

SUPREME COURT ASKS CENTRE TO GIVE DETAILS OF INFLOW OF 'ILLEGAL' MIGRANTS

Why in the News?

- A five-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court, on December 5, began hearing pleas challenging Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955.
- The provision was introduced in the statute following the signing of the Assam Accord.

What is Assam Accord?

- The Assam Accord was a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed between representatives of the Government of India and the leaders of the Assam Movement.
 - The **Assam Movement** (also Anti-Foreigners Agitation) (1979–1985) was a popular uprising in Assam that demanded the Government of India to detect, disenfranchise and deport illegal aliens.
 - The protestors demanded the identification and deportation of all illegal foreigners – predominantly Bangladeshi immigrants.
 - The movement ended in 1985 with the Assam Accord.
- According to the Assam Accord, the Government of India agreed to secure the international border against future infiltration by:
 - Erection of physical barriers like walls, barbed wire fencing and other obstacles at appropriate places,
 - Deploying a patrol by security forces on land and river routes all along the international Bangladesh-India border.
- The Accord created three classes of immigrants based on which Indian citizenship would be granted:
 - Immigrants who entered Assam before 1 January 1966 would be considered Indian citizens and were allowed to vote.
 - Immigrants who entered Assam after 1 January 1966 but before 24 March 1971 would be considered Indian citizens but would not be allowed to vote for the first 10 years following their detection as Indian citizens.

- Immigrants who entered Assam on or after 25 March 1971 would be considered illegal immigrants and would be expelled from India.
- The accord brought an end to the Assam Movement and paved the way for the leaders of the agitation to form a political party and form a government in the state of Assam soon after.
- **Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955**, containing above mentioned special provisions for the state of Assam, was introduced to give effect to the Assam Accord.
- The petitioners have challenged the constitutional validity of Section 6A by contending that **it is arbitrary as it singles out Assam, violates Article 14 and has led to an influx of illegal migrants into the state from Bangladesh.**
- The petitioners want **1951 to be established as the cut-off date for inclusion in the National Register of Citizens instead of 1971.**

Central Government's Arguments:

- The central government has rejected the charge that the state has been singled out to bear the load of the illegal migrants.
- It has argued that both on historical and geographical grounds, it is possible to classify different states of India differently and, therefore, the classification which is implied in Section 6-A must be said to be based on intelligible differentia.
- Rejecting arguments of arbitrariness, the Centre said that the guarantee against non-arbitrariness under Article 14 does not require that every law must have universal application irrespective of dissimilarity or of the nature or attainments of the persons to whom it relates.

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL SERVICES MAINTENANCE ACT (ESMA)?



The Odisha Government recently invoked the Orissa Essential Services (Maintenance) Act (ESMA) prohibiting strikes by paramedical staff, including nurses, pharmacists, technicians, Class III and IV employees, to ensure that medical services are not disrupted.

About the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA):

- It is an act of the Indian Parliament enacted in **1968** to assure the supply of certain services that, if impeded, would harm people's daily lives.
- It is enforced to **prohibit striking employees** from refusing to work in certain essential services. Employees cannot cite bandhs or a curfew as an excuse not to report to work.
- **Which services fall under this category?**
 - Services relating to **public conservation, sanitation, water supply, hospitals, or national defence** are essential.
 - Any establishment involved in producing, delivering, or distributing **petroleum, coal, electricity, steel, or fertiliser** also gets classified as providing essential services. Aside from that, any **banking-related** service may be subject to ESMA.
 - This statute also applies to **communication and transportation services** and any government initiative relating to the acquisition and distribution of food grains.
- State governments, acting alone or collaborating with other state governments, can enforce their respective acts in specified territories.
- **Each state has its own ESMA**, with provisions that differ slightly from the federal statute.
- As a result, if the nature of the strike disturbs only one or more states, the states can initiate it.
- **The Act also allows states** to choose the essential services on which to enforce ESMA.
- In a nationwide interruption, particularly involving **railways**, the central government may activate the ESMA.

What actions can be taken against the employees?

- Persons who commence the strike as well as those who instigate it are liable to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.
- As the **strike becomes illegal** after ESMA is invoked, **legal action** can also be taken against these employees.

- Any police officer is empowered to arrest the striking person without a warrant.
 - Persons participating in or instigating the strike are **punishable with imprisonment**, which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both.
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NATIONAL AUTOMATED FINGERPRINT IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (NAFIS)

Recently, the Minister of State for Home Affairs informed the Rajya Sabha that the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) has been established at 1022 locations across the country.



About the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS):

- It is a **pan-India searchable database** of crime and criminal-related fingerprints.
- It is managed by the **Central Fingerprint Bureau** at the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), based in New Delhi.
- It functions as a central information repository by consolidating fingerprint data from all states and Union Territories.
- It enables law enforcement agencies to upload, trace, and retrieve data from the database in real time on a **24×7 basis**.
- With the help of this it is possible to locate a person of interest in a matter of minutes and connect that individual's name to any active warrants, warnings, or information about related criminal conduct stored in other police information reference systems.

Working of NAFIS:

- It assigns a unique **10-digit National Fingerprint Number** for each criminal, based on biometrics.
- The unique ID will be used for a **lifetime of an offender**. Different crimes registered under different FIRs will be logged as incidents belonging to the same National Fingerprint Number.

- The first two digits of the ID will be the state code of the state where the criminal is registered, followed by a sequence number.
 - The state partition will have IDs belonging to a state.
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PRADHAN MANTRI UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (PM-USHA)

The Union Education Minister recently urged the Odisha Chief Minister to implement the PM-USHA scheme for higher education in the state.



About the Pradhan Mantri Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA):

- It was launched in **2013** as a **centrally sponsored programme** to improve access, equity, and quality in higher education through the planned development of **higher education at the state level**.
- It aims to work with **300-plus state universities** and their affiliated colleges.
- **Objectives:**
 - creating new academic institutions,
 - expanding and upgrading the existing ones,
 - developing institutions that are self-reliant in terms of quality education, professionally managed, and characterised by a greater inclination towards research.

Funding:

- It aims at providing strategic funding to eligible state higher educational institutions.
- The central funding is based on norms and is outcome-dependent.
- Funds flow from the central ministry through the state governments/union territories before reaching the identified institutions.
- Funding to states would be made on the basis of the critical appraisal of State Higher Education Plans, which would enlist each state's strategy to address issues of equity, access, and excellence in higher education.

- PM-USHA places greater emphasis on the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning processes in order to produce employable and competitive graduates, postgraduates and PhDs.
 - The programme focuses on state higher educational institutions and draws upon the best practices from colleges and universities across the nation.
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IS GOOGLE GEMINI BETTER THAN CHATGPT?

Why in the News?

- Google has surprised the world with the launch of Gemini, which it claims to be its largest and most capable **Artificial Intelligence model**.

About Artificial Intelligence:

- Artificial intelligence (AI) is the **ability of a computer or a robot controlled by a computer to do tasks that are usually done by humans because they require human intelligence and discernment**.
- The term is frequently applied to the project of developing systems endowed with the intellectual processes characteristic of humans, such as the ability to reason, discover meaning, generalize, or learn from past experience.
- AI algorithms are trained using large datasets so that they can identify patterns, make predictions and recommend actions, much like a human would, just faster and better.

What is ChatGPT?

- **OpenAI** is the artificial intelligence research company which developed ChatGPT.
- ChatGPT is an AI chatbot that uses natural language processing to create humanlike conversational dialogue.
- The language model can respond to questions and compose various written content, including articles, social media posts, essays, code and emails.
- ChatGPT is a form of **generative AI** -- a tool that lets users enter prompts to receive humanlike images, text or videos that are created by AI.

- The GPT stands for "**Generative Pre-trained Transformer**," which refers to how ChatGPT processes requests and formulates responses.
- ChatGPT is trained with reinforcement learning through human feedback and reward models that rank the best responses.
 - This feedback helps augment ChatGPT with **machine learning** to improve future responses.
- Apart from ChatGPT, other famous examples of AI algorithms (known as **AI Chatbots**) are **Google's Bard**, **Microsoft's Bing Chat**, etc.

About Google's Gemini:

- Google has surprised the world with the launch of Gemini, which it claims to be its largest and most capable **Artificial Intelligence model**.
- Google has unveiled Gemini in three models **Ultra**, **Pro**, and **Nano**.
- Google has shared a sheet comparing key metrics where Gemini overshadowed GPT-4 (ChatGPT's most powerful model to date).
- **Features of Google's Gemini:**
 - Gemini is Google's family of highly capable multimodal models.
 - On the other hand, Generative Pre-trained Transformer – 4 (GPT-4) is a multimodal large language model from OpenAI which was launched in March this year.
 - Reportedly, Gemini Ultra has accomplished state-of-the-art benchmarking, which is essentially the practice of evaluating the efficiency and performance of a new model.
 - The ultra-version has been designed for data centres and is still under red-teaming safety review and will be available sometime in early 2024 and reportedly on a new version of Bard.

[GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE \(GPAI\)](#)

India is hosting the Annual Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit from December 12 – 14, 2023.



About the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence:

- It is a multi-stakeholder initiative which aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice on AI by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.
- It was launched in **June 2020**.
- Membership in GPAI is **open to all countries**, including emerging and developing countries.
- **Member countries:** At present it has 28 member countries including the European Union.
- India is one of the founding members of GPAI.
- **Secretariat:** Its secretariat is hosted at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris.
- **Structure**
 - It has a Council and a Steering Committee.
 - It has two Centres of Expertise: One in Montreal and another in Paris.
 - These Centres of Expertise will facilitate GPAI's four working groups and their research and practical projects, across various sectors and disciplines.
- The working groups will initially focus on **four themes**:
 - Responsible AI
 - Data Governance
 - the Future of Work
 - Innovation and Commercialization

PASHUPATINATH TEMPLE

The sale and consumption of meat, alcohol, and other intoxicants have been restricted around the Pashupatinath Temple area due to the Hindu festival of Bala Chaturdashi.



About the Pashupatinath Temple:

- It is a Hindu temple dedicated to Pashupati, a form of Shiva.
- **Location:** It is located on the bank of the **Bagmati River** on the eastern outskirts of **Kathmandu, Nepal**.
- In 1979, the temple was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
- **Features:**
 - The temple complex includes 518 temples, buildings, and structures.
 - The main temple is designed in the **Nepalese pagoda style**, with a tiered roof and plinth.
 - It is a two-tiered structure with a **gold-plated roof**.
 - The temple has two interior rooms where the Pashupatinath idol is placed.
 - It is a cubic structure with four main doors, all covered with silver sheets.
 - One of the most astonishing decorations of the temple is the huge **golden statue of Nandi**, Shiva's bull.

What is a Pagoda?

- A Pagoda is a **tower like, multistorey, solid or hollow structure** made of stone, brick, or wood, usually associated with a Buddhist temple complex, common in China, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Vietnam, and other parts of Asia.
- The pagoda structure derives from that of the **stupa**, a hemispherical, domed, commemorative monument first constructed in ancient India.
- Pagodas are constructed around a central staircase and can have many forms.
- A pagoda has three sections: a base, a body, and a top, which often takes the form of a miniature pagoda.