



16-03-2022

White Phosphorus Bomb

Why in newspapers?

The fierce battle between Russia and Ukraine continues. For the 20th day in a row, Russian soldiers are still pelting bombs on different cities of Ukraine. Meanwhile, Russia is being accused of using phosphorus bombs. Ukraine alleges that phosphorus bombs have been used against them by Russia in the war. According to media reports, white phosphorus bombs were used in the town of Popasna in eastern Luhansk. Ukraine's human rights body has also claimed the use of phosphorus bombs by Russia. We try to understand what a phosphorus bomb is and how many deadly effects it can have and how dangerous is it for humans?

White Phosphorus Bomb?

- White Phosphorus It is a colourless, white or yellowish, waxy solid
- It is a highly flammable substance that reacts with oxygen in the air.
- It can catch fire at a temperature of 10 to 15 degrees above room temperature.
- Due to its flammable nature, each country has strict regulations regarding its manufacture and operation.

Quick Issue?

- WP is not classified by international agencies as an incendiary or chemical weapon.
- The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which is an intergovernmental organization and the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention, has not listed WP in any of the three Schedules of Chemical Weapons.

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS?

Ukraine

- **Capital** - Kyiv
- **President** - Volodymyr Zelensky
- **Prime Minister** - Volodymyr Goysman
- **Government** - Unitary semi-presidential republic
- **Area** - 603628 sq. km.
- **Population** - 42539010
- **Currency** - hryvnia (nb)
- **Official language** - Ukrainian

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS?

Russia

- **Capital** - Moscow
- **President** - Vladimir Putin
- **Prime Minister** - Dmitry Medvedev
- **Area** - 1,70,75,200 m².
- **Population** - 14,55,13,037
- **Currency** - ruble
- **Official language** - Russian
- **Government** - Semi-Presidential Federation



- International law prohibits the use of white phosphorus bombs in populated areas but allows them to be used to provide cover/protection to soldiers in open spaces.

Historical background ?

- The United Nations considers it an incendiary chemical. The General Rules of Protocol III on the Prohibition or Restriction on the Use of Incendiary Weapons may apply when it is used in military operations.
- Protocol III specifically mentions that it does not apply to warships that have lights, tracers, smoke or signalling systems, making it confusing for many whether the use of WP is considered a war crime. Protocol III does not specifically prohibit the use of White Phosphorus in military action. It restricts its use only near the civilian population.
- When WP comes into contact with human skin, it can cause both thermal and chemical burns.
- It can produce a number of chemicals when it comes into contact with the skin, such as phosphorus pent oxide which reacts with water in the skin and produces phosphoric acid which is highly corrosive.
- The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a multilateral treaty for the banning of chemical weapons and their destruction within a stipulated time.
- Negotiations for the CWC began in 1980 at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament
- The convention was drafted in September 1992 and submitted for signature in January 1993. It came into effect from April 1997.
- India signed the treaty in January 1993. The Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000 was passed to implement the CWC.
- Apart from CWC, the 'Australia Group' also prevents the spread of chemical or biological weapons.

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS?

Australia Group

- It is an informal forum of countries, which regulate the export of any such material by ensuring that it is not used for the development of chemical or biological weapons.
- Formation** - Year 1985 (during the Iran-Iraq War 1980-88)
- Member States** - 43 nations including the European Union
- The annual meeting is held in Paris (France).
- India on January 19, 2018. Joined the group as 43rd participant.



Likely question asked in preliminary exam

Question: Consider the following statements:

1. WP is not classified by international agencies as an incendiary or chemical weapon.
2. India signed the treaty in January 1993. The Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000 was passed to implement the CWC.
3. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a multilateral treaty for the banning of chemical weapons and their destruction within a stipulated time.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are true?

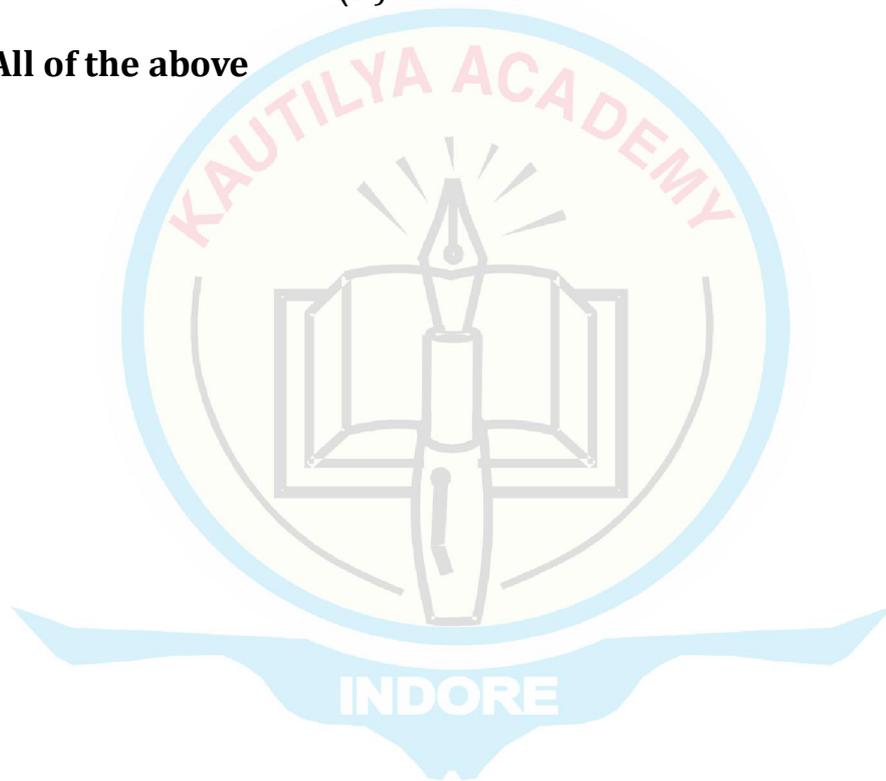
(A) 01 and 02

(B) 02 and 03

(C) 01 and 03

(D) All of the above

Answer - (D) All of the above





FALKLAND ISLANDS DISPUTE

Why in newspapers?

This long-running dispute between Britain and Argentina has become a topic of discussion after China recently declared the Falkland Islands as part of Argentina. China's statement has been condemned by Britain.

Falkland Islands?

The Falkland Islands have been a fabric of a complex history since their discovery. France, Britain, Spain and Argentina have claimed the island at one time or another, and have built and left settlements on this island. The Franco-Spanish alliance and Britain were on the brink of war because of the Falklands Crisis in 1770. Argentina continued to claim the archipelago after the Spanish government's claim to independence from Spain in 1816 and the War of Independence in 1817. The United Kingdom regained the island in 1833 after the US Navy's USS Lexington had destroyed the Argentine settlement at Puerto Louis on 28 December 1831.

Quick issue?

- The Falkland Islands or the Malvinas Islands are currently an overseas territory of Britain.
- The Falkland Islands, located in the South Atlantic Ocean, are made up of two main islands, East Falkland and West Falkland, and about 200 smaller islands.
- The capital and major city Stanley is located on the East Falklands, with several scattered small settlements as well as a Royal Air Force base located on Mount Pleasant.

Historical Background ?

- Argentina and the Falkland Islands, located about 300 miles east of its coast, remained under Spain for a long time. The island was first settled by the British in the year 1765 but was driven out by Spain in the year 1770.
- Argentina became independent from Spain in 1816, declaring its sovereignty over the Falklands in 1820. In the year 1831, an American warship destroyed the Argentine

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS?

Falkland Islands

- **Head of State** - Queen Elizabeth II
- **Governor** - Nigel Haywood
- **Government** - British Overseas Territory
- **Capital** - Stanley
- **Area** - 12,173 sq. km.
- **Population** - 3,140
- **Currency** - Falkland Islands pound (NW)
- **National Anthem** - "God Save the Queen"
- **National Motto** - "Seek Rights"



settlement on the East Falklands (Soledad Island). After this, from the year 1833, there was British rule here. Argentina continued to oppose Britain's occupation of the islands.

- The issue of the Falkland Islands also raised in the United Nations during the anti-colonial debate of World War II. In 1965, the United Nations General Assembly approved a resolution inviting Britain and Argentina to deliberate on finding a peaceful solution to the dispute. During this, in 1982, the Argentine military government invaded the Falklands, but they had to surrender. Britain retained the possession of the islands and stationed troops here.
- In 2009, a new constitution came into force, which strengthened the local democratic government of the Falklands and protected the rights of the people living there to determine the political status of the region. In a referendum held in 2013, the Falkland Islands voted almost unanimously to remain British territory.

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS?

China

- **Capital** - Beijing
- **President** - Xi Jinping
- **Prime Minister** - Li Keqiang
- **Area** - 9572900 sq. km.
- **Population** - 1447766361
- **Currency** - Renminbi
- **National Sport** - Table Tennis

Likely question asked in preliminary exam

Question: Consider the following statements:

1. The Falkland Islands or the Malvinas Islands are currently an overseas territory of Britain.
2. On the East Falklands lies the capital and major city Stanley, with several scattered small settlements as well as a Royal Air Force Base located on Mount Pleasant.
3. Argentina became independent from Spain in the year 1816, it declared its sovereignty over the Falklands in the year 1820. In the year 1831, an American warship destroyed the Argentine settlement on the East Falklands (Soledad Island). After this, from the year 1833, there was British rule here. Argentina continued to oppose Britain's occupation of the islands.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are true?

- (A) 01 and 02
- (B) 02 and 03
- (C) 01 and 03
- (D) All of the above

Answer - (D) All of the above

