Delay in Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016

What is the issue?

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- The controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, is not likely to be tabled in Parliament in the upcoming monsoon session.
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- It has been stated that the “Joint Parliamentary Committee” would examine it further and holding wider consultations.
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What is the bill mainly about?

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- **What -** The Bill’s argues that the aim is to help persons of Indian origin, who are facing persecution in the neighbourhood.
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- It seeks to make it easy for illegal migrants (in India) from minority communities of 3 neighbouring countries to gain Indian citizenship.
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- Consequently, “Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Christians and Parsis” who’ve arrived from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan stand to benefit.
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- Significantly, Muslims aren’t covered as they form the majority in these countries (even persecuted minority Muslim sects aren’t covered).
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- **Technicalities -** Under the present law, citizenship by naturalisation requires applicants to have stayed in the country for 11 years of the previous 14 years.
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- The proposed amendment reduces the residency requirement to six years, apart from one full year of residency preceding citizenship approval.
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Why are some opposing the bill?

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- Assam has been witnessing strong protests against the bill, as natives fear that non-Muslim migrants from Bangladesh might get citizenship.
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- Once the migrants are granted citizenship, their political clout in Assam's politics will grow drastically, which might undermine the natives.
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- The fear is mainly rooted in the sheer number of illegal migrants that are already residing in Assam's Barak Valley.
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- Significantly, the ongoing exercise for updating of "National Citizen's Registry" (NCR) with its cut off date as March 24th 1971, runs contrary to the bill.
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- The NCR exercise is a direct consequence of the "Assam Accord", and is intended to identify illegal migrants from Bangladesh.
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Quick Facts:

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Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC):

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- JPCs are ad-hoc parliamentary committees which are usually formed when a motion for it is adopted by one house and supported by the other house.
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- Notably, presiding officers of both houses can also discuss and form JPCs, even without house resolutions.
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- Significantly, Lok Sabha is always contributes 2/3rd members and Rajya Sabha contributes the rest 1/3rd.
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- JPCs are constituted for specific purposes and they can hear from experts, public bodies, associations, individuals or interested parties to fulfil their task.
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- Thus far, JPCs have been constituted for Bofors Scam, 1992 Stock Market

Scam, 2G Scam, Soft Drink Pesticide Issue etc…
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Source: The Hindu

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