

**07 – 12 – 2021**

**News:** India, Russia renew military pact

## **2+2 Dialogue**

- 2+2 Ministerial is the **highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries.**
- It is a format of dialogue where the **defence/foreign ministers or secretaries meet with their counterparts** from another country.
- Apart **Russia**, India holds such talks with Australia, Japan and the USA also.

**News:** Highly invasive snail spotted in Kerala

- A **tiny snail with a striking, pellucid, golden yellow shell found in the Edappally canal in Kochi has been flagged as an invasive species** that could play havoc with native ecosystems.
- The Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) has identified it as the acute **bladder snail Physella acuta, globally branded as highly invasive.**
- This is the **first time this snail has been reported in Kerala.**
- What makes its discovery worrying is that it **plays host to worms that can cause food-borne diseases and skin itches in humans.**

- Moreover, its rapid growth rate, air breathing capability, and tolerance to pollution makes the *Physella acuta* a potential competitor to native fauna.
- Small in size, the snail can grow to 16 mm in height and 9 mm in width.
- *Physella acuta* is easily identified by its sinistral (left opening aperture) shell.
- Its good looks make this snail a favourite of aquariums, but it is advised not to do so.

**News:** Nagaland CM calls for scrapping of AFSPA

- Two days after a botched ambush by 21 Para Commando unit in Nagaland's Mon district, Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has called for scrapping of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act.

## **Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)**

- Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) was enacted in 1958, granting extra-ordinary powers and immunity to the armed forces to bring back order in the disturbed areas.
- A disturbed area is one which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA. An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.

- Once a region is declared ‘**disturbed**’ then it has to **maintain the status quo for a minimum of three months**, as per The Disturbed Areas Act of 1976.
- The **state governments can suggest** whether the Act is required to be enforced or not. But under Section (3) of the act, their **opinion can be overruled** by the governor or the Centre.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is the authority that would decide on the imposition of AFSPA in the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh.
- Initially when the act came into force in 1958 the power to confer AFSPA was given only to the governor of the state. This **power was conferred on the central government with the amendment in 1978** (Tripura was declared a disturbed area by the central government, over the opposition by the state government).
- The act **does not explicitly explain the circumstances on which it can be declared as ‘disturbed area’**. It only states that “the AFSPA only requires that such authority be of the opinion that whole or parts of the area are in a dangerous or disturbed condition such that the use of the Armed Forces in aid of civil powers is necessary.
- The **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. A suitable notification would have to be made in the Official

Gazette. As per Section 3, it can be invoked in places where “**the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary**”.

Some of the Immunities / Powers include:

- **Fire upon anyone** after giving warning who is acting against law and order in disturbed areas.
- **Arrest anyone** without warrant.
- **Stop and search** any vehicle or vessel.
- **Legal immunity** for these actions.
- Presently, AFSPA is enforced in Area **under 8 police stations of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur (excluding 7 assembly constituencies of Imphal), Mizoram, Entire state of Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir.**