

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS SECTION 6A OF CITIZENSHIP ACT

### Context

- In a 4:1 majority verdict, the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955.

### Background

- Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955**, confers citizenship to immigrants who entered Assam after January 1, 1966 but before March 24, 1971.
  - The provision was inserted into the Act in furtherance of a Memorandum of Settlement called the “**Assam Accord**”.
- Under Section 6A, foreigners who had entered Assam before January 1, 1966, and been “ordinarily resident” in the State, would have all the rights and obligations of Indian citizens.

### Concerns raised on the provision

- The **cut-off date provides a different standard for citizenship** for immigrants entering Assam than the rest of India (which is **July 1948**) and violates the right to equality (**Article 14**) of the Constitution.
- Also the provision **violates the rights of indigenous people** from Assam under **Article 29** by changing the demographics in the state.

### What is the Assam Accord?

- The Assam Accord was signed in 1985 amongst **Union of India, Govt. of Assam, All Assam Student of Union, All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad**.
- To implement the various Clauses of Assam Accord a new Department has been established in the name of “**Implementation of Assam Accord Department**” during the year 1986.
- The Accord set **March 24, 1971**, as a cut-off. Anyone who had come to Assam before midnight on that date would be an Indian citizen, while those who had come after would be dealt with as foreigners.
- The same cut-off was used in updating the **National Register of Citizens (NRC)**.

### Supreme Court ruling

- The Court opined that the mere presence of diverse ethnic groups within a state does not, in itself, constitute a violation of **Article 29(1)** of the Constitution (**protection of interests of minorities**).

- Section 6A is a statutory intervention that balances the humanitarian needs of migrants of Indian origin and the impact of such migration on economic and cultural needs of Indian states

### Concluding remark

- The judgment underlined parliamentary supremacy over citizenship matters under **Article 11** of the Constitution.
- It also reinforced the Union government’s defense of amendments under the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019**, which is presently pending challenge in the Supreme court.

### Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019

- It amended the **Citizenship Amendment Act, 1955**, making two key changes to facilitate citizenship to undocumented migrants belonging to six non-Muslim communities — **Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian** from **Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan**, who entered India on or before December 31, 2014.
- It reduced the period to qualify for citizenship from the existing requirement of continuous stay of 11 years to continuous stay of **five years**.
- However, Pakistani Hindus were anyway eligible for citizenship under **Section 5 and Section 6 (1)** of the Citizenship Act, 1955. The CAA only helped fast track the application process.
- The Rules grant the final authority to accord citizenship to an empowered committee headed by the Director, Census Operations, while the scrutiny of applications filed online on the portal was done by a **district level committee (DLC)** headed by Department of Post officials.
  - On successful verification of documents, the DLCs administered the oath of allegiance to the applicants.

Source: IE

## FEASIBILITY OF GRAM NYAYALAYAS

### In News

- The Supreme Court questioned the practicality of establishing Gram Nyayalayas given the inadequate infrastructure of regular courts.

### About Gram Nyayalayas

- The Law Commission of India proposed the establishment of **Gram Nyayalayas in its 114th**

**Report** to ensure affordable and quick access to justice for rural citizens.

- **The Gram Nyayalayas Act** was enacted on October 2, 2009, applying throughout India except in certain northeastern states and specified tribal areas.
  - ♦ The Act does not apply to Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and certain tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.

#### Key Features and Objectives:

- **Location:** Headquarters at the intermediate Panchayat; Nyayadhikaris may visit villages to hear cases.
- **Accessibility:** Designed to provide inexpensive justice at the doorstep of rural communities.
- **Establishment:** Set up for each intermediate Panchayat or groups of contiguous Panchayats, located at their headquarters.
- **Procedures:** Handle specified civil and criminal cases using a summary procedure, with an emphasis on conciliation.
- **Flexibility:** Not strictly bound by the Indian Evidence Act, guided by natural justice principles.

#### Challenges

- **Feasibility Concerns:** The Supreme Court questioned the practicality of establishing gram nyayalayas given the **inadequate infrastructure** of regular courts.
  - ♦ Only about 314 out of a targeted 2,500 gram nyayalayas are operational across India.
- **Funding Issues:** State governments struggle to fund existing courts, making it unlikely they can support additional rural courts.
- **Limited Effectiveness:** Concerns were raised about the effectiveness of gram nyayalayas, as some magistrates handle very few cases (e.g., one in Karnataka managed only 116 cases in four years).
- **Potential Burden on Higher Courts:** The court warned that establishing these rural courts might lead to an increase in appeals and writ petitions in high courts, counteracting the intended purpose of declogging district courts.

#### Suggestions

- The Supreme Court suggested increasing the number of regular courts and judicial officers, rather than establishing more gram nyayalayas.
- The court proposed that the establishment of gram nyayalayas should be based on specific state needs rather than a uniform mandate across all states.

Source: HT

## SCO SUMMIT 2024

#### Context

- The heads of government meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was attended by **India, Pakistan, China, Russia and six other member countries**.
  - ♦ External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar travelled to Islamabad for the meeting, the **first such visit in nine years**.

#### Key Takeaways

- Due to territorial sovereignty issues, **India remains the only SCO member to oppose China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
  - ♦ The SCO's joint communique reaffirmed support for China's BRI.
- The summit saw **criticism of Western sanctions** on Russia and Iran, which were deemed harmful to international trade and economic relations.
- Discussions between India and Pakistan indicated **a potential resumption of cricket ties**, though these are still early.
- **In a reference to Pakistan**, the External Affairs Minister said, "If activities across borders are characterised by terrorism, extremism and separatism, they are hardly likely to encourage trade, energy flows, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges in parallel."

#### Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- **Shanghai Five** emerged in **1996** from a series of border demarcation and demilitarization talks between **4 former USSR republics and China**.
  - ♦ **Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan** were members of the **Shanghai Five**.
  - ♦ With the accession of **Uzbekistan** to the group in **2001**, the Shanghai Five was renamed the SCO.
- **Objective:** To enhance regional cooperation for efforts to curb terrorism, separatism, and extremism in the Central Asian region.
- **Members:** China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Belarus and the four Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan,.
- **Observer status:** Afghanistan and Mongolia.
- **Language:** The SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.
- **Structure:** The **supreme decision-making body** of the SCO is the **Council of Heads of States (CHS)** which meets once a year.



- ♦ **The Organization has 2 standing bodies** — the Secretariat in Beijing and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent.

### Significance for India

- **Regional Security:** The SCO serves as a platform for addressing security concerns, including terrorism, separatism, and extremism, which are critical issues for India given its geographical and political context.
- **Economic Cooperation:** The organization facilitates economic collaboration among member states, which enhance trade and investment opportunities for India, particularly with Central Asian countries.
- **Geopolitical Influence:** India's membership in the SCO helps enhance its influence in Central Asia and counterbalances the presence of China and Pakistan in the region.
- **Central Asia:** The **SCO is especially important for India** because its membership and focus emphasize **Central Asia**—a region where **India is keen to ramp up ties** but faces an inherent constraint with its outreach.
  - ♦ In recent years, India has convened dialogues with Central Asian leaders to signal India's commitment to partnership—and the visit by External Affairs Minister to Islamabad is to amplify that message.

### Challenges

- **China-Pakistan Axis:** The strong partnership between China and Pakistan within the SCO complicates India's strategic positioning, as at times it limits India's influence in regional security discussions.
- **Geopolitical Tensions:** Ongoing border disputes and geopolitical tensions with China and Pakistan spill over into SCO discussions, making it difficult for India to engage constructively.
- **Focus on Security over Economic Development:** The SCO's primary focus on security issues sometimes overshadow economic and developmental cooperation, which are crucial for India's interests in the region.

### Conclusion

- India has to maintain a delicate balance as the dynamics of the SCO are changing.
- The External Affairs Minister's trip was intended to signal **India's commitment to the SCO**, not to strengthen ties with Pakistan.

Source: IE

## NEED FOR TRUSTWORTHY AI IN MODERN WARFARE

### Context

- The Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan launched the **Evaluating Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (ETAI) Framework and Guidelines** for the Armed Forces.

### About

- The ETAI Framework focuses on **five broad principles**:
  - ♦ Reliability and Robustness,
  - ♦ Safety and Security,
  - ♦ Transparency,
  - ♦ Fairness and
  - ♦ Privacy.
- The framework and guidelines offer developers and evaluators a structured approach to build and assess trustworthy AI.

### Artificial Intelligence

- Artificial intelligence (AI) is a wide-ranging branch of computer science concerned with building smart **machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence**.
- Artificial intelligence allows machines to model, or even improve upon, the capabilities of the human mind.

### Artificial Intelligence in Defence Sector

- **Intelligence and Surveillance:** AI helps military analysts process vast amounts of data gathered through satellites, drones etc. to detect threats, recognize patterns, and make informed decisions in real-time.
- **Autonomous Weapon Systems:** AI-powered systems like drones, unmanned combat vehicles, and missile systems operate autonomously, reducing human intervention in combat scenarios.
- **Supply Chain Management:** AI optimizes logistics by predicting equipment failures, automating inventory management, and ensuring timely delivery of critical supplies.
- **Cybersecurity:** AI helps identify vulnerabilities, detect cyberattacks in real-time, and automatically respond to mitigate damage. AI-driven systems provide predictive capabilities, safeguarding sensitive military infrastructure.
- **Decision-Making Support:** AI enhances decision-making in warfare by simulating various combat scenarios and predicting outcomes.

### Need For Trustworthy AI in Modern Warfare

- **Ethical dilemmas** arise in situations where AI systems misinterpret non-combatants as threats, leading to potential violations of international humanitarian law.
  - ♦ In 2020, the United Nations raised concerns about the use of autonomous drones in the **Libyan Civil War**.
- **Cybersecurity Risks:** AI systems are vulnerable to cyberattacks, where adversaries could manipulate the algorithms to produce incorrect results or hijack autonomous systems.
- **Accountability:** If an AI-powered autonomous system causes collateral damage or violates the laws of war, it becomes challenging to assign responsibility.
  - ♦ Autonomous military systems like **LAWS (Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems)** have sparked debates regarding accountability.
- **Bias in AI Decision-Making:** During the development of facial recognition technologies, certain AI systems exhibited racial bias, misidentifying individuals from certain ethnic groups.

### Way Ahead

- While AI has immense potential in revolutionizing defense capabilities, its integration into military operations is fraught with challenges.
- Addressing these challenges requires stringent ethical guidelines, international cooperation, robust technological safeguards, and accountability frameworks to ensure that AI in defense is used responsibly and without jeopardizing security.

Source: BL

## “SAMARTH” (SCHEME FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN TEXTILES SECTOR)

### Context

- The Union government extended the Samarth Scheme for **two years** (FY 2024-25 and 2025-26) with a budget of **Rs. 495 Crore** to train 3 lakh persons in textile-related skills.

### Samarth Scheme

- Samarth is a demand-driven and placement-oriented umbrella **skilling program** of the **Ministry of Textiles**.
- **Scheme aims to** encourage and support the industry in creating jobs in the organized textile

and related sectors, covering the entire value chain of textiles, excluding Spinning and Weaving.

- ♦ The scheme also **provides upskilling/reskilling programs** to improve the productivity of existing workers in Apparel & Garmenting segments.
- **Achievement:** Under the Scheme, **3.27 lakh** (in which **88.3%** is women) candidates have trained, of which **2.6 lakh (79.5%)** have been employed.

### Textile Industry of India

- **Share in Domestic Trade:** The domestic apparel & textile industry in India contributes approx. **2.3 % to the country's GDP, 13%** to industrial production and **12%** to exports.
- **Share in Global Trade:** India has a **4%** share of the global trade in textiles and apparel.
- **Export:** In FY22, India was the third largest textile exporter globally, enjoying a 5.4% share.
- **Production of Raw Material:** India is one of the largest producers of cotton and jute in the world. India is also the 2nd largest producer of silk in the world and 95% of the world's hand-woven fabric comes from India.
- **Employment Generation:** The industry is the 2nd largest employer in the country providing direct employment to 45 million people and 100 million people in the allied sector.
- **Regions:** Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Haryana, Jharkhand, and Gujarat are the top textile and clothing manufacturing states in India.

### Other initiatives in the textile sector

- **PM-MITRA:** To boost employment generation through setting up of 7 **PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA)** Parks in Greenfield /Brownfield sites with world class infrastructure.
- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** - The PLI Scheme for Textiles to promote production of Manmade Fibre (MMF) apparel, MMF Fabrics and Products of Technical Textiles in the country.
- **Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS):** To achieve the vision of generating employment and promoting exports through “Make in India” with “**Zero effect and Zero defect**” in manufacturing, ATUFS was launched in **2016** to provide credit linked Capital Investment Subsidy (CIS).

Source: PIB

## NEWS IN SHORT

### BUSHVELD MINERALS

#### In News

- The discovery of living microbes in a 2-billion-year-old rock from **South Africa's Bushveld Igneous Complex** is a breakthrough in understanding of early life on Earth and the potential for life beyond our planet.

#### About Bushveld Igneous Complex

- Located in northeastern South Africa, it is one of the largest and most well-preserved layered igneous intrusions in the world.
- The BIC was formed about 2 billion years ago when magma from deep within the Earth's mantle slowly cooled beneath the surface, resulting in the formation of multiple layers of igneous rock.
- It contains 70% of the world's mined platinum reserves, making South Africa the leading global producer of platinum.

Source: Scitechdaily

### MERA HOU CHONGBA

#### In News

- The Mera Hou Chongba Festival 2024 was celebrated in Imphal.

#### Mera Hou Chongba

- It is the only festival where both hill and valley indigenous communities are observed together in the state.
- It is an age-old festival that marks the oneness of the growth of nationalism in the state.
  - It has been celebrated in Manipur since the time of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba, the God King of Manipur, in the first century AD.
- It is aimed at strengthening the bond between indigenous communities in the hills and the valley of Manipur.
  - It is recognized as a General Holiday in Manipur.

Source: AIR

### APPOINTMENT TO CJI

#### In News

- Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud has recommended Justice Sanjiv Khanna to the

government for appointment as the 51st Chief Justice of India.

#### About Chief Justice of India :Appointment

- The Chief Justice of India and the other judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President under clause (2) of Article 124 of the Indian Constitution.
- The Chief Justice should be the senior most judge of the Supreme Court deemed fit for the role.
- The outgoing Chief Justice recommends the next Chief Justice to the Union Minister of Law, who forwards it to the Prime Minister for the President's approval.
  - If there are doubts about the senior most judge's fitness, consultations with other judges (per Article 124(2)) will occur.

#### Do you know ?

- Appointment of Supreme Court Judges :** The Chief Justice initiates the process when a vacancy arises and forwards recommendations to the Union Minister of Law.
  - The Chief Justice consults a collegium of the four seniormost puisne judges for recommendations.
  - The President appoints the seniormost available judge as Acting Chief Justice if the position is vacant.

Source:PIB

### INDIA EXTENDS ITS FIRST-EVER RUPEE DENOMINATED LINE OF CREDIT UNDER IDEAS

#### In News

- India has extended a Line of Credit of 487.60 crores to Mauritius for a water pipeline replacement project,

#### About

- It is the first -denominated credit under the **Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS)**.
- It aims to replace approximately 100 km of obsolete water pipeline in Mauritius and will be financed by the State Bank of India on concessional terms.
- This initiative reflects India's commitment to socio-economic development in Global South countries, aligning with the needs of its partner nations.

**Do you know?**

- The Government of India provides development assistance through **concessional Lines of Credit (LOCs)** under the **Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS)** via the Exim Bank of India.
  - ◆ Over 300 LOCs worth \$32 billion have been extended to 68 countries, funding around 600 projects in various sectors, including railways, roads, agriculture, and healthcare.
  - ◆ Under the “**Neighbourhood First**” policy, significant LOCs have been allocated to neighboring countries: \$7.862 billion to Bangladesh, \$1.65 billion to Nepal, over \$2 billion to Sri Lanka, \$745 million to Myanmar, and \$1.43 billion to the Maldives.

Source: AIR

**HOOLOCK GIBBON****In News**

- The **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)** has deferred its approval for oil exploration in the **Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary in Assam**, which serves as a crucial habitat for the **Hoolock Gibbon**.

**About Hoolock Gibbon**

- **About:** Gibbons are the **smallest and fastest of all apes**. The **hoolock gibbon**, unique to **India’s northeast**, is one of 20 species of gibbons found in **tropical and subtropical forests in Southeast Asia**.
  - ◆ Gibbons are known for their energetic vocal displays and were **initially found in Assam**. They are **diurnal and arboreal**. They are **omnivorous**.
- **Types in India:**
  - ◆ Initially, zoologists believed that there were **two species of hoolock gibbons in the northeast region of India** — the **eastern and western hoolock gibbons**.
- **Threats:** The primary threat to the hoolock gibbon is the deforestation caused by infrastructure projects.
- **Conservation Status: IUCN Status:** Western hoolock gibbon is classified as endangered and the eastern hoolock gibbon as vulnerable.

- ◆ Schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act 1972

**Global Gibbon Network (GGN)**

- GGN was founded with a vision to **safeguard and conserve a key element of Asia’s unique natural heritage** – the singing gibbon and their habitats, by promoting participatory conservation policies, legislations, and actions.
- It was first initiated in 2020 and was organized by two institutions in China through Ecofoundation Global and the Hainan Institute of National Park.

Source: TH

**WILDLIFE BOARD APPROVES 5 ROADS IN LADAKH****Context**

- The National Board for Wildlife has **approved five critical road projects**, four of which pass through the Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary along the Line of Actual Control, and **one road to Daulat Beg Oldie**.

**About**

- Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) is the country’s **northernmost military outpost** in **Ladakh** and location of its highest airstrip.
- In total, **35 km of new roads** leading to DBO, which runs parallel to the LAC, have been authorised.
- A key segment among these is the 7.75 km link road from DS-DBO to Saser-Brangsa-Gapshan, which will be constructed at an altitude of **17,000 ft**.

**Significance**

- The wildlife clearance represents a **major boost for the Ministry of Defence**, which is increasing its infrastructure development along the LAC.
- The current DS-DBO route, extending 255 km, runs **adjacent to the LAC** and remains within **sight of Chinese-held territory**.
- It offers an **alternative for rapid troop and resource movement** for operational needs, located nearly **100 km from areas controlled by China**.

Source: IE