

OPERATION MEGHDOOT

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Context:

Recently, the Indian Army commemorated 40 years of 'Operation Meghdoot'.

Background:

Operation Meghdoot was a significant military endeavour executed by the Indian Army.

About OPERATION MEGHDOOT:

1. Operation Meghdoot was the codename for the Indian Army's operation to take full control of the Siachen Glacier in Ladakh.
2. Executed on the morning of April 13, 1984, in the highest battlefield in the world, Meghdoot was the first military offensive of its kind.
3. Operation Meghdoot was in response to the intelligence reports about Pakistan's Operation Ababeel, which aimed to capture the Siachen Glacier.
4. Siachen region had become a disputed area between India and Pakistan following a vague demarcation of territories in the Karachi Agreement of 1949.
5. As a result of Operation Meghdoot, India gained the 70 kilometers long Siachen Glacier and all of its tributary glaciers, as well as the three main passes on the Saltoro Ridge: Sia La, Bilafond La, and Gyong La.
6. This strategic advantage allowed India to hold higher grounds in the region, and currently, the Indian Army remains the first and only army in the world to have deployed tanks and other heavy ordnance at altitudes well over 5,000 meters

Strategic Importance of Siachen:

1. The Siachen Glacier, located at a height of around 20,000 feet in the Karakoram Mountain range, is known as the highest militarized zone globally.
2. It dominates the Shaksgam Valley (ceded to China by Pakistan in 1963) in the north, controls routes from Gilgit Baltistan to Leh from the west, and also dominates the ancient Karakoram Pass in the east.
3. Additionally, it observes nearly the entire Gilgit Baltistan, which is an Indian territory illegally occupied by Pakistan since 1948.