



Siachen Glacier

For Prelims: [Siachen Glacier](#), [Geological Survey of India \(GSI\)](#), [Operation Megh Doot in 1984](#), Karachi Ceasefire Agreement, [Simla Agreement](#).

For Mains: Siachen Glacier.

Source: TH

Why in News?

NJ 9842 is the known boundary between India and Pakistan, but fewer know about **5Q 131 05 084, the number** assigned to the [Siachen Glacier](#) by the [Geological Survey of India \(GSI\)](#), a disputed area between the two countries since 1984.

- The point NJ 9842 as it is the last mutually demarcated point between India and Pakistan as per the Karachi ceasefire agreement of 1949 and also the point where the [Line of Control](#) of the Simla Agreement ends.

What is the First GSI Survey of Siachen Glacier?

- **GSI Survey:**
 - The first GSI survey of the Siachen Glacier was conducted in June 1958 by an Assistant Geologist V. K. Raina, with the **GSI**. The survey aimed to study the **Himalayan glacier systems as part of the International Geophysical Year activities**.
 - The GSI team spent nearly three months camping at the base of the glacier, conducting various studies and establishing survey points.
- **Significance for India:**
 - The survey holds significance for India as it marks the **official Indian exploration of the Siachen Glacier**, an area that would later become a bone of contention between India and Pakistan.
 - The peaceful environs surveyed in 1958 turned into a conflict zone when India **launched [Operation Meghdoot in 1984](#)** to secure its presence in the region.
 - The GSI survey provides **historical evidence of India's early knowledge and scientific engagement with the glacier**, countering any claims of Pakistani control since the beginning.
- **Pakistan's Claims:**
 - Initially, during the GSI survey in 1958, Pakistan **did not raise any protests or objections** to the Indian presence on the glacier. This could be attributed to both countries abiding by the terms of the **Karachi ceasefire agreement of 1949**, which had delineated the ceasefire line up to the glaciers and called for mutual demarcation.
 - However, Pakistan's lack of interest in scientific visits and explorations in the region might have also played a role.
 - It was only 25 years later, in August 1983, that **Pakistan unilaterally extended the [Line of Control \(LOC\)](#) from NJ 9842 till the [Karakoram Pass](#)** in its protest notes, challenging

the status quo.

- This move raised concerns in India, **leading to the pre-emptive occupation of the strategic Saltoro Heights** by Indian forces in April 1984.
- Pakistan's claims and actions since then have been based on differing interpretations of **historical agreements, such as the Karachi ceasefire agreement** and the [Simla Agreement](#).

What is Siachen Glacier?

- The Siachen Glacier is located in the **Eastern Karakoram range in the Himalayas**, just northeast of **Point NJ9842 where the LOC** between India and Pakistan ends.
 - The entire Siachen Glacier, with all major passes, has been under the administration of India since **1984 (Operation Meghdoot)**.
- The Siachen Glacier is **positioned from northwest to southeast**. It originates at the base of the Indira Col West, a col (low point) on the Indira Ridge, **at an altitude of 6,115 metres, and it descends to an altitude of 3,570 metres**.
- It is the Second-Longest glacier in the World's Non-Polar areas after Fedchenko Glacier in Tajikistan.
- The Siachen Glacier lies **immediately south of the great drainage divide** that separates the **Eurasian Plate from the Indian subcontinent** in the extensively glaciated portion of the **Karakoram sometimes called the "Third Pole"**.
- Nubra river originates from Siachen Glacier.
- The Siachen Glacier is the **world's highest battlefield**.



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Siachen Glacier is situated to the (2020)

- (a) East of Aksai Chin
- (b) East of Leh
- (c) North of Gilgit
- (d) North of Nubra Valley

Ans: (d)

