

AFSPA

WHAT IS ARMED FORCES SPECIAL POWERS ACT?

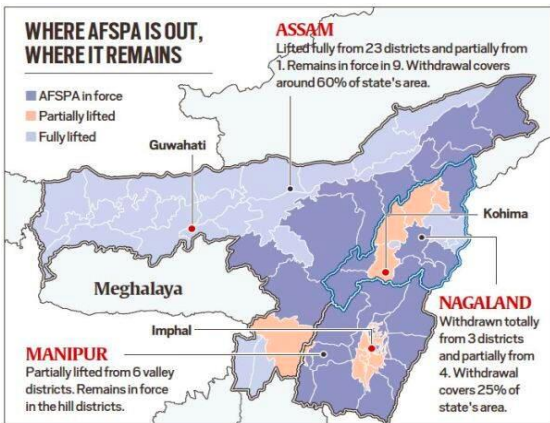
Introduced in 1958, AFSPA confers on members of the armed forces special powers to rein in suspects in areas declared "disturbed" on account of insurgent activities or similar threats. It has been in force in Manipur since 1980, and the alleged excesses committed under it are the reasons why activist Irom Sharmila has been on a hunger strike since 2000.

WHAT ARE SPECIAL POWERS?

AFSPA allows any commissioned officer, warrant officer and non-commissioned officer – or any other



- person of equivalent rank – to:
- Fire upon or use force against any person acting 'in contravention of any law for the time being in force in the disturbed area'
 - Arrest suspicious people without warrant
 - Destroy any structure suspected to house an arms dump, shelter from which armed attacks are made or are likely to be made
 - Conduct searches without warrants for evidence, to recover a wrongfully confined person or property or arms or explosives
 - AFSPA bars prosecution or proceedings – except with Centre's nod – against personnel for action committed while exercising powers under the Act



Philippine vs China

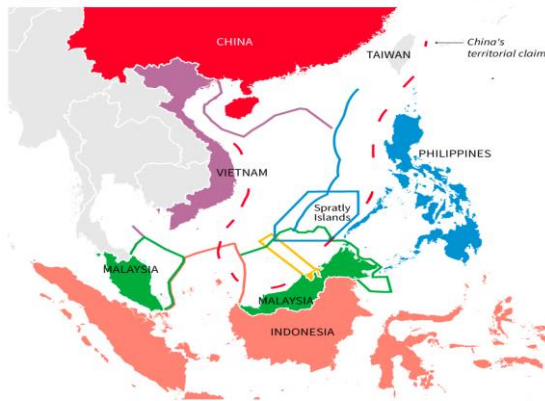
Philippines to remove a 300 meter floating barrier installed by China near the disputed Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea and



China and Taiwan Malaysia Vietnam Brunei Philippines

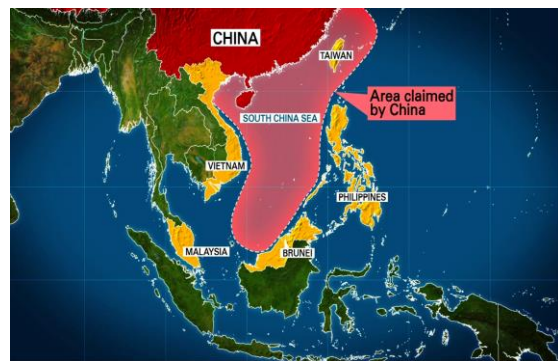
Overlapping claims in the South China Sea

China claims 90% of the South China Sea as its sovereign territory, but is opposed by Southeast Asian states and Taiwan. The waterway is strategically vital: it has rich fishing stocks; likely oil and gas deposits; and is where \$3 trillion of trade transits annually.



Sources: U.S. State Department; UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea; U.S. Energy Information Administration; Reuters Staff, 26/10/2020

Beijing's warning to Manila asking it "not to stir up trouble" underscore



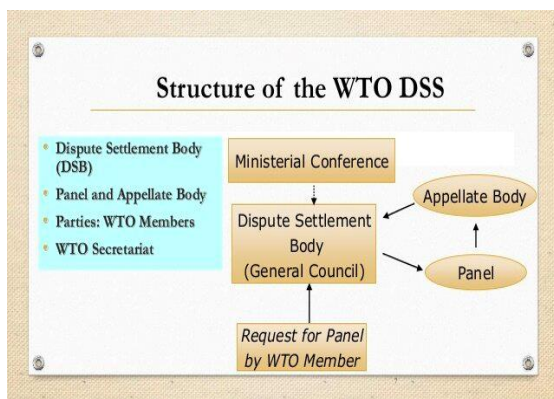
how delicate the situation is in one of the world's busiest waters



The Hindu

Global dispute settlement

Recently concluded G-20 Declaration, among its many commitments, reiterated the need to pursue reform of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to improve all its functions and conduct proactive discussions “to ensure a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all members by 2024”.



The WTO’s dispute settlement system, conceived as a two-tier panel cum appellate body structure, has been dysfunctional since 2019, because the United States has blocked the appointment of appellate body members.

Hailed as the crown jewel of the

WTO, the dispute settlement system, with the scope for appellate review and mechanisms to enforce rulings, has issued over 493 rulings since its establishment in 1995.

While the commitment expressed in the G-20 Declaration is heartening, whether it will have an appellate process or just be a one-stage panel process, given Washington’s continued opposition to an appellate review process, remains to be seen.

While the future of the WTO’s appellate process is uncertain, another area of international law witnessing the formative stages for an appellate process is international investment law through investor-state-dispute settlement (ISDS), an ubiquitous component of Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs).

The ISDS today is the principal means to settle international investment law disputes.

Benefits of an appellate review

An appellate review mechanism will allow for rectifying errors of law and harmonizing diverging interpretations.

It will have the power to uphold,

modify, or reverse the decision of a first tier tribunal and thus bring coherence and consistency, which, in turn, will infuse predictability and certainty into the ISDS system.

An appellate mechanism will also be better than existing mechanisms

India has not made a formal statement on this issue, India, presumably, supports the idea of an appellate review in the ISDS because Article 29 of the Indian model BIT talks of it.

Given India's concerns about inconsistency and incoherence in the ISDS system, supporting the creation of an appellate review mechanism will be in India's interest.

The Hindu

Ms swaminathan and biodiversity

Contributions to conservation and environmental protection are no less significant.

He worked extensively on four aspects of conservation: mangrove ecosystem; biodiversity conservation; genetic conservation;

and Keystone Dialogues (which pertained to plant genetic resources and biological diversity).

The mangrove ecosystems are capable of surviving in the most challenging environment of saline brackish waters, low oxygen tension and high temperatures.

They provide benefits to coastal populations, mainly protection against natural events.

But they constantly face the threat of destruction from human depredations, including expansion of coastal aquaculture.

Swaminathan sought urgent measures to prevent any further destruction of the mangrove forests and restore the partially degraded ones.

He was particular about maintaining the genetic diversity of the ecosystem of the Indo- Malaysian region, regarded as the center of diversity for mangrove species,

Swaminathan wanted every country to "achieve harmony between human and animal populations and

the natural resource endowments”.

He was acutely aware that unless the livelihood security of people was strengthened, conservation of unique natural endowments could become a lost cause in poor and overpopulated countries, according to his biography

For promoting the theme of conservation agriculture, he formulated an educational programme, ‘Every Child a Scientist’, to sensitise children to the country’s biological heritage and conservation methods.

After he was elected president of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 1984, he emphasised, in his “Personal Manifesto”, that the IUCN must change from a Euro-centric to an Earth- centric organisation.

The Hindu

Ramanujan prize

The 2023 SASTRA Ramanujan Prize will be awarded to Ruixiang Zhang of the University of California, Berkeley.

This annual \$10,000 prize is for outstanding contributions by

individuals in areas of mathematics influenced by Indian mathematics great Ramanujan (in a broad sense).

- The prize will be awarded at an International Conference in Number Theory.

The Hindu

IR in NEWS

Mullaitivu is the main town of Mullaitivu District, situated on the north-eastern coast of Northern Province, Sri Lanka.

China’s cross -sea bullet trains will link five cities in Fujian.

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