

## Constitutional Bench of SC upholds validity of Section 6A of Citizenship Act

**Section 6A** is a special provision added through **Citizenship Amendment Act, 1985** in furtherance of a Memorandum of Settlement called the 'Assam Accord' between then central government and leaders of the Assam Movement.

- It conferred **citizenship to those who migrated from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)** to Assam from **January 1, 1966, until 24 March 1971** upon completion of ten years from the date of detection as a foreigner.

**SC judgment:**

- On legislative competence of Parliament to enact Section 6A:** Law is enacted in exercise of power under Article 246 read with **Entry 17 of List I (Union list)**
  - Entry 17 deals with **Citizenship, naturalization and aliens.**
- Article 14 (Equality):** Assam's special citizenship law does **not violate equality** because the migrant situation in **Assam was unique** compared to rest of India.
- Impact on Culture (Article 29 (1)):** No evidence that migrants harmed **cultural rights of Assamese.**
- On the cutoff date of 24 March 1971:** It is reasonable because Pakistani Army launched **Operation SearchLight** to curb Bangladeshi nationalist movement in East Pakistan on 26 March 1971.
  - Migrants after this date were considered to be **migrants of war and not partitions.**

### About Citizenship Act, 1955

- Prescribes five ways of acquiring citizenship:** birth, descent, registration, naturalisation and incorporation of territory.
- Does not provide for **dual citizenship.**
- Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019:** It provides that any person belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian community from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan, shall not be considered illegal migrant if he/she entered into India on or before the 31st December, 2014.

## Islamabad hosts 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of Government

During summit, **eight significant agreements** were signed, focusing on issues like SCO's budget, operations of secretariat, and **counterterrorism efforts.**

**Key Takeaways from Summit:**

- India **highlighted three evils** i.e. **Terrorism, extremism and separatism** against regional peace and development.
- India **did not endorse China's Belt and Road Initiative** on grounds of territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- Meeting saw **criticism of "unilateral sanctions"** that Western nations have imposed e.g. on Russia.
- Meeting further **advanced India's digital agenda**, incorporating Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and digital inclusion into SCO cooperation framework.

**Significance of SCO for India:**

- Countering Terrorism: Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** provides access to key information and intelligence on movements of terrorists and drug-trafficking.
- Forum for Cooperation with Central Asian Countries:** Provides India a platform to Help India in pursuing Connect Central Asia policy.
  - SCO also provides a forum for **closer Indo-Russian cooperation.**
- Energy Security:** Region is home to **4% of world's natural gas reserves** and approximately 3% of oil reserves.
- Balancing Chinese Dominance in Region:** E.g. through Chabahar Port, INSTC etc.

**Challenges of SCO:**

- Disputes** among member countries;
- Competition for dominance** between China and Russia,
- Divergent interests** of Member countries etc;



### About SCO (HQ: Beijing, China)

- Genesis:** **Permanent intergovernmental international organization established in 2001 in Shanghai (PRC)** by Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- Current Members:** India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus. While Afghanistan and Mongolia have observer status.
- Goal:** Strengthening mutual trust, **friendship and neighborly relations** among member states; Promoting effective cooperation in **political, economic, and cultural spheres** etc.

## Prime Minister participates in International Abhidhamma Divas (IAD)

Ministry of Culture in association with International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) observed IAD.

It also celebrated recent declaration of Pali as a classical language by Cabinet.

### About IAD:

- It commemorates the day when Lord Buddha descended from the celestial realm (Tāvātimsa-devaloka) to Sankassiya (now Sankisa Basantapur) in Uttar Pradesh.
  - Asokan Elephant Pillar at Sankassiya marks this significant event.
- It coincides with end of first Rainy Retreat (Vassa) i.e. period of three months when bhikkhus must reside in one place and Pavāraṇā festival (ceremony for conclusion of rainy retreat).

### About Abhidhamma:

- Abhidhamma is a collection of suttas (teachings) representing earliest compilation of Buddhist philosophy and psychology detailing Buddhist doctrines.
  - Abhidhamma combines 'abhi' (higher/further) and 'dhamma' (teachings), translating to Higher Dhamma or Further Truths.
- It forms third part of Tripitaka (Pali Canon) fundamental to Theravada Buddhist tradition.
- Made up of seven books, it explores human experience, including nature of consciousness, universal mental factors, cultivation of mindfulness, etc.
  - Abhidhamma developed a specialized vocabulary in Pali, forming the basis of Buddhist philosophy and psychology.
  - Key terms include "citta" (consciousness), "cetasika" (mental factors), "rūpa" (materiality), and "nibbāna" (final liberation).

### About Pali language:

- Recognized as Classical Language alongside Marathi, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali.
- Ancient language in which Buddhist and Jain literature is written, including the Tripitaka.
  - Tripitaka includes Vinaya Pitaka (Ethical monastic rules), Sutta Pitaka (discourses of Buddha and his principal disciples) & Abhidhamma Pitaka.
- Other important works in Pali: Jataka Kathas, Atthasālinī & Sammohavinodanī (Explains intricate teachings of Abhidhamma philosophy), Dhammapada, Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta etc.

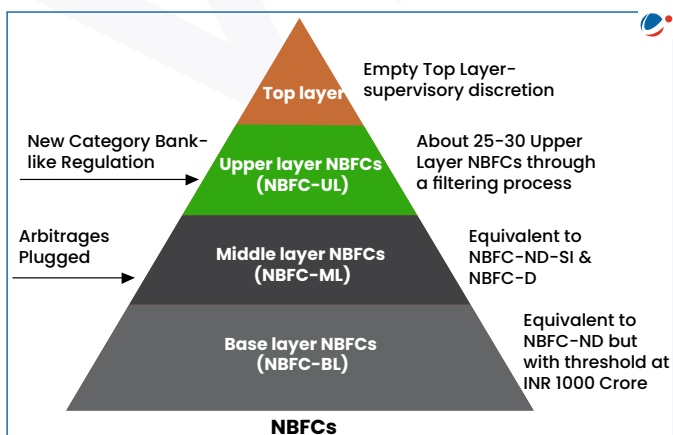
## Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bars four NBFCs from Granting Loans

The RBI has issued direction in the exercise of its powers under Section 45L(1)(b) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

RBI action is based on material supervisory concerns observed in the pricing policy regarding their weighted average lending rate (WALR) and the interest spread charged over their cost of funds.

### About Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)

- It is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956, primarily engaged in lending activities, but excludes institutions mainly involved in agriculture, industrial activity, trading goods (except securities), and providing any services and sale/purchase/construction of immovable property.
- The RBI regulates NBFCs in four layers based on their size, activity, and perceived riskiness (See Infographic).
- NBFCs are different from Banks as
  - They cannot accept demand deposits.
  - Do not form part of the payment and settlement system and cannot issue cheques drawn on itself.
  - The deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available to depositors of NBFCs.
- Issues with NBFCs: Multiple regulatory bodies (SEBI, IRDAI, etc), funds borrowed for short term and lending take place for long tenures, Non-Performing Assets, etc.



## Framework for integrating trustworthy AI into defense operations launched

Evaluating Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (ETAI) Framework and Guidelines have been launched by Chief of Defense Staff to integrate Trustworthy AI into critical defense operations.

- ETAI is a risk-based assessment framework developed specifically for the defense sector.
- Focuses on five broad principles: Reliability and Robustness, Safety and Security, Transparency, Fairness and Privacy.
- Framework further defines a comprehensive set of criteria for evaluating trustworthy AI and offers a structured approach to build and assess trustworthy AI.

### How AI is revolutionizing modern warfare?

- Intelligent Weapons Systems:** AI is enhancing capabilities of drones and other autonomous systems. E.g. Israeli UAVs Harpy and Harop
- Command and Control:** By processing vast amounts of data in real time. E.g. Sarvatra Pehchaan: AI based Intrusion Detection & Integrated Command Station
- Decision-Support Systems:** AI-driven decision-support systems can rapidly assess complex battlefield situations, suggesting optimal strategies and responses. E.g. Use of Storm drone by Indian army

### Concerns with Use of AI:

- Accidental damage:** Use of automatically controlled weapons (E.g. Killer Robots) can result in unintended civilian and innocent deaths.
- Legal and Ethical Ambiguity:** E.g. in cases of Human rights violations and civilian casualties.
- Other Issues:** Cyber security Risks, Lack of reliability, Promoting unrest and conflicts etc.

### Steps taken by India for AI adoption into defense sector

- Defense AI Council (DAIC):** Created to provide guidance and policy level changes for AI adoption
- Defense AI Project Agency (DAIPA):** Prepared roadmap for development of AI enabled applications
- AI roadmap for defense DPSU:** 61 defense specific AI projects have been identified for development
- Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) framework** to foster Innovation.

## Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report, 2024 released

It is jointly published by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)**.

➤ The report overlays **violent conflict data with multidimensional poverty data** to better understand their interlinkages across countries and over time with the theme **"Poverty Amid Conflict"**.

### Key finding of the report

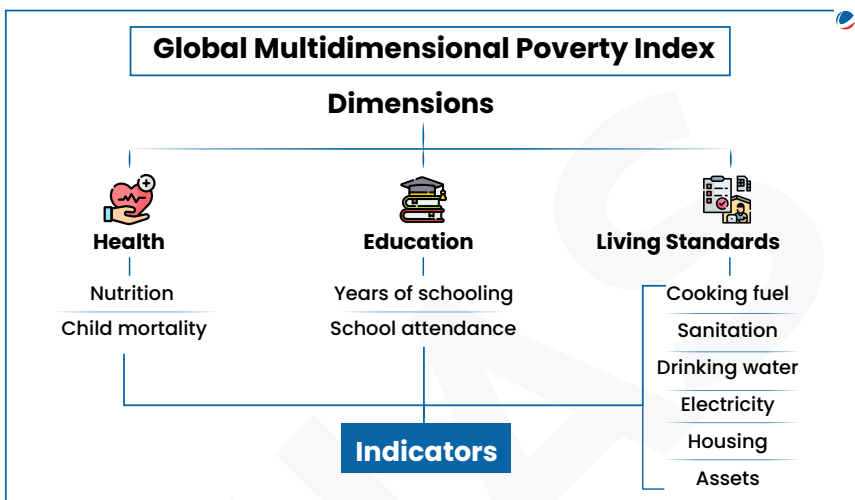
- Countries at war have **higher deprivations compared with non-conflict settings across all ten indicators** of multidimensional poverty.
- Across **112 countries, 1.1 billion people (~18%)** live in acute multidimensional poverty.
- With **234 million, India** was the country with the **largest number of people in extreme poverty**.

### About MPI

- It is a poverty measure that reflects the multiple deprivations that poor people face in the areas of **education, health, and living standards** (refer image).
- If a person is deprived of **1/3rd or more of (weighted) indicators**, they are identified as **'MPI poor'**.
- **Genesis:** Launched in 2010.
- MPI advances **Sustainable Development Goal 1**, i.e., ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.

### India's National MPI (NMPI)

- It was introduced in 2021 by **NITI Aayog**
- Retained the **10 original indicators of the global MPI model** and has added two indicators, viz., **Maternal Health and Bank Account**.



## Also in News



### Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB)

DTAB has recommended inclusion of all antibiotics in definition of new drugs in **New Drugs and Clinical Trial (NDCT) Rules, 2019**.

#### About DTAB

- It's a part of the **Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)** in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- DTAB is a committee constituted as per **provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940**.
- The **highest statutory decision-making body**, DTAB functions by taking policy decisions related to the technical aspects of the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act and Rules**.
- They **send the recommendations to the Ministry** for final approval.



### Minimum Support Price (MSP)

Recently Government has increased MSP for wheat and five other rabi crops.

#### About MSP

- It is **guaranteed price paid to farmers** when government **buys/procures their crops**.
- **MSP covers 22 crops:**
  - ⊕ **14 Kharif Crops:** Paddy, jowar, bajra, maize, ragi, arhar, Moong, Urad, groundnut, soyabean, sunflower, sesamum, niger seed, cotton.
  - ⊕ **6 Rabi Crops:** Wheat, barley, gram, masur (lentil), rapeseed/mustard and safflower.
  - ⊕ **2 Commercial Crops:** Jute and copra
  - ⊕ In addition, **MSP for Toria and de-husked coconut** is also fixed based on MSPs of rapeseed & mustard, and copra, respectively.
- **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices** recommends MSP and **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** chaired by Prime Minister takes final decision.



### Line of Credit (LOC)

India has extended its first-ever rupee-denominated LOC to **Mauritius** for a water pipeline replacement project.

- It is a **development assistance** by India under **Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS)** through Exim Bank of India.

#### About LOCs

- LOC is not a grant but a **'soft loan' provided on concessional interest rates to developing countries**, which has to be repaid by borrowing government.
- LOCs also help to **promote exports of Indian goods and services**, as 75% of value of contract must be sourced from India.
- Over **300 LOCs worth US\$ 32 billion** have been extended to **68 countries**, covering around **600 projects in various sectors**.



### Bushveld Igneous Complex (BIC)

Researchers have discovered **living microbes** within a sealed fracture of a **2-billion-year-old rock** from **BIC in South Africa**.

- This is **oldest example of living microbes** found within **ancient rock to date**.

#### About BIC

- Located in South Africa, It is a large layered **igneous intrusion within Earth's crust** (Magma slowly cooled below Earth's surface).
- It has been **tilted and eroded with time** and covers an area of approximately **66,000 square kilometers**.
- It contains some of the richest ore deposits on Earth including about **70% of the world's mined platinum**.





### Green and Blue water

The Global Commission on the Economics of Water released The economic of water report highlighting 'Green water' and 'Blue water'.

#### About Green and Blue water

- Green water refers to moisture in soils and vegetation.
  - ⊕ **Part of the hydrologic cycle:** Green water is absorbed by roots, used by plants, and released back to the atmosphere through the **process of transpiration**.
  - ⊕ It is vital for generating rainfall, as well as for mitigating climate change and ensuring economic stability.
- **Blue water** is about encompassing surface and groundwater, found in lakes, rivers, and reservoirs.
  - ⊕ Blue water is recharged by precipitation.



### Hyperuniformity

Researchers have explored the mechanism **behind the recently discovered exotic disordered state** of matter, known as "hyperuniformity".

#### About Hyperuniformity

- It is a property of certain heterogeneous media in which **density fluctuations in the long-wavelength range decay to zero**.
- **Feature:** Fluctuations are suppressed as the system grows, unlike liquids or solids, where random variations are common.
- **Where it is found:** Quasicrystals, biological emulsions, soft and biological emulsions and colloids
- **Applications:**
  - ⊕ Energy-efficient photonic devices (like photonic band-gap materials)
  - ⊕ Optical data transmission systems for communication
  - ⊕ Possible uses in controlling physiological functions in cells.



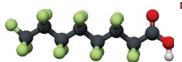
### Hoolock Gibbon

The National Board for Wildlife deferred its nod for oil exploration in Assam's Hoolongapar Gibbon Sanctuary.

- This sanctuary is the habitat of the **Hoolock Gibbon**.

#### About Hoolock Gibbon

- It is the **only apes found in the country**.
- **It is of two types:** western hoolock gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock*) and the eastern hoolock gibbon (*Hoolock leuconedys*).
- The western hoolock gibbon **has a much wider range**, and is found in all the states of the north-east.
- The eastern hoolock gibbon **inhabits specific pockets of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam**.
- The western hoolock is listed as **Endangered in the IUCN Redlist**, while the eastern hoolock is listed as **Vulnerable**.



### Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)

New research suggests that exposure to PFAS may impair **kidney function through disruptions in gut microbiota**.

#### About PFAS:

- Often dubbed **forever chemicals** because these chemicals persist in environment and **human bodies, breaking down extremely slowly**.
- PFAS are **man-made chemicals used in everyday products**. Such as:
  - ⊕ Nonstick cookware, water-repellent clothing, stain resistant fabrics and carpets, some cosmetics, some firefighting foams, etc.
- PFAS exposure has been linked to several health issues, including **cardiovascular disease, cancer, etc.**
- Currently, three sub-groups of PFAS are **listed under Stockholm Convention** as industrial POPs.

## Place in News



### Mauritania (Capital: Nouakchott)

The President of India visited Mauritania.

#### About Mauritania

- **Political Features:**
  - ⊕ **Form of Government:** Presidential.
  - ⊕ **Boundary:** It borders **Western Sahara to the northwest, Algeria to the northeast, Mali to the east and southeast, and Senegal to the southwest, and Atlantic ocean in the west.**
  - ⊕ It is a **former French colony**, It achieved independence in 1960.
- **Geographical features:**
  - ⊕ **Location:** Lies on the **Atlantic coast of Africa, Much of the country is part of the Sahara desert.**
  - ⊕ **Drainage:** Senegal River and its tributaries.
  - ⊕ **Climate:** Dry, hot, and windy climate, and severely exposed to the effects of desertification.
    - ◆ **Northeastern trade winds and Harmattan winds** affect its climate.

