurance:** Can navigate obstacles, climb stairs, and cross rivers.
 - **Payload capacity:** Able to carry up to **15 kg**.
 - **Advanced sensing:** Equipped with electro-optics and infrared for object recognition.
- **Innovative High-Altitude Tents (Peak Pods)**
 - The Army is also evaluating a new tent called **Peak Pods**, designed for extreme cold environments. Developed by **DTECH 360 Innovations**, these tents can maintain an internal temperature of **15°C** even when external temperatures drop to **-40°C**.
 - **Key highlights include:**
 - **Sustainable design:** No fuel or electricity is needed for heating.
 - **Unique features:** Includes an inbuilt bio-toilet, making it a comprehensive solution for soldiers in high-altitude conditions.
 - The Peak Pods have undergone trials in various locations, including **Leh, Daulat Beg Oldie, and Durbuk**, showing promising results for future deployment.

Robotic mules 'join' Army; drones, high-altitude tents under evaluation

Dinakar Peri
LEH

The Army has procured and inducted 100 robotic mules in forward areas, while logistics drones are undergoing trials which will significantly streamline support and movement to forward areas, especially in high altitude. A new tent for high-altitude areas is under evaluation for deployment at temperatures up to minus-40 degrees Celsius.

All of these were on display last week at the Himtech symposium organised at Leh, specifically showcasing high-altitude technologies. "The Army has procured and has inducted 100 robotic mules under the fourth tranche of emergency procurements (EP)," a defence source said.

The fourth round of EPs was undertaken in the year to September 2023.



A robotic mule is a high-endurance, agile and durable all-weather ground robot for use in defence applications. DINAKAR PERI

Contracts up to ₹300 crore can be placed under EP, and deliveries have to be concluded within one year. Since the 2020 stand-off with China in Eastern Ladakh, the Army has been looking for a series of technological innovations especially for high altitudes for a range of functions.

The robotic mule is a high-endurance, agile and

all-weather durable ground robot for use in a broad range of unstructured urban and natural environments for defence applications.

"He is able to walk up to three years. He is able to counter all kinds of obstacles... He can go inside water and cross rivers... He has the ability to recognise objects around as there are electro-optics, infrared..."

Arjun Aggarwal, managing director and CEO of AeroArc, said while speaking at Himtech. The mule can climb stairs, steep hills and other hurdles and can operate in extreme temperatures, ranging from minus-40 to a hot 55 degrees Celsius and carry 15 kg of payload.

Extreme high-altitude clothing and habitat is a critical requirement for the Indian Army which is deployed in the world's highest battlefield of Siachen and also other super high altitude locations. At Himtech, DTECH 360 Innovations announced the field launch of its Peak Pods, a high-altitude habitat (tent) designed for sub-zero temperature regions.

The product has been under evaluation at three high altitude locations: Leh (11,500 feet), Daulat Beg Oldie (16,700 feet) and Durbuk (12,500 feet).

4. **Massive Greenland landslide** **GS 3 (Disaster Management)**

- **Why in News:** A massive landslide in a **remote fjord in Greenland** created a wave so powerful that it sent vibrations through the Earth for nine days. This unusual event took place last September and was detected by seismic sensors around the world, sparking an investigation by scientists to trace its origin.
- **What happened?**
 - Unlike typical earthquake vibrations, this signal lasted for nine days and exhibited characteristics not caused by earthquakes, leading to a collaborative investigation by researchers across multiple countries.

- Scientists classified it as a **"USO"** — an unidentified seismic object.
- Eventually, the source of the signal was traced to a massive landslide in **Greenland's remote Dickson Fjord.**

- The landslide occurred when a mountainside collapsed, bringing with it a large chunk of glacial ice. The force of the collapse triggered a gigantic 200-meter-high wave in the narrow Dickson Fjord. This wave became "trapped" in the fjord and moved back and forth, creating seismic signals that puzzled researchers.

• What caused it?

- After investigation, researchers discovered that this unusual signal was caused by a **massive landslide** in Greenland.
- **Landslide Event:** A peak called **Hvide Støvhorn** This collapse created a huge avalanche of ice and rock, which then crashed into the nearby Dickson Fjord.

- A huge amount of rock and ice, enough to fill 10,000 Olympic swimming pools, had plunged into the fjord. This caused a mega-tsunami with a wave 200 meters high.
- The landslide also triggered a **seiche**, a back-and-forth wave in the fjord, which continued for nine days. The landslide's immense power was due to the thinning of the glacier, caused by global warming.

- **Tsunami Generation:** The force of the falling ice and rock displaced a large amount of water in the fjord, creating a **mega-tsunami**—a giant wave that reached about 200 meters high (almost three times the height of the Srirangam Temple).
- **Seismic Waves:** As the landslide occurred and the mega-tsunami formed, it generated seismic waves that traveled across the globe, ringing out like a bell. These waves were recorded by seismic stations all over the world.

- The seismic waves produced by this landslide were distinct from typical earthquake signatures. They exhibited a single frequency, akin to a plucked violin string, rather than the complex patterns associated with tremors.
- These waves traveled globally, resonating for days, as the landslide's impact rang out like a gong, causing the Earth to vibrate.

• The Seiche Effect

- Inside the **fjord**, the waves reflected off the **steep cliffs**, causing a phenomenon called a **seiche**. This is when water oscillates back and forth, creating **repeating waves**. The waves continued to bounce around the fjord for over nine days, which matched the long-lasting seismic signal recorded.
- **Geographical Importance:** The Dickson Fjord is a unique geographical feature—it's deep and U-shaped, which made the waves behave in this unusual way. Additionally, the warming climate is causing glaciers in the area to melt, which increases the risk of such landslides happening more frequently.

Massive Greenland landslide sent seismic waves around earth for 9 days

One year ago, roughly 25 million cubic metres of ice and rock splashed into the Dickson Fjord in Greenland and displaced the water enough to give rise to a 200-metre high mega-tsunami. In this way, a melting glacier led to a planet-wide tremor, and researchers warn that it may not be the last.

X.N. Venkatesan

On September 16, 2021, several seismic stations worldwide detected a bizarre signal. Earthquakes are not rare. In 2020 alone, 1,712 earthquakes of magnitude 5 or more were registered worldwide. But these seismic waves were puzzling: the signatures clearly indicated that earthquakes had not caused them, and the reverberations lasted for a staggering nine days.

A mysterious ringing

"We saw it on sensors everywhere, from the Arctic to Antarctica," Stephen Hicks, a computational seismology research fellow at University College London, and Kristian Sørensen, senior researcher at the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland, wrote in a recent article. They are co-authors of the study reporting their findings, published in *Science* on September 12.

When you pluck the violin, you yank multiple strings together, which emit sounds at a mix of frequencies. Seismic waves from earthquakes behave the same way. However, the turn the seismologists recorded had only one frequency—like only one string of the violin had been plucked. That is not characteristic of tremors.

At first, the seismologists classified this wave as a "USO", an unidentified seismic object. "Even more puzzling was that the signal kept going for nine days," Hicks and Sørensen wrote. Earthquake vibrations also produce aftershocks. But in this case, the reverberations faded more slowly than one might anticipate from an earthquake.

A global effort
What set off the tremor? Only powerful events like volcanic eruptions or clandestine nuclear weapons tests could unleash this much energy. Seismologists were intrigued.

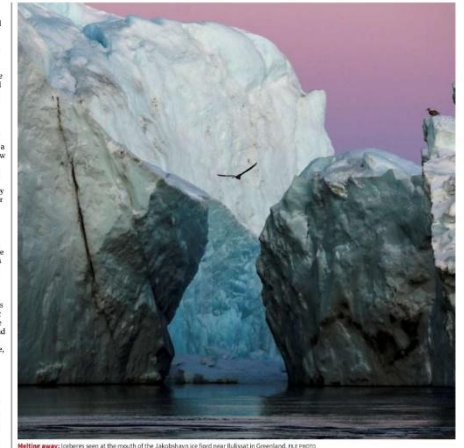
To resolve the enigma, more than 68 researchers from 40 universities in 15 countries teamed up across disciplines. After piecing together numerous datasets and using computer simulations, the team realised the waves were caused by a massive landslide on the banks of the Dickson Fjord in Greenland.

According to Hicks and Sørensen, "solving this mystery required putting many diverse pieces of evidence together, from a treasure trove of seismic data to satellite imagery, ocean water level monitors, and detailed simulations of how the water reacted."

The team even had to obtain a classified army bathymetric map of the fjord from the Danish Navy. It took about a year to assemble the figure pieces and get the complete picture.

Rock in the water
A fjord is a geological structure created when glaciers carve a valley below sea level and the sea water floods it. They frequently feature U-shaped channels that stretch well inland, surrounded by high cliffs or hills.

A series of events, starting with the collapse of Hvide Støvhorn peak, located approximately 1.2 km from the fjord, culminated in a mega-tsunami. The rockslide rolling down gained momentum and shattered the glacier, resulting in a rock-ice avalanche, according to the authors.



Melting away: Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

Iceberg seen at the mouth of the Jakobshavn fjord near Ilulissat in Greenland. (N.A. Peters)

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.

For more than nine days, the waves in the Dickson Fjord kept up their dance, moving from side to side around 10,000 times.</

5. PM Modi meets Palestinian PM Abbas in New York GS 2 (International Relations)

- **Why in News:** PM Modi met the President of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, on the sidelines of the Summit of the Future in New York. The meeting occurred shortly after **India abstained from voting on a UNGA resolution demanding that Israel end its "unlawful presence" in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.**

• India – Palestine Relation

○ Background:

▪ Evolution of relationship

- India's support for the Palestinian cause is an integral part of the nation's foreign policy.
- In 1974, India became the **first Non-Arab State** to recognize Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
- In 1988, India became one of the first countries to recognize the Palestinian State.
- In 1996, India opened its Representative Office in Gaza, which was later shifted to Ramallah in 2003.

▪ Support at multilateral fora

- India has always played a proactive role in garnering support for the Palestinian cause in multilateral fora.
- India has consistently supported, co-sponsored, and voted in favour of UN General Assembly Resolutions:
 - securing the right to self-determination of Palestinians,
 - urging Israel's compliance with legal obligations, and
 - its status as a non-member State at the UN.
- In 2011, India also voted in favour of Palestine becoming a full member of UNESCO.

▪ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

- India supports Palestine and Palestinian refugees through its contributions to UNRWA.
- India is a member of its Advisory Commission since 2020. Since 2002, India has contributed a total of US\$ 36.5 million to UNRWA till 2022-23.

▪ IBSA Cooperation

- India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) Fund has also funded four projects in Palestine worth US\$ 5 mn approximately.

○ Important Bilateral Visits and Political Interaction

- PM Modi paid a historic visit to Palestine in February 2018, the **first for an Indian Prime Minister.**

○ Developmental Cooperation

- India has provided various forms of developmental cooperation assistance to Palestine over the years, amounting to approximately US\$ 141 million.
- India has also provided a total of **US\$ 39 million of budgetary support** to the Palestinian Authority.
- In July 2021, India offered a Line of Credit worth USD 50 Million to Palestine for implementing developmental and sustainable projects.
- The major development assistance projects executed successfully by India include:
 - Palestine-India Techno-Park
 - Construction of Jawaharlal Nehru Library at the Al Azhar University in Gaza city
 - The Mahatma Gandhi Library-cum-Student Activity Centre at the Palestine Technical College at Deir Al Balah in the Gaza Strip, etc.

DAYS AFTER INDIA ABSTAINED AT UNGA

PM Modi meets Abbas: 'Deep concern' on Gaza

PM also holds bilateral meetings with Nepal's Oli and Kuwait Crown Prince

SHUBHJITROY

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 23

PRIME MINISTER Narendra

Modi met Palestinian President

Mahmoud Abbas in New York

on the sidelines of the Summit

of the Future, discussing the

ongoing conflict in Gaza and

the humanitarian situation

there. "Modi said in a post

on X, "I am deeply concerned

about the humanitarian crisis

in Gaza and the suffering of

the Palestinian people. I

am committed to working

with the international

community to bring about a

just and lasting solution to

the conflict in Gaza."

The meeting came days

after India abstained at the

UN General Assembly on a

resolution demanding that

Israel end its "unlawful

presence" in the Occupied

Palestinian Territory. India

has consistently supported

the Palestinian cause at

multilateral forums.

India has also provided

developmental assistance

to Palestine through the

IBSA Fund and UNRWA.

India is a member of the

UNRWA Advisory Commission

since 2020. The meeting

was the first between the

two leaders since 2018.

Modi also met with

Nepal's Oli and Kuwait's

Crown Prince Mishal bin

Fahd Al Saud. He also

met with the Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu. The meeting

was held in the presence

of the UN Secretary-

General Antonio Guterres.

Modi also held a

press conference after the

meeting, expressing his

concern over the situation

in Gaza and the need for

a just and lasting

solution. He also

reiterated India's

commitment to working

with the international

community to bring about

a just and lasting

solution to the conflict

in Gaza. He also

expressed his

concern over the

humanitarian situation

in Gaza and the

suffering of the

Palestinian people.

He also

reiterated India's

commitment to

working with the

international

community to

bring about a

just and lasting

solution to the

conflict in Gaza.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds a bilateral meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session, in New York on Sunday.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), citing the Ministry of Health in Gaza estimates, has said that between October 7, 2023 and September 18, 2024, at least 62,000 Palestinians have been killed and 95,411 injured. According to the Israeli military and official Israeli sources cited in the media, more than 15,411 Israeli and foreign civilians have been killed in this period, the majority on October 7, when the Hamas attacked Israel. Modi had spoken to Abbas in October last year, when he conveyed condolences at the death of a senior Hamas leader. Modi's long-standing principled position on the Israel-Palestine issue has been a key factor in his foreign policy. "That phone call had come days after Modi spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, when he expressed his concern over the situation in Gaza and the suffering of the Palestinian people. Modi also met with Crown Prince Shalhuh bin Khalid Al Saud and discussed ways to deepen 'normal' relations and 'people-to-people' contacts."

- Currently, eight developmental projects are in progress, the details of some of which are as follows
 - Palestinian Institute of Higher Diplomacy in Ramallah;
 - National Printing Press at Ramallah;
 - Construction of Super-specialty hospital in Ramallah;
 - Turathi - Women Empowerment Centres at Ramallah and Gaza; etc.
- **Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)**
 - In 2021-22 India implemented four Quick Impact Projects:
 - Rehabilitation of Yasser Arafat Square in Ramallah City,
 - Integration of Technology into Education with the Young Scientists Club (Al Muntada),
 - Establishing Beitunia Municipality Nursery, and
 - Construction of Aqraba Children Park.
- **PM Modi meets Palestinian PM Abbas in New York**
 - **About the news**
 - During the UN General Assembly (UNGA) session in New York, Prime Minister Modi met Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.
 - The meeting occurred shortly after India abstained from voting on a UNGA resolution demanding that Israel end its "unlawful presence" in the Occupied Palestinian Territory
 - The UNGA adopted a resolution calling for Israel to end its occupation within 12 months.
 - India, along with countries like Australia, the UK, Germany, and Canada, abstained from voting on the resolution.
 - During the meeting, PM Modi express concern over the humanitarian situation in Gaza.
 - He reiterated India's support for the early restoration of peace and stability in the region and emphasized strengthening the long-standing friendship between India and Palestine.
 - **India's Balancing Approach on the Israel-Palestine Conflict**
 - PM Modi's meeting with Abbas follows a phone call from October 2023, where he expressed condolences for civilian casualties in Gaza and reaffirmed India's position on the Israel-Palestine issue.
 - In October 2023, in his first phone conversation with Palestinian President Abbas since the Hamas attack on Israel, PM Modi had reiterated India's long-standing principled position on the Israel-Palestine issue.
 - Later, India sent humanitarian aid for the beleaguered residents of Gaza via Egypt.
 - India has consistently sought to balance its stance on the conflict, with PM Modi also expressing solidarity with Israel after the **October 7 Hamas attacks**, which he labeled as **terror attacks**.
 - For Delhi, the diplomatic challenge was to balance between the many sides in West Asia where India has deep strategic ties with Israel on the one hand, and Saudi, UAE, Qatar, Iran and Egypt – to name a few – on the other hand.

6. SC Strengthening Law Against Child Pornography in India

GS 2 (Social Issues)

- **Why in News:**
 - Marking a significant move in the fight against child exploitation, the Supreme Court of India emphasised that the consumption of sexually explicit content involving minors is a severe criminal offence under the **POCSO Act**.
 - The top court **overruled a controversial judgement by the Madras HC**, which held

How SC strengthened child pornography law

The Supreme Court expanded the definition of what constitutes 'possession' of child pornography to include viewing or displaying such content as well

JUSTICE K. J. SHARMA
The Supreme Court has expanded the definition of 'possession' of child pornography under the POCSO Act to include viewing or displaying such content as well. This is a significant step towards strengthening the law against child exploitation.

What is the law in question?
The POCSO Act, 2015, defines 'possession' of child pornography as having control over the material. The Supreme Court has now clarified that viewing or displaying such content also constitutes possession.

Why is this important?
This ruling is crucial for protecting children from sexual exploitation. It ensures that anyone who views or displays child pornography is held accountable under the law.

What does the SC say?
The Supreme Court has held that 'possession' includes viewing or displaying child pornography. This means that anyone who accesses such content, even if they do not download it, is in violation of the law.

What are the implications?
This ruling strengthens the legal framework against child pornography. It provides a clear message that such activities are strictly prohibited and will be dealt with severely.

How will this be enforced?
Law enforcement agencies will be directed to monitor and act against individuals who are found viewing or displaying child pornography.

What is the next step?
The government will take measures to raise awareness about the dangers of child pornography and ensure that the law is effectively implemented.

CASES & VICTIMS

Section 15 & 16 of POCSO

Year Cases Victims

2021 106 709

2022 104 562

2023 111 117

Source: NCSC, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs

that passive consumption of child pornography did not constitute an offence under the POCSO Act or the Information Technology (IT) Act.

- **The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act:**

- **About:**

- It is the **first comprehensive law** in the country enacted in **2012** for dealing specifically with sexual abuse of children
 - Administered by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, the law is **intended to**
 - **Protect children from sexual assault**, sexual harassment and pornographic violations.
 - Establish Special Courts for such trials.
 - In **2019**, the Act was amended to strengthen the penalties for specified offences in order to deter abusers and promote a dignified upbringing.

- **Key provisions:**

- **Gender-neutral legislation:** The Act defines a child as "any person" under the age of 18.
 - **Non-reporting is a crime:** Any person in charge of an institution (excluding children) who fails to report the commission of a sexual offence involving a subordinate faces punishment.
 - **No time limit for reporting abuse:** A victim may report an offence at any time, even years after the abuse has occurred.
 - **Keeping victim's identity confidential:** The Act forbids the disclosure of the victim's identity in any form of media unless authorised by the special courts established by the Act.

- **Concerns:**

- **Such abuse is on the rise:** Particularly since the Covid-19 outbreak, when new forms of cybercrime have emerged.
 - **Lack of awareness or knowledge:** On the part of minor girls, boys, parents and society as a whole.

- **Examining the SC's Decision to Tighten the Law on Child Pornography:**

- **The provision of the POCSO Act in question:** The Bench (led by the CJI) expanded the interpretation of **Section 15** of the POCSO Act, which deals with the **"Punishment for storage of pornographic material involving child"**.

- **Section 15 of the POCSO Act:**

- It punishes any person, who stores or possesses pornographic material in any form involving a child,
 - With an intention to share or transmit child pornography;
 - For commercial purposes, etc.
 - With a three-to-five-year jail sentence.

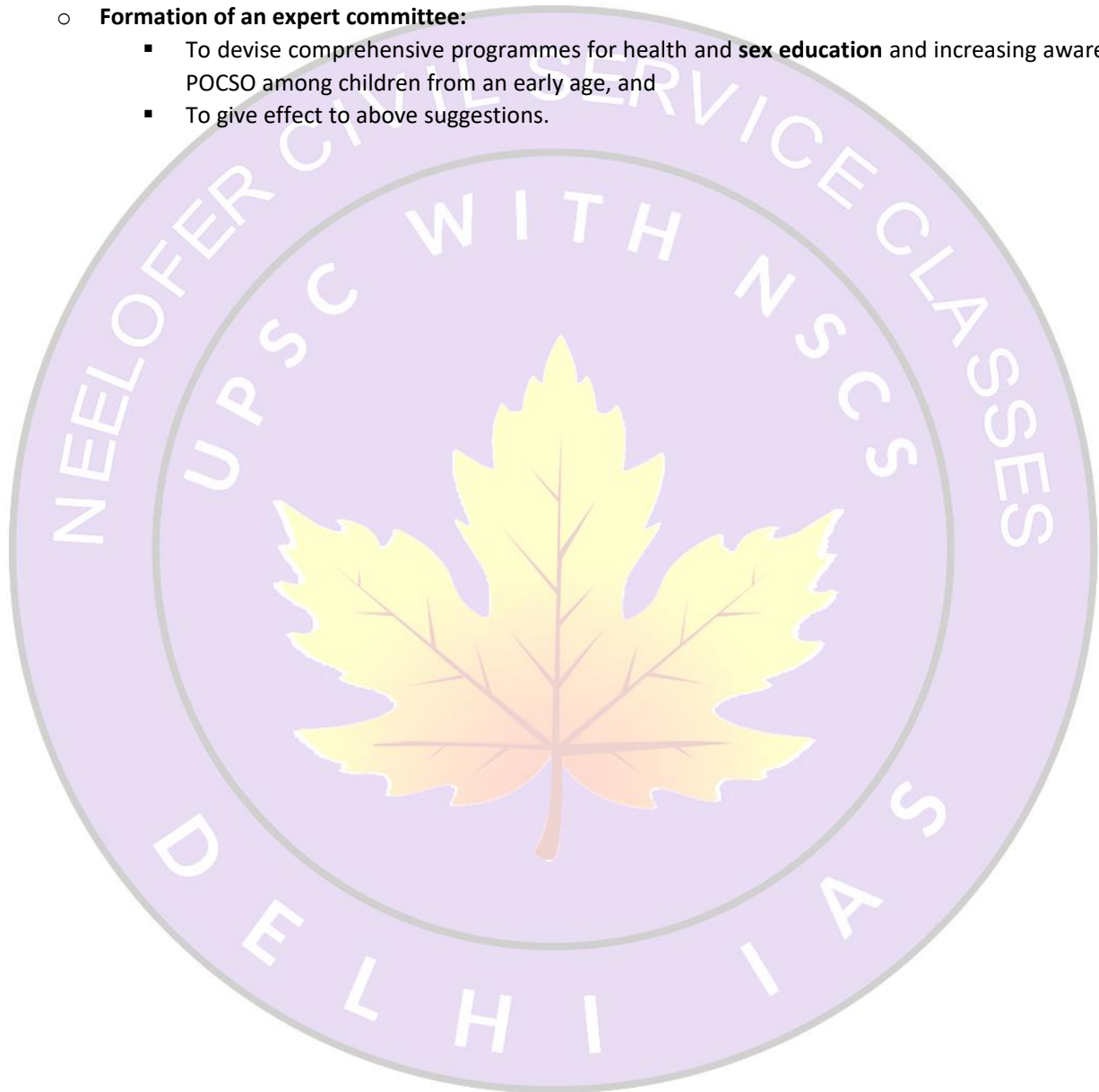
- **SC's verdict:**

- Section 15 is not limited to punishing the sharing or transmitting of child pornographic material, and **could even be used to punish the "intent"** to commit such an act.
 - **For instance**, the court held that a failure to "delete or destroy or report" child pornography would allow the court to "indirectly" infer that the concerned individual intended to share or distribute it under Section 15
 - Overturning the Madras HC judgement, **the SC expanded the definition of "possession"** in child pornography cases to include cases –
 - Where the individual may not have physical possession of child pornographic material.
 - But they have the power to control the material in question and the knowledge of exercise of such control.
 - The court termed this **"constructive possession"** and held that "viewing, distributing or displaying" such material would still amount to it being in the accused's "possession" under Section 15.

- **SC's Recommendations to the Centre to Address the Issue of Child Pornography:**

- **Amend the POCSO Act:** To replace the term "child pornography" with "child sexual exploitative and abuse material" (**CSEAM**) to better reflect the nature of the crime.

- **Help victims to heal and reintegrate into society:** By providing psychological counselling, therapeutic interventions and educational support to victims.
- **Introducing cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) programmes:** To help address the cognitive distortions that fuel such behaviour among offenders.
- **Promoting coordinated effort:** Among educators, health care providers, law enforcement and child welfare services to identify individuals with problematic sexual behaviours early and implement intervention strategies.
- **Raising awareness:** Public campaigns should aim to de-stigmatise reporting and encourage vigilance within the community.
- **Formation of an expert committee:**
 - To devise comprehensive programmes for health and **sex education** and increasing awareness of POCSO among children from an early age, and
 - To give effect to above suggestions.



MCQ Current Affairs
24th Sept, 2024

1. Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) lies in which one of the following states?

- a) Odisha
- b) Assam
- c) Maharashtra
- d) West Bengal

2. Consider the following statements regarding 'Disturbed area' under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA):

- A. An area can be considered to be disturbed due to differences or disputes among different religious, racial, language, or regional groups or castes or communities.
- B. Only the Central Government can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
- b) B only
- c) A and B
- d) Neither of two

3. Barak Bhuban Wildlife Sanctuary, was recently in the news, is located in:

- a) Tripura
- b) Maharashtra
- c) Haryana
- d) Assam

4. Consider the following statements regarding Nanozymes:

- A. These are the nonmaterial-based artificial enzymes which emulate the catalytic functions inherent in enzymes.
- B. These are used as therapeutics against cancer and inflammatory diseases.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
- b) B only
- c) A and B
- d) Neither of two

5. Consider the following statements regarding the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats scheme:

- A. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- B. Under this scheme support is provided to National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
- b) B only
- c) A and B
- d) Neither of two

MCQ Current Affairs
24th Sept, 2024

1. c
2. a
3. d
4. c
5. c

