

# WEEKLY NEWS

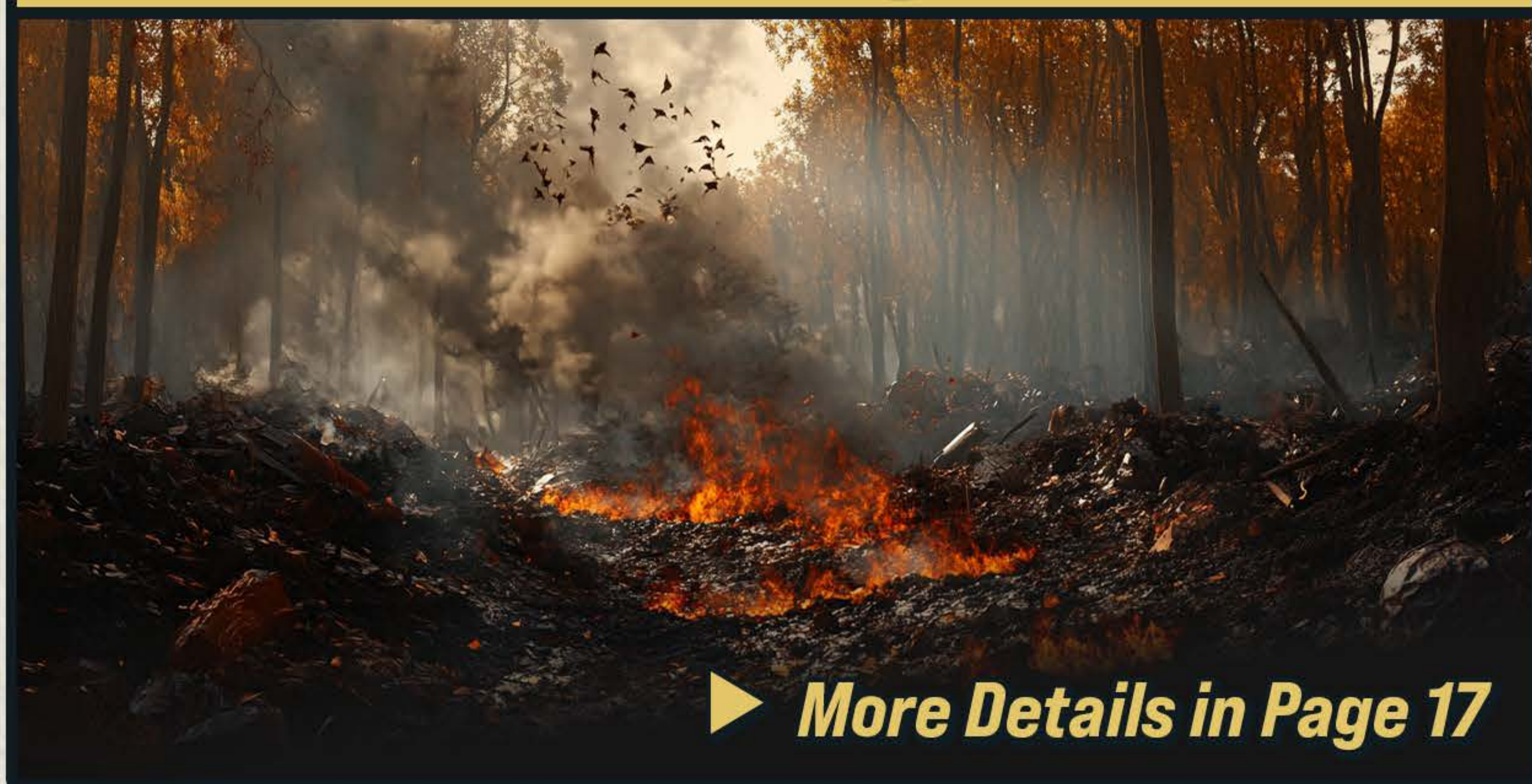
October 13-19, 2024

## National Regulatory Authority (NRA)



► More Details in Page 09

## Guidelines on Greenwashing



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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Viability of Gram Nyayalayas
- Posthumous Use of Cryopreserved Semen

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# UN International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction 2024

## ● Why in News?

- ➡ Observed on: 13th October
- ➡ Theme for 2024: Empowering the Next Generation for a Resilient Future  
Focuses on involving youth and future leaders in building resilience against disasters.

## ● Institutional Framework for Disaster Management in India

- ➡ National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA): Formulates policies, plans, and guidelines for disaster management.
- ➡ National Executive Committee (NEC): Monitors and coordinates national disaster management efforts.
- ➡ State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs): Constituted under the Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005, for state-level disaster management.
- ➡ State Executive Committees (SEC): Headed by the Chief Secretary to coordinate disaster management in states.
- ➡ District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA): Established in every district to plan and implement disaster management at the local level.
- ➡ National Disaster Response Force (NDRF): Comprises eight battalions of Central Paramilitary Forces specialized for disaster response.
- ➡ State Disaster Response Force (SDRF): Modeled after the NDRF and aligned with the Civil Defence Act (amended in 2010).

## ● Key Laws and Policies for Disaster Management in India

- ➡ Disaster Management Act, 2005: Focus shifted from response to preparedness, prevention, and planning.
- ➡ National Policy on Disaster Management, 2009: Promotes a multi-disaster approach with inclusive relief and rehabilitation measures.
- ➡ National Disaster Management Plan, 2018: A comprehensive framework aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- ➡ Prime Minister's 10-Point Agenda (2016): Emphasizes community preparedness, technological adoption, and international cooperation.





● **Way Forward**

- ➡ **Youth Empowerment:** Engage younger generations to build disaster-resilient communities.
- ➡ **Technology Integration:** Leverage AI, satellite mapping, and early-warning systems for disaster risk management.
- ➡ **Multi-Stakeholder Approach:** Involve local authorities, civil society, and international partners for effective disaster management.
- ➡ **Strengthen Response Forces:** Expand and train the NDRF/SDRF for faster and more effective disaster response.

● **Conclusion**

- ➡ India's institutional disaster management framework ensures coordinated efforts across all levels—from national to district. With evolving policies and global cooperation, the focus remains on building resilience and empowering future generations.





# World Mental Health Day 2024

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ **World Mental Health Day 2024:** Released on **10th October** to raise awareness about mental well-being.
- ➔ **Report by WHO and UNICEF:** Titled '**Mental health of children and young people – Service guidance.**'

## ● Key Findings

### ➔ Onset of Mental Conditions:

One-third of conditions appear before **14 years**, and half before **18 years**.

**15% of adolescents** (10–19 years) have experienced mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and behavioral disorders.

**Suicide** is the **fourth leading cause of death** among adolescents aged 15–19 years.

### ➔ Barriers to Mental Health Services:

Limited access, high costs, and stigma discourage youth from seeking care.

**Funding Deficit:** Public resources for child and adolescent mental health services remain inadequate worldwide.

## ● Recommendations

- ➔ **Community-based Services:** Shift from institutional care to **family and community-based models**.
- ➔ **Continuity in Education and Social Life:** Ensure children's growth within supportive environments for healthy development.

## ● India's Efforts Recognized

- ➔ **Mental Health Care Act, 2017:** **Decriminalized suicidal behavior** to promote better care.
- ➔ **Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), Chennai:** Provides **free services for early psychosis** based on international standards.
- ➔ **Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy, Maharashtra:** Runs **Outlive!**, a **suicide prevention program** targeting marginalized youth aged 18-24 years.





● **Way Forward**

- ➡ **Public Funding Expansion:** Increase resources dedicated to child and adolescent mental health.
- ➡ **Reduce Stigma:** Promote mental health awareness campaigns to combat discrimination.
- ➡ **Strengthen Community Services:** Ensure access to care within families and schools to support children's well-being.





# 19th East Asia Summit (EAS)

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ Prime Minister of India attended the 19th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Vientiane, Lao PDR.
- ➔ EAS is a premier forum for **strategic dialogue in the Indo-Pacific region**.

## ● Key Announcements by India

- ➔ **ASEAN Centrality:** India reiterated **ASEAN's central role** in the Indo-Pacific regional architecture, India's Indo-Pacific vision, and **Quad cooperation**.
- ➔ **Education Conclave at Nalanda University:** India invited EAS members for a **Heads of Higher Education Conclave** to be held at **Nalanda University** (Bihar).

### ➔ Engagement on Myanmar

India endorsed **ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus (5PC)** on Myanmar and emphasized **dialogue over isolation**.

Key components of the 5PC:

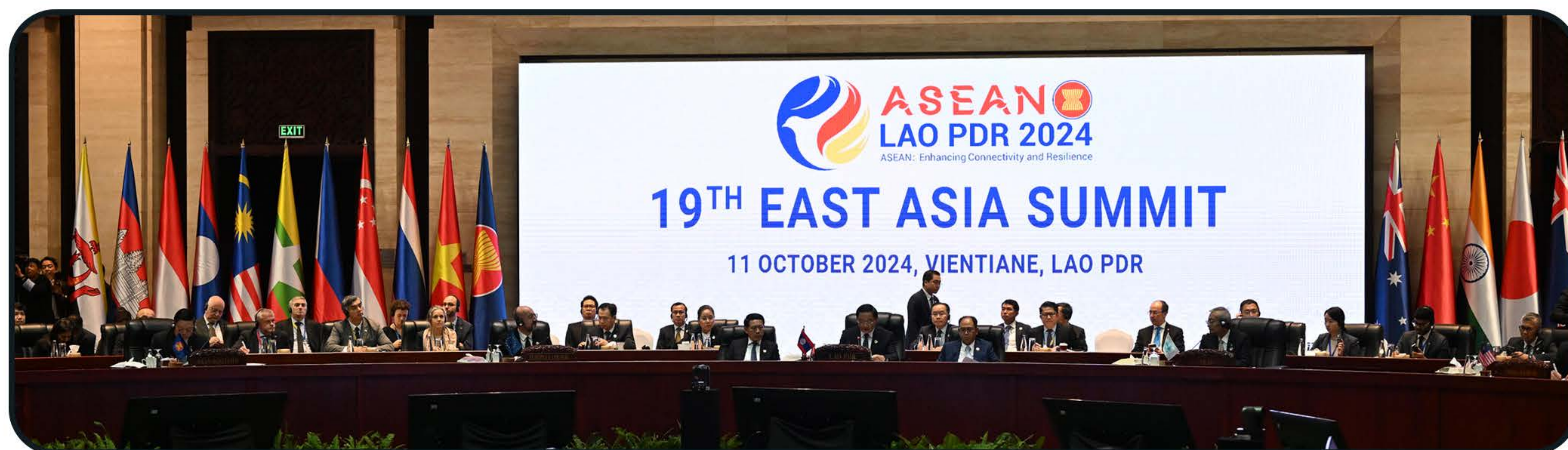
- Immediate end to violence.
- Dialogue among all parties.
- Appointment of a special envoy.
- Humanitarian assistance by ASEAN.
- Special envoy's visit to Myanmar for discussions.

### ➔ Code of Conduct for Maritime Navigation

India urged for **UNCLOS-compliant maritime practices** and the development of a **robust Code of Conduct (CoC)**.

India emphasized that CoC should not restrict the **foreign policies** of regional countries.

Called for a **development-based regional approach** instead of one focused on expansionism.





● **About East Asia Summit (EAS)**

➡ **Genesis:** Founded in **2005** in **Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**

➡ **Aim:** To promote **peace, stability, and economic prosperity** in East Asia.

➡ **Participants:**

18 members, including **10 ASEAN countries** + India, Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia, and the US.

**ASEAN Members:** Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

➡ **6 Priority Areas of Cooperation:**

Environment and Energy.

Education.

Finance.

Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases.

Natural Disaster Management.

ASEAN Connectivity.

➡ **Significance:** EAS members represent **53% of the world's population** and **60% of global GDP.**

● **Way Forward**

➡ Strengthening **Indo-Pacific cooperation** with ASEAN at the center.

➡ Promoting **inclusive development** over geopolitical expansionism.

➡ Encouraging **multilateral cooperation** on education, maritime security, and humanitarian issues.





# Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2024

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ The **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2024** has been released by **Concern Worldwide** and **Welthungerhilfe**, highlighting India's position in global hunger metrics.

## ● Key Findings about India

- ➔ **Ranking:** India is ranked **105th out of 127 countries**, classified under the "**serious**" category, alongside 41 other nations, including **Pakistan** and **Afghanistan**.
- ➔ **GHI Score:** India's GHI score has shown a **decline since 2000**, indicating persistent hunger issues.
- ➔ **Child Nutrition:** High levels of **child wasting** and **stunting** continue to be significant challenges.
- ➔ **Maternal Malnutrition:** This issue perpetuates **child undernutrition**, creating an **intergenerational cycle** of poor nutritional status.

## ● About Global Hunger Index (GHI)

- ➔ The GHI is a tool used to **measure and track hunger** at global, regional, and national levels.
- ➔ Each country's GHI score is calculated using a formula that combines **four key indicators**:
  - Undernourishment:** Insufficient caloric intake.
  - Child Stunting:** Low height-for-age in children under 5.
  - Child Wasting:** Low weight-for-height in children under 5.
  - Child Mortality:** Deaths of children before their fifth birthday.

## ● Key Issues with GHI

- ➔ **Methodology:** Three out of the four indicators focus on **child health**, which may not accurately represent the overall population's nutritional status.
- ➔ **Questionable Indicator:** The use of **stunting** as an indicator of undernutrition has been challenged, as it can occur in **well-nourished populations**.
- ➔ **Data Limitations:** The GHI relies on outdated datasets, such as **National Family Health Surveys**, which do not provide **annual updates** for crucial indicators.



● **Way Forward**

- ➔ **Policy Reforms:** Strengthening nutritional programs to address maternal and child malnutrition effectively.
- ➔ **Data Improvement:** Updating datasets regularly to ensure accurate assessments of hunger and nutrition.
- ➔ **Comprehensive Approach:** Expanding the indicators used in the GHI to better represent the nutritional status of the entire population.





# India's National Regulatory Authority (NRA) Meets WHO Vaccine Standards

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ The **National Regulatory Authority (NRA)** of India has been recognized for meeting **WHO international standards** for vaccine regulations.

## ● Key Developments

- ➔ **Functional Status:** India's vaccine regulatory systems have been declared "**functional**" in all key regulatory functions according to the **WHO's Global Benchmarking Tool (GBT)**.
- ➔ **Assessment Update:** Initially assessed in **2017** using the older GBT version V, India has now been reassessed with the updated **GBT VI**.
- ➔ **Maturity Level:** India retained a **Maturity Level 3**, achieving the highest marks in several regulatory functions. This level indicates a **stable, well-functioning, and integrated regulatory system**.

## ● About WHO's Global Benchmarking Tool (GBT)

- ➔ The GBT is utilized to evaluate national regulatory systems for various products, including **medicines, vaccines, blood products, and medical devices**.
- ➔ The GBT introduces a concept of **maturity levels** ranging from 1 (existence of some regulatory system elements) to 4 (advanced performance with continuous improvement).

## ● National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of India

- ➔ Comprises institutions responsible for the regulation, control, and testing of vaccines, ensuring they meet **international standards** for quality, safety, and efficacy.
- ➔ Key components include:
  - Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)**
  - State Drug Regulatory Authorities**
  - Central Drugs Laboratory**
  - Immunization Division**
  - Pharmacovigilance Programme of India (PvPI)**





## ● Regulation of Vaccines in India

- ➔ **Import/Manufacturing:** Governed by the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940**, along with relevant rules.
- ➔ **Licensing:** Manufacturing licenses are granted following a joint evaluation by the concerned **State Licensing Authority** and **CDSCO**.
- ➔ **New Vaccine Manufacturing:** Requirements for clinical studies and approvals are outlined in the **New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019**.
- ➔ **r-DNA Derived Vaccines:** Compliance with **Department of Biotechnology** guidelines is mandatory.

## ● Way Forward

- ➔ **Strengthening Systems:** Continue enhancing regulatory systems to ensure the highest standards for vaccine safety and efficacy.
- ➔ **Global Collaboration:** Foster international partnerships to align with evolving global regulatory standards.
- ➔ **Ongoing Assessment:** Regularly reassess and update regulatory practices to maintain compliance with WHO guidelines.





# Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) Initiatives

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) has launched its first two initiatives: **Prime Minister Early Career Research Grant (PMECRG)** and **Mission for Advancement in High-Impact Areas - Electric Vehicle (MAHA-EV)**.
- ➔ These initiatives aim to bridge the gap between academic research and industrial application.

## ● About Prime Minister Early Career Research Grant (PMECRG)

- ➔ **Objective:** Position India as a leader in science and technology by providing a **flexible budget** to support early career researchers.
- ➔ **Significance:**
  - Foster **high-quality innovative research**.
  - Enable researchers to expand their knowledge boundaries and drive **technological progress**.

## ● About Mission for Advancement in High-Impact Areas - Electric Vehicle (MAHA-EV)

- ➔ **Focus:** Development of key **electric vehicle (EV)** technologies to reduce dependency on imports and promote domestic innovation.
- ➔ **Alignment:** Supports the government's **Atmanirbhar Bharat** (self-reliant India) vision.
- ➔ **Key Technology Verticals:**
  - Tropical EV Batteries and Battery Cells**
  - Power Electronics, Machines, and Drives**
  - EV Charging Infrastructure**
- ➔ **Significance:**
  - Position India as a **hub for EV component development**, enhancing global competitiveness and innovation.
  - Contribute to a **greener and sustainable future** by accelerating the shift towards electric mobility.



● **About ANRF**

- ➔ **Establishment:** Formed under the **ANRF Act 2023**, operating under the **Department of Science & Technology**.
- ➔ **Integration:** The **Science and Engineering Research Board** has been subsumed into the ANRF.
- ➔ **Aim:**  
Seed, grow, and promote **R&D** while fostering a culture of research and innovation across India's universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories.  
Act as an apex body providing **strategic direction** for scientific research in the country, in line with the recommendations of the **National Education Policy**.

● **Way Forward**

- ➔ **Enhancing Research Collaboration:** Encourage partnerships between academic institutions and industries to boost research application.
- ➔ **Investment in Innovation:** Continue to provide funding and resources for cutting-edge research in emerging technologies, especially in the EV sector.
- ➔ **Supporting Young Researchers:** Implement mentorship programs alongside PMECRG to nurture early career researchers and facilitate their integration into the industrial landscape.





# Diplomatic Tensions Between India and Canada

## ● Why in News?

- ➡ India recalled its High Commissioner to Canada and expelled Canadian diplomats amid escalating diplomatic tensions.
- ➡ The dispute arose after Canada requested India to waive diplomatic immunity for its officials linked to an ongoing investigation, a request India deemed unreasonable.

## ● Understanding Diplomatic Immunity

- ➡ **Definition:** Diplomatic immunity is a principle of international law ensuring that foreign government officials are not subject to the jurisdiction of local courts for official or personal activities.

- ➡ **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961):**

Grants privileges and immunities to diplomatic staff.

India acceded to the convention in 1965 and ratified it in 1972 through the **Diplomatic Relations (Vienna Convention) Act of 1972**.

## ● Recent Fallout in India-Canada Relations

- ➡ **Khalistani Extremists:**

Sikh separatist groups supported by Canada have strained relations, leading to diplomatic fallout.

Canada's backing of Khalistani activities, such as an unofficial referendum for an independent Sikh state in 2023, is viewed as an attack on Indian sovereignty.

- ➡ **Security Cooperation:** India's multiple extradition requests for terrorists and organized crime figures residing in Canada have gone unaddressed.

- ➡ **Defunct Agreements:** Progress on the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** and the **Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement** has stalled.

- ➡ **Vote Bank Politics:** The Sikh community, especially in provinces like Ontario and British Columbia, is a significant vote bank for political parties, notably the Liberal Party, influencing their stance on India.





## ● **India-Canada Relations Overview**

- ➔ **Bilateral Trade:** Trade in goods has declined, falling from **USD 10.50 billion** in 2022 to USD 7.65 billion in 2023.
- ➔ **Consular Matters:** Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (1994) and Extradition Treaty (1987) facilitate cooperation.
- ➔ **Nuclear Cooperation:** A Nuclear Cooperation Agreement was signed in 2010, leading to the establishment of a Joint Committee on Civil Nuclear Cooperation.
- ➔ **Space Collaboration:** ISRO launched Canada's first Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite during the PSLV 100th satellite launch in 2018.

## ● **Way Forward**

- ➔ **Dialogue and Diplomacy:** Both nations should engage in constructive dialogue to address concerns and rebuild trust.
- ➔ **Strengthening Security Cooperation:** Enhance collaboration on security matters, particularly regarding extradition requests and counter-terrorism efforts.
- ➔ **Reviving Economic Agreements:** Revisit and revitalize stalled agreements to foster trade and investment between India and Canada.
- ➔ **Community Engagement:** Address the concerns of the Sikh community in Canada while promoting a balanced view of India's sovereignty and security issues.





# Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences 2024

## ● Why in News?

➡ **Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson** received the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2024.

➡ Recognized for their work on the **role of institutions in shaping economic prosperity**.

## ● Key Findings of the Laureates

### ➡ Importance of Societal Institutions:

Demonstrated how institutions significantly impact a nation's prosperity.

Highlighted the role of **threats of mass revolts** in prompting the development of democracy and reforms in former colonies.

## ● Differences in Global Prosperity

### ➡ Wealth Disparity:

The **richest 20% of countries** are now approximately **30 times wealthier** than the **poorest 20%**.

**Institutional Legacy:** Persistent differences in societal institutions, especially those shaped by **European colonizers**, contribute to disparities.

## ● Types of Colonial Institutions

### ➡ Extractive Institutions:

Established to **exploit resources and indigenous populations** for the benefit of colonizers.

**Reversal of Fortunes:** Previously prosperous regions became impoverished post-colonization.

**Example:** India had higher **industrial production** than the USA in the mid-18th century (pre-colonization).

### ➡ Inclusive Institutions:

Designed to benefit European settlers and ensure long-term prosperity in colonies with favorable settlement conditions.

These systems fostered inclusive **political and economic frameworks**.

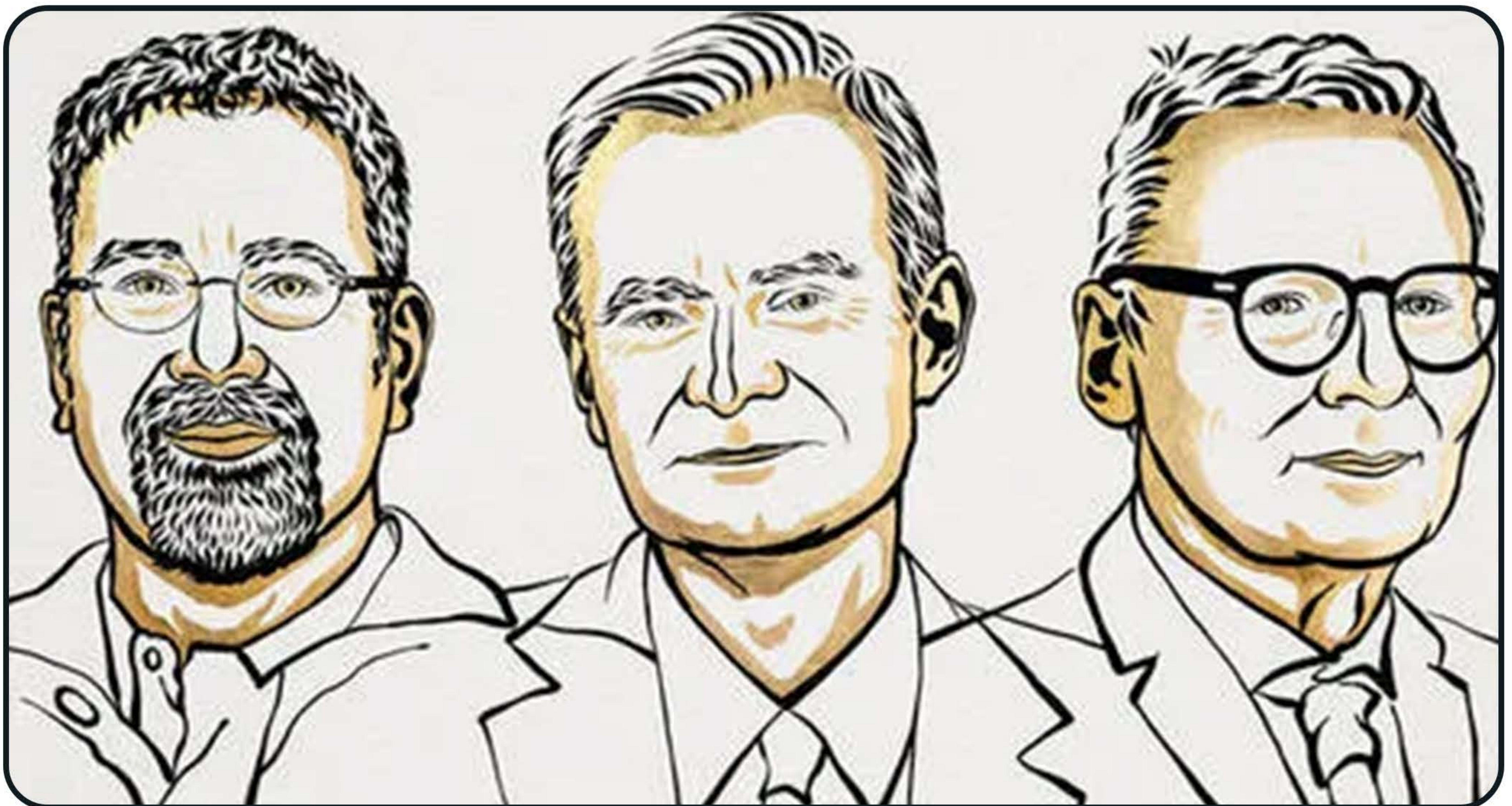


## ● **Factors Shaping Institutional Development**

- ➔ **Number of European Settlers:** Larger settler populations led to the establishment of inclusive systems.
- ➔ **Settler Mortality:** High disease prevalence (e.g., in equatorial regions) limited settler presence, favoring extractive institutions.
- ➔ **Geography and Climate Zones:** Affected the type of institutions formed, influencing long-term economic outcomes.

## ● **Way Forward**

- ➔ **Reinforce Inclusive Institutions:** Countries can achieve long-term prosperity by building strong, inclusive political and economic systems.
- ➔ **Institutional Reforms:** Developing nations should focus on reforming extractive systems to promote equitable growth.
- ➔ **Global Policy Discussions:** Insights from the laureates' research should be integrated into international development policies.
- ➔ **Address Wealth Disparities:** Global efforts should focus on reducing institutional inequality to bridge the gap between wealthy and poor nations.





# Guidelines on Greenwashing and Environmental Claims by CCPA

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** has issued new guidelines aimed at preventing and regulating greenwashing and misleading environmental claims under the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.
- ➔ The guidelines respond to a significant rise in deceptive advertising of 'green' products, which misleads consumers and detracts from genuine environmental efforts.

## ● Key Highlights of the Guidelines

### ➔ Definition of Greenwashing:

Greenwashing is characterized as any deceptive or misleading practice that involves:

- Concealing, omitting, or hiding relevant information.
- Exaggerating or making vague, false, or unsubstantiated environmental claims.
- Using symbols or imagery to highlight positive environmental aspects while downplaying or concealing negative attributes.

- ➔ **Scope of Applicability:** These guidelines apply to all environmental claims made by businesses.

### ➔ Transparency Requirements:

The use of generic terms like "eco-friendly," "green," and "sustainable" is prohibited without adequate, accurate, and accessible evidence.

Companies must provide detailed information regarding the methodology and data supporting their claims.

- ➔ **Third-Party Certifications:** Claims such as compostable, degradable, recyclable, and climate-positive must be supported by statutory or independent third-party verification.

- ➔ **Aspirational Claims:** Companies may make aspirational or futuristic claims only when they have developed clear and actionable plans detailing how these goals will be achieved.





● **Way Forward**

- ➡ **Enhanced Consumer Awareness:** Consumers should be educated about recognizing genuine environmental claims versus greenwashing tactics.
- ➡ **Industry Compliance:** Businesses must adapt to the guidelines, ensuring that their marketing practices are transparent and substantiated.
- ➡ **Strengthened Enforcement:** The CCPA should monitor compliance and impose penalties for misleading claims to ensure adherence to the guidelines.
- ➡ **Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Engage industry stakeholders, environmental groups, and consumers to create a culture of accountability and transparency in environmental claims.





# Pathways out of the Polycrisis: World Bank Report 2024

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ The **World Bank Group** has released its report titled **Pathways out of the Polycrisis: Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet 2024**.
- ➔ The report provides a **framework for managing trade-offs** between poverty reduction, economic prosperity, and climate sustainability.

## ● Key Findings

### ➔ Stalled Global Poverty Reduction

Global poverty reduction has slowed in the last five years, driven by **multiple overlapping crises (polycrisis)**.

**Polycrisis:** A combination of economic stagnation, climate risks, increased fragility, and uncertainty that hampers both national strategies and global cooperation.

### ➔ Non-Attainment of Targets

Extreme poverty is projected to be 7.3% in 2030, far from the **3% World Bank target** and the **UN SDG goal of elimination**.

Current extreme poverty rate stands at **8.5% in 2024**.

### ➔ Global Prosperity Gap

The **prosperity gap** measures the income needed to bring everyone to a standard of **\$25 per person per day**.

The report highlights stalled progress in **inclusive income growth** post-pandemic.

### ➔ India's Progress

A significant decline in Indians living in extreme poverty, from **431 million in 1990** to **129 million in 2024**.

World Bank currently defines **extreme poverty** as living on **less than \$2.15 per person per day**.





## ● **Proposed Pathways and Recommendations**

- ➔ **Faster and Inclusive Growth:** Focus on **increasing labor productivity**, boosting **employment**, and raising **incomes**.
- ➔ **Climate Resilience**
  - Improve **risk management and mitigation** to safeguard against climate shocks.
  - Align policies** to balance income growth with emission reduction.

## ● **Priorities by Country Groups**

- ➔ **Low-Income Countries:** Focus on **poverty reduction** through investment in **human, financial, and physical capital**.
- ➔ **Middle-Income Countries:** Prioritize **income growth** and **reduce vulnerability**, while addressing issues like **air pollution**.
- ➔ **High-Income Countries:** Accelerate **climate mitigation** and manage the **transition costs** effectively.

## ● **Way Forward**

- ➔ Nations need to **synchronize policies** that address poverty, prosperity, and climate challenges simultaneously.
- ➔ **Global cooperation** is essential to manage the trade-offs and overcome the challenges posed by the **polycrisis**.





# ***JUNO: China's Underground Neutrino Observatory***

## ● **Why in News?**

- ⇒ China's **Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory (JUNO)** is set to begin gathering data on neutrinos.
- ⇒ It aims to uncover the mysteries of neutrinos, including their **origin** and **interaction with other particles**.

## ● **About Neutrinos**

- ⇒ **Neutrinos** are subatomic particles with extremely **small mass** compared to other elementary particles.
- ⇒ **Types of Neutrinos:**
  - Electron Neutrino
  - Muon Neutrino
  - Tauon Neutrino
- ⇒ **Neutrino Oscillation:** Neutrinos switch between types as they travel.

## ● **Key Characteristics**

- ⇒ **Spin:** 1/2
- ⇒ **Charge:** Neutral
- ⇒ **Speed:** Travels close to the speed of light.
- ⇒ **Interaction:** Rarely interacts with matter (earning the nickname "**ghost particle**").
- ⇒ **Abundance:** Most abundant particles with mass in the universe.
- ⇒ **Forces of Interaction:** Limited to **gravity** and the **weak force**.

## ● **JUNO's Contribution and Significance**

- ⇒ **Solar Neutrinos:** Observing neutrinos from the **sun** to gain real-time insights into solar processes.
- ⇒ **Earth's Mantle:** Studying neutrinos from **uranium and thorium decay** to understand mantle convection and tectonic activity.
- ⇒ **Astrophysical Sources:** Probing violent phenomena like **supernovae** and **gamma-ray bursts**.





## ● **Notable Neutrino Observatories**

### ➡ **India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO):**

**Location:** Bodi West Hills, Theni District, Tamil Nadu.

Jointly funded by the **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** and the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**.

### ➡ **IceCube Neutrino Observatory:** Located deep within the **South Pole ice**.

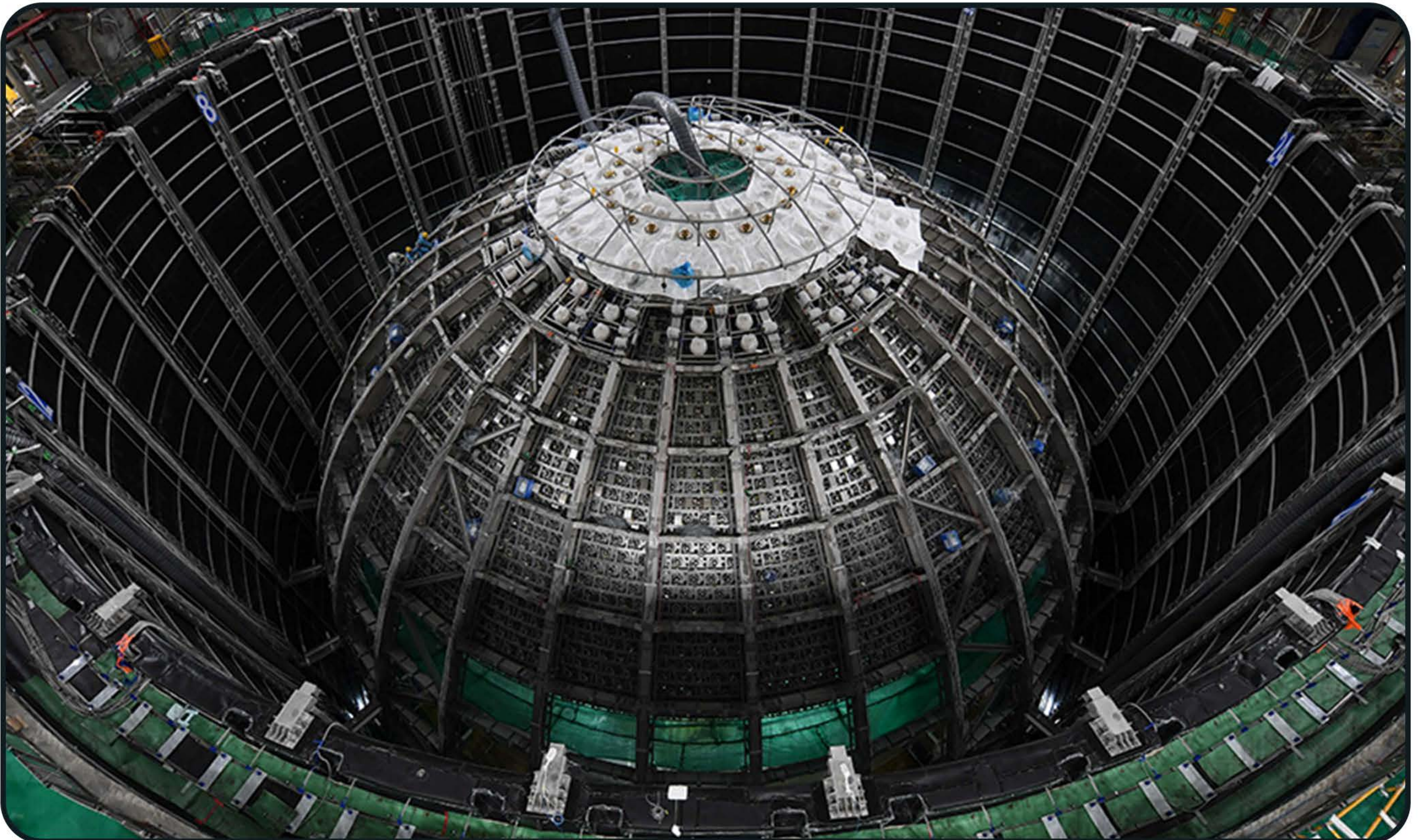
### ➡ **China's TRIDENT:** Tropical Deep-Sea Neutrino Telescope.

### ➡ **US's DUNE:** Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment.

## ● **Way Forward**

### ➡ JUNO's findings will advance our understanding of **particle physics** and provide insights into **Earth's interior** and **cosmic events**.

### ➡ Collaboration with global observatories can enhance **scientific breakthroughs** in neutrino research.





# Supreme Court Questions the Viability of Gram Nyayalayas

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ The **Supreme Court of India** has raised concerns about the feasibility of establishing **Gram Nyayalayas** (village courts) as mandated by the **Gram Nyayalayas Act of 2008**.
- ➔ Gram Nyayalayas aim to ensure that justice is accessible to all citizens, regardless of social, economic, or other disabilities.

## ● Key Concerns Raised by the Supreme Court

- ➔ **Mandatory Establishment:** The court questioned whether the establishment of Gram Nyayalayas by states and Union Territories is mandatory or discretionary. Section 3 of the Act states that governments "may" constitute these courts.
- ➔ **Resource Limitations:** State governments are already facing resource constraints for regular courts, making it difficult to allocate funds for additional Gram Nyayalayas.
- ➔ **Burden on Higher Courts:** There are concerns that establishing more Gram Nyayalayas could lead to an increase in appeals and writ petitions burdening higher courts.

## ● Key Features of Gram Nyayalayas

- ➔ **Location:** Designed to be set up at the intermediate level of Panchayats or a group of contiguous Panchayats.
- ➔ **Appointment of Nyayadhikari:** The state government appoints a 'Nyayadhikari' for each Gram Nyayalaya in consultation with the high court.
- ➔ **Jurisdiction:** Functions as a mobile court with both civil and criminal jurisdiction.
- ➔ **Dispute Resolution Process:**

Disputes are preferred to be settled through conciliation, with social workers possibly appointed as conciliators.

Not bound by the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (replaced by the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam) but guided by the principles of natural justice.





## ● **Implementation Status of Gram Nyayalayas**

- ➡ Initially targeted to establish around **2,500 Gram Nyayalayas**, but fewer than **500** have been set up, with only **314** currently operational across India.
- ➡ States like **Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan** have made progress, while major states such as **Uttar Pradesh** and **Bihar** have seen limited or no implementation.

## ● **Initiatives to Support Gram Nyayalayas**

- ➡ Under the **Gram Nyayalayas scheme** (Centrally Sponsored Scheme), the **Union Government** provides financial assistance to states for establishing Gram Nyayalayas.

## ● **Way Forward**

- ➡ **Policy Clarity:** Clarification on whether the establishment of Gram Nyayalayas is mandatory to ensure uniform implementation across states.
- ➡ **Resource Allocation:** States need support in resource allocation to effectively set up and operate Gram Nyayalayas.
- ➡ **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular monitoring and evaluation of operational Gram Nyayalayas to assess their effectiveness and impact on local justice delivery.
- ➡ **Awareness Programs:** Conduct awareness programs to educate citizens about the functions and benefits of Gram Nyayalayas, promoting their use for resolving disputes.





# ***IUCN's Report on Agriculture and Conservation***

## ● **Why in News?**

- ➔ The **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** released a flagship report titled "**Agriculture and Conservation**," which examines the intricate relationship between agriculture and conservation efforts.

## ● **Key Findings of the Report**

### ➔ **Impact of Agriculture on Biodiversity**

#### **Negative Impacts:**

**Threat to Species:** Agriculture directly threatens **34%** of species listed on the **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species**.

**Habitat Conversion:** Conversion of natural habitats into croplands, pasturelands, and plantations, as well as irrigation practices, poses direct threats.

**Indirect Effects:** Indirect impacts include the introduction of invasive alien species, nutrient loading, soil erosion, use of agrochemicals, and climate change.

#### **Positive Impact:**

Approximately **17%** of species on the IUCN Red List have documented agricultural habitats.

### ➔ **Impact of Biodiversity on Agriculture**

#### **Positive Contributions:**

Ecosystems provide essential support for agriculture through:

**Provisioning Services:** Production of biomass and genetic materials.

**Regulating Services:** Climate regulation, sediment retention, nutrient cycling, water flow regulation, and pollination.

**Negative Contributions:** Ecosystem disservices such as crop predation, pests, and pathogens.



● **Recommendations for Aligning Agriculture with Conservation**

➡ **Agriculture Sustainability:**

Protect places and species that cannot thrive alongside agriculture to ensure food security and economic viability.

Maintain ecosystem services essential for agriculture, including natural states of climate, soil, and water.

➡ **Policy Alignment:**

Align agricultural and economic policies with the conservation of living nature, as currently, less than 5% of agricultural subsidies are designated as green subsidies.

➡ **Food Policy Reform:**

Address food wastage and promote positive dietary changes, such as reducing meat consumption.

● **Way Forward**

➡ **Integrated Approaches:** Foster collaboration between agricultural sectors and conservationists to develop sustainable practices.

➡ **Increased Funding for Green Initiatives:** Encourage governments to allocate more funds for green agricultural practices and biodiversity conservation.

➡ **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Increase awareness about the importance of biodiversity in agriculture and the need for sustainable practices among consumers and farmers alike.

➡ **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement robust monitoring systems to assess the impact of agricultural practices on biodiversity and to guide policy reforms.





# Delhi High Court Authorizes Posthumous Use of Cryopreserved Semen

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ The **Delhi High Court** has permitted a 60-year-old couple to use the frozen sperm of their deceased son for surrogacy, marking a significant ruling on posthumous reproduction rights.

## ● Highlights of the Judgment

- ➔ **Legal Framework:** Indian law does not prohibit posthumous reproduction in the absence of the spouse, provided that the consent of the sperm or egg owner is evident.
- ➔ **Definition: Posthumous Reproduction** refers to conceiving a child using **Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)** after the death of one or both biological parents, utilizing cryopreserved gametes.
- ➔ **Property Rights:** The court determined that semen or ovum samples qualify as 'property' since they are part of an individual's biological material, which can be inherited by legal heirs.

## ● About Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)

- ➔ **Definition:** ART encompasses techniques aimed at achieving pregnancy by manipulating sperm or oocytes outside the human body before transferring them into a woman's reproductive system.
- ➔ **Types of ART:**
  - In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF)
  - Surrogacy
  - Gamete Cryopreservation
  - Gamete Intra-Fallopian Transfer (GIFT)

## ● Regulatory Framework for ART in India

- ➔ **ART (Regulation) Act, 2021:** Establishes guidelines for the regulation and supervision of ART clinics and banks, focusing on preventing misuse and ensuring safe, ethical practices.
- ➔ **Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021:** Prohibits and penalizes commercial surrogacy, allowing it only for altruistic purposes.



● **Way Forward**

- ⇒ **Policy Clarification:** There is a need for clearer guidelines regarding posthumous reproduction to address ethical and legal concerns.
- ⇒ **Public Awareness:** Increase awareness about the rights and options available under ART, especially regarding posthumous reproduction.
- ⇒ **Support for Families:** Ensure emotional and psychological support for families navigating the complexities of posthumous reproduction.
- ⇒ **Continuous Monitoring:** Implement monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance with the ART Regulation Act and Surrogacy Regulation Act to maintain ethical practices in ART services.





# Section 6A of Citizenship Act

## ● Why in News?

- ➡ The **Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court** upheld the validity of **Section 6A** of the Citizenship Act.
- ➡ **Section 6A** was introduced through the **Citizenship Amendment Act, 1985**, as part of the **Assam Accord** between the Government of India and leaders of the Assam Movement.

## ● About Section 6A

- ➡ Grants **citizenship to migrants** from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) who entered Assam between **January 1, 1966, and March 24, 1971**.
- ➡ Migrants are granted citizenship after **10 years** from the date of being detected as foreigners.

## ● Supreme Court Judgment

- ➡ **Legislative Competence: Parliament has authority** to enact Section 6A under **Article 246** (Union List, Entry 17 – Citizenship, naturalization, and aliens).
- ➡ **Equality (Article 14):** Special citizenship provisions for Assam **do not violate equality** as Assam's migrant situation was unique.
- ➡ **Cultural Impact (Article 29(1)):** No evidence that migrants **threatened Assamese cultural identity**.
- ➡ **Cutoff Date (March 24, 1971):** The cutoff date is reasonable since **Operation Searchlight** was launched in East Pakistan on **March 26, 1971**, marking the start of the **Bangladeshi nationalist movement**.

## ● About the Citizenship Act, 1955

- ➡ **Acquisition of Citizenship:** Citizenship can be acquired through **birth, descent, registration, naturalization, and incorporation of territory**.
- ➡ **Dual Citizenship:** The Act does **not allow dual citizenship**.

## ● Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA)

- ➡ Exempts **Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians** from **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan** from being classified as illegal migrants if they entered India before **December 31, 2014**.





● **Way Forward**

- ➡ The judgment reaffirms the **constitutional validity** of special citizenship provisions.
- ➡ Future debates may focus on the **balance between regional sensitivities** and **national policy** on citizenship and migration.





# 23rd Meeting of the SCO Heads of Government in Islamabad

## ● Why in News?

- ⇒ Islamabad hosted the **23rd Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government**, where eight significant agreements were signed, addressing various critical issues including the SCO's budget and counterterrorism efforts.

## ● Key Takeaways from the Summit

### ⇒ India's Stance:

India emphasized the three major threats to regional peace and development: **terrorism, extremism, and separatism**.

India refrained from endorsing China's **Belt and Road Initiative**, citing concerns over **territorial integrity and sovereignty**.

- ⇒ **Criticism of Unilateral Sanctions:** The meeting criticized the unilateral sanctions imposed by Western nations, particularly against Russia.
- ⇒ **Digital Agenda Advancement:** The summit advanced India's digital agenda, integrating **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** and digital inclusion into the SCO's cooperation framework.

## ● Significance of SCO for India

- ⇒ **Countering Terrorism:** The **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** provides crucial intelligence on terrorist movements and drug trafficking.
- ⇒ **Platform for Central Asia Cooperation:** SCO serves as a platform to further India's **Connect Central Asia** policy.
- ⇒ **Closer Indo-Russian Cooperation:** The SCO facilitates enhanced cooperation between India and Russia.
- ⇒ **Energy Security:** The region possesses about **4% of the world's natural gas reserves** and approximately **3% of oil reserves**, making it vital for India's energy security.
- ⇒ **Balancing Chinese Influence:** Initiatives like **Chabahar Port** and the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** aim to counterbalance Chinese dominance in the region.



● **Challenges Faced by SCO**

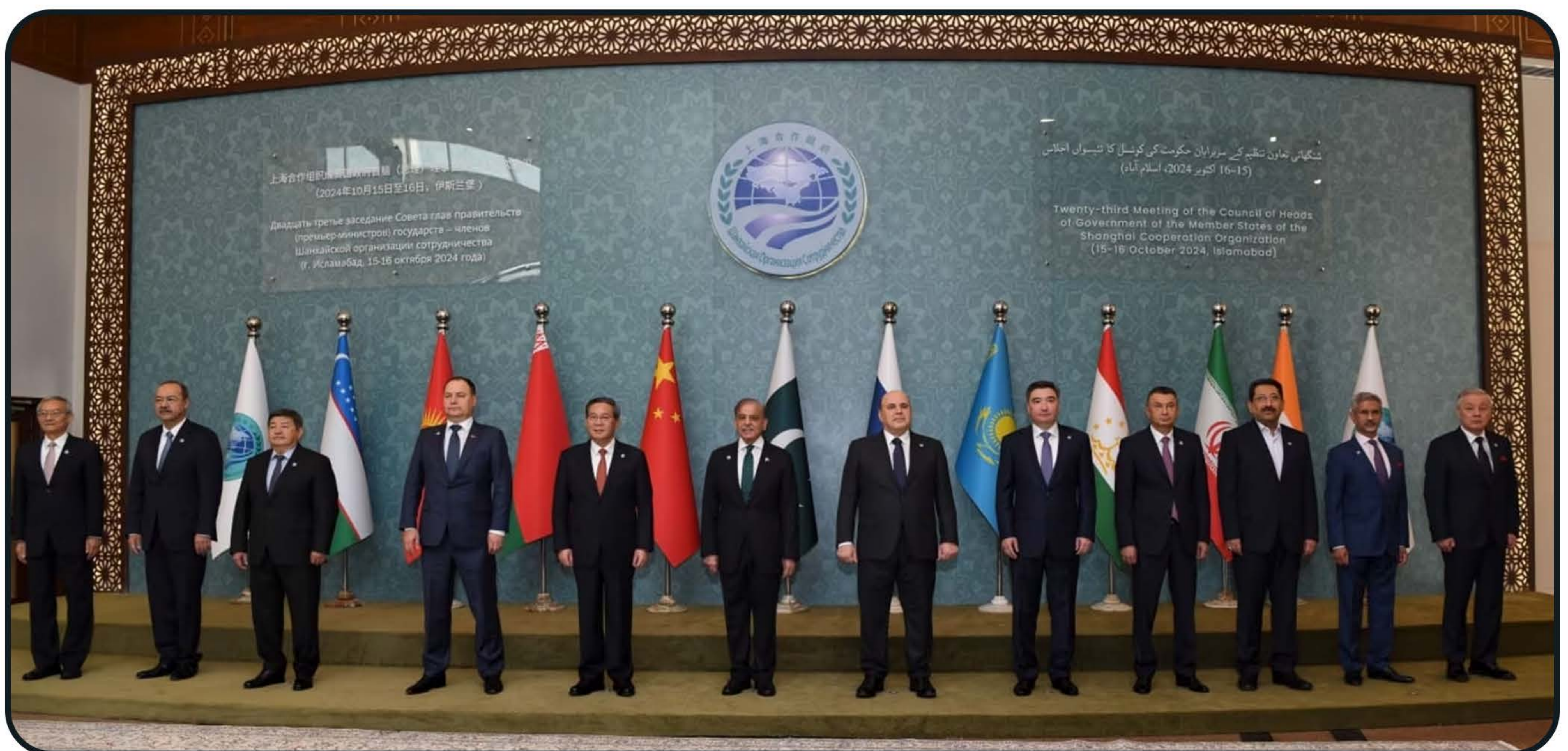
- ➡ **Member Disputes:** Ongoing disputes among member countries pose challenges to cooperation.
- ➡ **Dominance Competition:** Tensions arise from the competition for influence between China and Russia.
- ➡ **Divergent Interests:** Varied interests among member countries complicate unified action.

● **About SCO**

- ➡ **Headquarters:** Beijing, China
- ➡ **Genesis:** Established in 2001 in Shanghai by Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- ➡ **Current Members:** India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Belarus. Afghanistan and Mongolia hold observer status.
- ➡ **Goal:** To strengthen mutual trust, friendship, and neighborly relations among member states while promoting cooperation in political, economic, and cultural spheres.

● **Way Forward**

- ➡ **Strengthening Counterterrorism Efforts:** Enhance collaboration within RATS to address terrorism and security threats in the region.
- ➡ **Promoting Economic Cooperation:** Focus on building trade and investment relationships among SCO members to drive regional economic growth.
- ➡ **Addressing Geopolitical Tensions:** Engage in diplomatic dialogues to resolve disputes and align interests among member states.
- ➡ **Enhancing Digital Collaboration:** Foster initiatives for digital cooperation to leverage technology for economic and social development in member countries.





# Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Report 2024

## ● Why in News?

- ➔ The **Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report for 2024** has been released, jointly published by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)**.
- ➔ The report explores the interplay between **multidimensional poverty** and **violent conflict** under the theme **“Poverty Amid Conflict.”**

## ● Key Findings of the Report

- ➔ **Higher Deprivations in Conflict Zones:** Countries experiencing war show significantly higher levels of deprivation across all ten indicators of multidimensional poverty compared to non-conflict areas.
- ➔ **Global Poverty Statistics:**
  - Approximately **1.1 billion people** (around **18%**) live in acute multidimensional poverty across **112 countries**.
  - India is identified as having the largest number of individuals in extreme poverty, with **234 million** affected.

## ● About the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

### ➔ Definition:

The MPI measures poverty by considering multiple deprivations faced by individuals in the domains of **education, health, and living standards**.

A person is classified as **‘MPI poor’** if deprived in one-third or more of the weighted indicators.

- ➔ **Genesis:** Launched in **2010**, the MPI supports the **Sustainable Development Goal 1**, aimed at ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.

## ● India's National MPI (NMPI)

- ➔ **Introduction:** The **National MPI (NMPI)** was introduced in **2021** by **NITI Aayog**.
- ➔ **Indicators:** The NMPI retains the ten original indicators from the global MPI model and includes two additional indicators: **Maternal Health** and **Bank Account**.





## ● Way Forward

- ➔ **Policy Formulation:** Governments should formulate targeted policies to address the root causes of multidimensional poverty, particularly in conflict-affected regions.
- ➔ **Data Integration:** Integrating data on poverty and conflict can enhance understanding and inform interventions aimed at reducing poverty in volatile settings.
- ➔ **Focus on Vulnerable Groups:** Prioritize support for the most vulnerable populations, ensuring access to essential services like education, healthcare, and financial resources.
- ➔ **International Cooperation:** Strengthen global partnerships to tackle poverty and its intersections with conflict through collaborative strategies and shared resources








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