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WHAT IS THE UNIFIED COMPLEX RADIO ANTENNA (UNICORN)?



- UNICORN, also known as NORA-50, is a **shipborne integrated antenna system**.
- It is a **mast with integrated communication systems** that is engineered to dramatically **enhance a warship's stealth** and situational awareness.
- **Developed jointly by three Japanese companies** (NEC Corporation, Sampa Kogyo K.K., and The Yokohama Rubber Co., Ltd.), the system is **already in service aboard Japan's Mogami-class frigates**.

What does UNICORN do?

- **Conventional warships** typically carry **several exposed antennas** – for radar, communications, and electronic warfare – bolted onto a mast.
- Each of these surfaces adds to a ship's radar cross-section, making it easier for an adversary to detect.
- **UNICORN** does away with that arrangement by **consolidating multiple antennas into a single enclosed radome mounted on one mast**, cutting down the number of reflective surfaces a hostile radar can pick up.
- Its design stacks the antennas vertically inside a **bar-shaped dome**, moving **components** such as the tactical air navigation antenna **from an exposed position at the top of the mast to a more sheltered spot lower down**.
- A lightning diverter strip runs across the mast's surface as a safety measure, given the exposure of ships at sea to lightning strikes.
- **Inside this unified mast** are several **vital subsystems**, including those for tactical data links, Tactical Air Navigation Systems (TACAN), Identification Friend or Foe (IFF), Electronic Support Measures (ESM), and general communications.

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India-Japan Agreement:

- India and Japan signed a Memorandum of Implementation (MOI) on 15 November 2024 for the **co-development of UNICORN masts**.
- It is the **first military hardware co-development pact between the two countries**.
- **Japan will provide the design and engineering support, while India will handle integration, adaptation, and co-production through Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).**
- The integrated mast is expected to gradually **replace** existing communication and **sensor mast systems across the Navy's fleet**.

WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION?



- It is an **intergovernmental organization** established to **regulate whaling** and promote the **conservation of whale populations**.
- It was established under the **1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling**.
- Formed in **response to the alarming decline of whale stocks in the 1930s**, the IWC initially aimed to ensure sustainable whaling practices among its member nations.
- The Convention also **applies to factory ships, land stations, and whale catchers** under the jurisdiction of the contracting governments, and **to all waters in which they carry out whaling**.
- **Membership:**
 - Beginning in 1979, IWC membership started to grow: 23 members in 1979, 41 by 1985. Currently, there are **88 contracting governments**.
 - **Countries that do not hunt whales can also join the IWC.**

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- Some of the current **members include: Australia, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, India, Japan (until 2019), Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States.**
- The IWC's **main office** is in Impington, near **Cambridge, England.**
- There are generally **three types of whaling** that the **Commission** regulates:
- **Commercial Whaling:**
 - **In 1986, a global moratorium**, or a temporary ban, on commercial whaling was adopted due to the overexploitation of whale stocks.
 - The Commission has also **designated sanctuary areas** in the **Indian and Southern Oceans** where **commercial whaling is not allowed.**
 - Although the **moratorium is still in place**, some countries, such as **Norway and Iceland**, continue to **engage in commercial whaling**
- **Scientific Research Whaling:**
 - Article VIII of the Convention **allows** contracting **governments to issue special permits** authorizing the taking of whales for purposes of **scientific research.**
 - **Japan's lethal scientific research** in the **North Pacific and Southern Oceans** under such special permits **ended in 2019 with their withdrawal** from the Convention.
- **Subsistence Whaling:**
 - The Commission also **regulates aboriginal subsistence whaling** (whaling by native people to sustain themselves).
 - Currently, the Commission **permits indigenous communities** in **Denmark (Greenland), the Russian Federation, Vincent and the Grenadines, and the United States** to engage in this type of whaling on certain whale stocks.
- Over the years, the IWC has faced significant
 - It **does not have** a way to **force countries to follow its rules or punish**
 - It often becomes a platform for member nations to negotiate over whaling quotas rather than prioritizing conservation efforts.

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PRAMAAN CERTIFICATE

• PRAMAAN stands for **Programme for Recognition and Accreditation of sustainable Management practices for Agroforestry And Natural forestry resources.**

- **Launched by:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)
- It is a nationally accepted **framework for certification of forests, wood and non-timber forest products.**
- **Standards & Accreditation:**
 - Under the framework, Forest Management certification is assessed against **Indian Forest Management Standards** derived from the **National Working Plan Code 2023.**
 - PRAMAAN's accreditation architecture is **benchmarked against international frameworks**, ensuring recognition among domestic and global buyers and regulators.
 - **Audited by:** The certification is **audited by certification bodies** accredited by the **National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB)** under the **Quality Council of India.**

Three types of Certification under IFWCS "PRAMAAN":

- **Forest Management (FM) Certification:** For recorded forest areas and forest plantations, in accordance with the Indian Forest Management Standard
- **Trees Outside Forests (TOF) Management Certification:** For agroforestry systems and **private plantations** in accordance with the Trees Outside Forests (Management) Standard
- **Chain of Custody (CoC) Management Certification:** Ensures **traceability of timber** and non-timber forest products at each step of production, from its source to the customer.
- **Significance:** The IFWCS-PRAMAAN certificate enhances the **social, and ecological values** of India's forests, **agroforestry systems and the Indian wood-based industries.**

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SPECIAL POWERS, PERSISTENT DEBATE: UNDERSTANDING AFSPA'S PROVISIONS AND REACH

- AFSPA was enacted in **1958** to give the armed forces special powers to operate in areas declared "**disturbed**" due to insurgency or serious internal security problems.
 - The law first came into effect in 1958 to deal with the uprising in the Naga Hills, followed by the insurgency in Assam.
- Once an area is notified as **disturbed under Section 3**, security personnel receive powers that ordinary police do not have:
 - Authority to use force, including lethal force, against persons acting in contravention of prohibitory orders.
 - Power to arrest without a warrant.
 - Power to enter and search premises without a warrant.
- **Legal Protection**
 - The Act also **shields personnel**: prosecution or any legal proceedings for actions done (or purported to be done) under AFSPA require the **prior sanction** of the Central government.
 - It is precisely these extraordinary powers and this protection against prosecution that make AFSPA contentious.

Who Can Declare an Area "Disturbed"?

- Both the **Central and State governments** have the power to declare an area disturbed under Section 3. This is why the geographical application of the law has historically not been determined solely by the MHA.
- For decades, the Manipur government itself issued disturbed-area notifications, even though AFSPA had operated in the state since 1981.
 - This changed after the May 3, 2023 ethnic violence.
- **Current Status Across States**

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- MHA currently issues periodic disturbed-area notifications only for Manipur, Nagaland, and parts of Arunachal Pradesh.
- For Assam, the notification is issued by the State government.
- AFSPA was removed entirely from Tripura by then state government in 2015.
- Meghalaya was under AFSPA for 27 years, until it was revoked by the Ministry from April 1, 2018.
- Jammu and Kashmir has a separate law — the J&K Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1990.

How AFSPA Shrank in Manipur — and Then Returned?

- AFSPA's footprint in Manipur had been contracting before the current conflict:
 - 2004: Withdrawn from the Imphal municipal area.
 - April 2022 – April 2023: A **much larger rollback** — AFSPA withdrawn from all police station areas in the Manipur Valley, citing an improved security situation and greater public sense of security.
 - AFSPA, however, continued in the hill regions throughout, where disturbed-area notifications had been renewed periodically for decades.
- **Reimposition**
 - In November 2024, the MHA reimposed AFSPA in Manipur across the jurisdictions of six police stations spread over five districts — areas from which it had earlier been withdrawn.

Why AFSPA Continues in Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh?

- **Nagaland:** Continuation has historically been linked to the presence and movement of armed insurgent groups and the unresolved Naga political issue.
 - The Centre has held negotiations with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah), or NSCN-IM, and Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs).
- **Arunachal Pradesh:** Its application has remained concentrated in districts affected by insurgent movement and areas adjoining Assam.

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FROM SPECIAL STATUS TO STATEHOOD DEMAND: J&K'S EVOLVING CONSTITUTIONAL JOURNEY

- Article 370 provided **special status** to Jammu and Kashmir, ensuring Parliament could legislate on only three subjects in relation to the state: Defence; Foreign relations; Communication. These were the exact subjects mentioned in the Instrument of Accession that made the princely state part of India.
- J&K was allowed its **own constitution**, standing apart from other states.
- Only Article 1 (defining India's territory) and Article 370 itself applied to the state, beyond the extension of subjects under those three heads.

What Was Article 35A?

- A **Presidential Order** in 1954, issued under Article 370's authority, added Article 35A to the Constitution as an annexure (Appendix 1) to the official text.
 - It empowered the J&K Assembly to define who qualified as a "permanent resident" of the state.
 - It extended special rights to such residents — including the right to own property and access to government jobs and scholarships.

How Article 370 Was Abrogated?

- On August 5, 2019, the government rendered Article 370 inoperative through the **Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019**, which superseded the 1954 Order. This nullified J&K's separate constitution and extended all provisions of the Indian Constitution to the state.
- **The Legal Mechanism Used**
 - The government invoked **Clause 3 of Article 370**, which allows the President to declare the article inoperative — but requires the "recommendation of the Constituent Assembly of the State".

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- Since J&K's constituent assembly no longer existed, the President instead used Clause 1 of Article 370, which empowers the President to modify the Constitution's application to J&K.
- To achieve this, the phrase "Constituent Assembly of the State" in Article 367 was replaced with "Legislative Assembly of the State."
- Since the state's Legislative Assembly was suspended at the time (the state was under President's Rule after the BJP-PDP alliance collapsed), the order specified that any reference to the Legislative Assembly would mean a reference to the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir — a central appointee.

Conclusion

J&K's constitutional journey has never stood still — from a special-status accession meant to be temporary, through decades of gradual integration via agreements like Delhi 1952, to complete abrogation using the very machinery Article 370 itself provided.

The current statehood demand, and the withdrawn push to restore Articles 370 and 35A, shows this evolution is still being contested — now in the Assembly rather than through arms or ordinances.



MANDAR INSTRUMENT

- It is a **traditional musical instrument** deeply rooted in the **folk culture and tribal life of Jharkhand**.

Key Features of Mandar Instrument:

- **Structure:** The Mandar is a **percussion** instrument characterised by its distinctive **cylindrical shape** made from red clay, which slightly bulges in the middle.
- The structure is hollow, with its **openings covered by leather** on both sides.
- The right opening is smaller, while the left is larger.
- The **leather coverings are secured** using braided cords.
- A **special coating, known as Kiran**, is applied to the smaller opening, giving Mandar its resonant and unique sound.

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- When played, the musician often moves rhythmically, carrying the instrument using a rope slung over the shoulder.
- It serves as the primary instrument played **during festivals, crop celebrations, religious rituals, and cultural events.**
- It is deeply integrated into the lives of both tribal and non-tribal communities, having been used for centuries in various dance and song performances.

FAO COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY



- It is **FAO's (Food and Agriculture Organization)** highest global **intergovernmental body** on forestry.
- It guides the organisation's work and fostering **international collaboration, policy dialogue, and technical** guidance on forest-related issues.
- It was **established** by the Conference at its **Sixteenth Session in 1971.**
- **Governance:**
 - COFO reports to the **FAO Council** on matters related to programmes and budgets, and to the **FAO Conference** on policy and regulatory issues.
 - Its work is informed by **six Regional Forestry Commissions**, which review regional forestry priorities and inform global policy discussions.
 - **Meetings:** It convenes **biennially (every two years)** at the **FAO headquarters in Rome,**
 - It brings **together 128 Members**, convening ministers, heads of forest services, senior government officials and partner organizations.

Key Functions of Committee on Forestry:

- It reviews the **programmes of work of the Organization** in the field of forestry and reviews forestry problems of an international nature, evaluating said problems with a view to concerted action by Member Nations and the Organization.