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News: ‘One nation, one police uniform’ is ideal: Modi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently mooted the idea of ‘one nation, one police uniform’.
- He was addressing the State Home Ministers’ conference on internal security issues in Faridabad, Haryana.
- Mr. Modi said he was not imposing his views on States, but it was an idea worth deliberating on.
- He said police uniforms should have a brand recall just like the red and black post boxes in the country.
- Speaking at the conference, Nagaland’s Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister Y. Patton said he hoped that the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) would be removed from more areas in Nagaland in future.
- He added that due to continuous improvement in the law and order situation in the State, the Centre had removed the AFSPA from 15 police station limits in seven districts and the State Police had put in place a special security plan in all the denotified areas.

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 Union 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, Nagaland (excluding 15 police station limits in seven districts) and Jammu and Kashmir.

- The 'Police' is a State subject in the 7th Schedule of Indian Constitution, meaning that the Uniform of State Police shall not be changed by the Union government unless States decide to do so.