

My Notes....

NATIONAL

ARTICLE 370 SCRAPPED

The Government on 5 August 2019 has scrapped Article 370 through Presidential order of the **India's** Constitution that provides special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The state will now be divided into two Union Territories — Ladakh, and Jammu and Kashmir. While the Ladakh UT will be without a legislature, the UT of J&K will be with legislature. Article 370 exempted Jammu & Kashmir from the Indian Constitution (except Article 1 and Article 370) and permitted the state to draft its own **Constitution. It restricted Parliament's legislative powers in respect of J&K, limiting it to matters of Defence, External Affairs and Communications.**

President's order on Article 370

In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 370 of the Constitution, the President, with the concurrence of the Government of State of Jammu and Kashmir, is pleased to make the following Order:

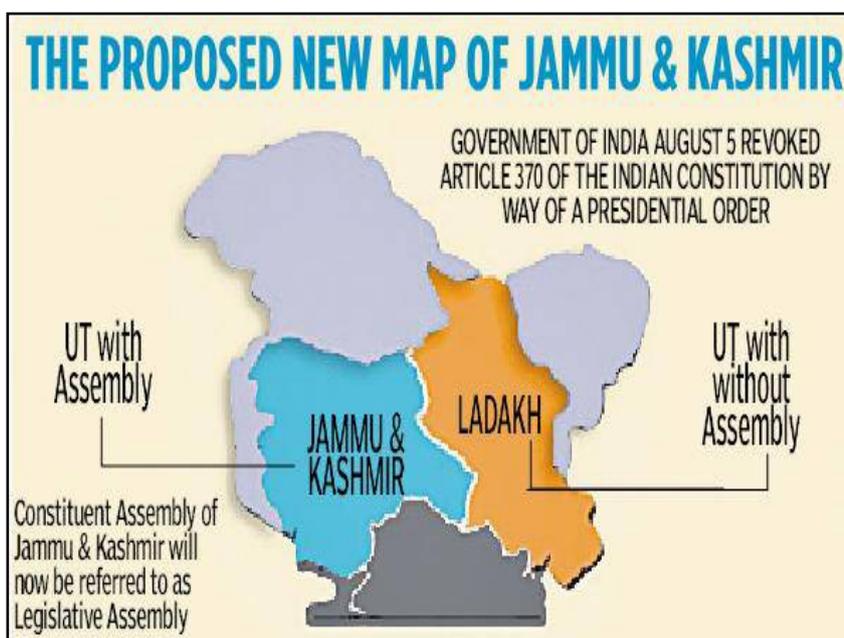
1. This Order may be called the Constitution Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019.

2. It shall come into force at once, and shall thereupon supersede the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954 as amended from time to time.

3. All the provisions of the Constitution, as amended from time to time, shall apply in relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir and

the exceptions and modifications subject to which they shall so apply shall be as follows: To article 367, there shall be added the following clause, **namely:"(4) For** the purposes of this Constitution as it applies in relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir

4. References to this Constitution or to the provisions thereof shall be construed as references to the Constitution or the provisions thereof as applied in relation to the said State:
5. References to the person for the time being recognized by the President on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly of the State as the Sadar-i-Riyasat of Jammu and Kashmir, acting on the advice of the Council of Ministers of the State for the time being in office, shall be construed as references to the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir:



6. References to the Government of the said State shall be construed as including references to the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir acting on the advice of his Council of Ministers.
7. In the proviso to clause (3) of Article 370 of this Constitution, the expression “Constituent Assembly of the State referred to in clause (2)” shall read “Legislative Assembly of the State”.

What Article 370 means

1. Under this article, the centre needs the state government's concurrence to apply laws — except in defence, foreign affairs, finance and communications.
2. It means the state's residents live under a separate set of laws, including those related to citizenship, ownership of property, and fundamental rights, as compared to other Indians. As a result of this provision, Indian citizens from other states cannot purchase land or property in Jammu & Kashmir.
3. Under Article 370, the Centre has no power to declare financial emergency under Article 360 in the state. It can declare an emergency in the state only in case of war or external aggression.
4. The Article 370 — which comes under Part XXI of the Constitution, which deals with "Temporary, Transitional and Special provisions" — grants J&K a special autonomous status. Constitutional provisions that are applicable to other Indian states are not applicable to J&K.
5. The provision was drafted in 1947 by Sheikh Abdullah, the then prime minister of J&K appointed by Maharaja Hari Singh and Jawaharlal Nehru. Abdullah had argued that Article 370 should not be placed under temporary provisions; he instead wanted 'iron-clad autonomy' for the state. The centre, however, didn't grant his wish.

What Article 35(A) means

1. Article 35A allows the state legislature to define the Jammu and Kashmir's permanent residents. The article had been inserted via the Constitution (Application to J&K) Order, 1954. It was issued by the then President Rajendra Prasad under Article 370 on PM Nehru's advice.
2. The state's Constitution, at the time of its adoption in 1956, defined a permanent resident as someone who was a state subject on May 14, 1954, or who has been a resident for 10 years, and has lawfully acquired immovable property.
3. What this clause means is that no outsider can now own property in J&K or get a state job.
4. The article is also known as the Permanent Residents Law. Among other things, it deprives the state's female residents of property rights if/when they marry an 'outsider'. The provision also extends to children born of any such women.

INDIA SIGNS UNISA

India on 7 August 2019 signed a key UN convention on international settlement agreements, **even as experts called for local laws to support the treaty's implementation** in business contracts. The United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA) **was signed by India's High Commissioner to Singapore Jawed Ashraf**, representing the Government of India. 46 countries signed the treaty named Singapore Convention on Mediation.

What

1. The signing of the convention is particularly important for the growth of mediation in India, said Chennai-based senior advocate and mediator Sriram Panchu, who was part of the team organising the convention.
2. India has adopted this (convention) and with that we have significantly enhanced the ease of doing business in India.
3. Signing of the Convention will boost the confidence of the investors and shall provide a positive signal to foreign investors about India's commitment to adhere to international practice on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
4. In order to encourage international commercial arbitration in India, to evolve a comprehensive ecosystem of arbitration the Government is establishing the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (NDIAC) as a statutory body.
5. The Commercial Courts Act, 2015, has been further amended and legislative exercise to further amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, is currently underway. These initiatives are being taken with a view to encourage the settlement of commercial disputes, domestic and international, in India through ADR Mechanism of Arbitration, Conciliation and Mediation.
6. A new Chapter (IIIA) has been inserted in the Commercial Courts Act, 2015, for mandatory pre-institution mediation and settlement in certain category of cases.
7. Therefore, the provisions of the 'Convention' are in line with the domestic laws and the efforts made to strengthen Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms.

Background

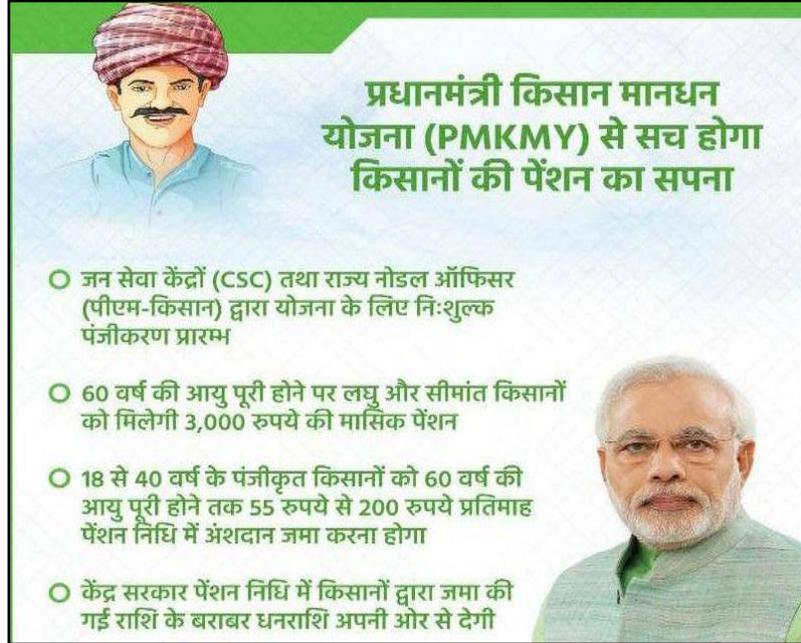
1. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation ("the Convention") on 20th December 2018.
2. The General Assembly authorized that the Convention will open for signature at a signing ceremony to be held on 7th August 2019 in Singapore and will be known as the "Singapore Convention on Mediation" (the Convention).
3. The Convention provides a uniform and efficient framework for the enforcement of international settlement agreements resulting from mediation and for allowing parties to invoke such agreements, akin to the framework that the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (New York, 1958) (the "New York Convention") provides for arbitral awards.
4. The Convention defines two additional grounds upon which a court may, on its own motion, refuse to grant relief. Those grounds relate to the fact that a dispute would not be capable of settlement by mediation or would be contrary to public policy.

PM-KMY LAUNCHED

PM-KMY, a central sector social security scheme administered by the Agriculture Ministry, was launched by Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar. Common Service Centre (CSC), a part of national e-governance scheme under the Central government, has set a target of enrolling 2 crore small and marginal farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY) by August 15.

What

1. Under PM-KMY, announced in the Budget 2019-20, a monthly pension of Rs 3,000 will be provided to eligible farmers on attaining the age of 60.
2. The Ministry has roped in CSC, a Special Purpose Vehicle under the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MEITY), as exclusive "enrolling agency" to enrol subscribers.
3. CSCs will remain open on Independence Day also to complete the target of registering at least 2 crore farmers by Independence Day.
4. Noting that the enrolment process was very simple, any eligible farmer who wants to join the scheme can visit his nearest CSC along with his Aadhaar card and bank passbook.
5. After the authentication process is completed, the enrolled farmer will be informed and his PM-KMY pension card with a unique pension account number will be generated.
6. The PM-KMY scheme is being implemented across the country, including Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh (both newly created Union Territories).
7. Farmers holding up to 2 lakh hectare farm land will be eligible for the PM-KMY scheme.
8. PM-KMY is a voluntary and contribution-based pension scheme for farmers in the age group of 18 to 40 years. Farmers will have to make a monthly contribution of Rs 55 to Rs 200 depending on the age of entry, in the pension fund till they reach the retirement age of 60 years.
9. The Central government will make an equal contribution of the same amount in the pension fund.
10. Spouse is also eligible to get a separate pension of Rs 3,000 upon making separate contribution to the fund.
11. In case of death of the farmer before the retirement date, the spouse may continue with the scheme.
12. If the spouse does not wish to contribute, the total contribution made by the farmer along with interest will be paid to the spouse.



CREATION OF CDS ANNOUNCED

In one of the biggest decisions for the military, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15 August 2019 announced the creation of the Chief of Defence Staff to integrate the

efforts, training, operations and planning of the three defence services. Modi made the announcement during his address to the nation from the Red Fort on the occasion of the 73rd Independence Day.

What

1. The CDS will provide effective leadership and synergise the efforts of the three defence services- army, air force and navy. This is needed to be in sync with the changing times and emerging security threats.
2. The CDS is the single-point reference to the government on all matters related to the military. The four-star rank officer heads the three services. The services will continue to have their own chiefs, but will report to the CDS.
3. The need for a CDS was first recommended after the 1999 Kargil War by a high-level committee, which was appointed to review the shortcomings in the security during the conflict.
4. A group of ministers examining the required reforms in national security also **favoured appointing a CDS. But, the recommendation didn't transform into action.**
5. In 2012, the Naresh Chandra task force had recommended creating a permanent chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.
6. This was to be a four-star rank officer and was being looked in place of the CDS to which there was some resistance. Instead, a Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) was created.
7. The senior-most among the three chiefs is appointed as the Chairman. Currently, it is the IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa. **But the Chairman COSC doesn't have powers like the CDS.**

Who is a CDS?

1. The CDS is meant to be a single-point military advisor to the government, and to coordinate long-term planning, procurements, training and logistics of the three services.
2. As future wars become short, swift and network-centric, coordination among the three services is crucial. Also as the stress on resources increases and defence budgets remain flat, the way forward is optimisation of resources by joint planning and training.
3. The CDS, being above the three Service Chiefs, is expected to play this role by optimising procurement, avoiding duplication among the services and streamlining the process. India being a nuclear weapons state, the CDS will also act as the military advisor to the Prime Minister on nuclear issues.

Is this proposal new?

1. The proposal for a CDS has been there for two decades. It was first made by the K. Subrahmanyam committee appointed after the Kargil conflict of 1999 to recommend higher military reforms. However, lack of consensus and apprehensions among services meant it never moved forward.
2. In 2012, the Naresh Chandra committee recommended the appointment of a Permanent Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) as a midway to allay apprehensions over the CDS.
3. The CDS is also one of the 99 recommendations made by the Lt General D.B. Shekatkar (retd) Committee which submitted its report in December 2016 which had 34 recommendations pertaining to the tri-services.

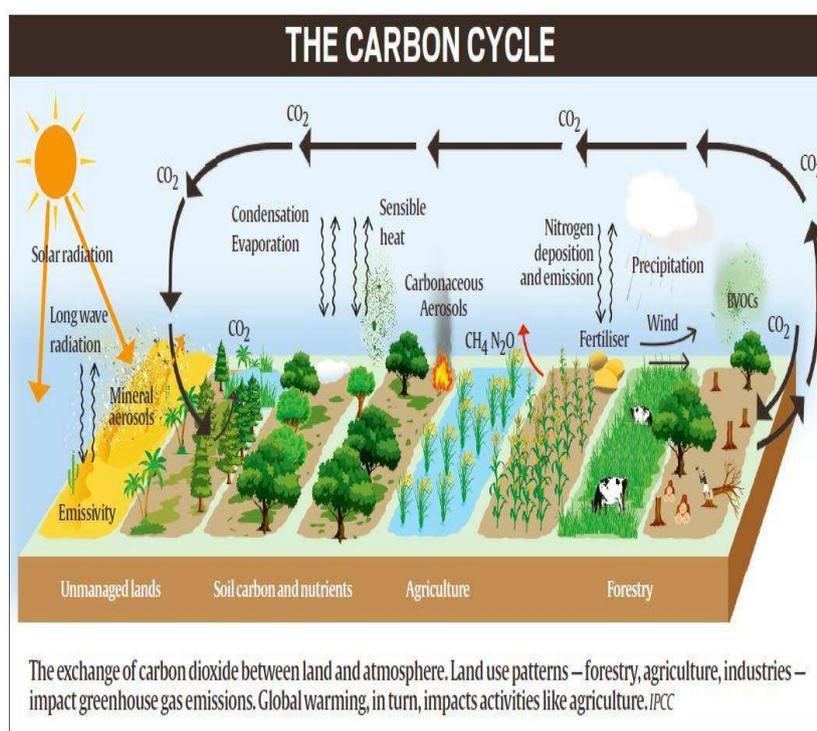
'CLIMATE CHANGE AND LAND' REPORT

Agriculture and associated land activities related to food production could be contributing over a quarter of the global emissions of greenhouse gases, a new major report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has said. If outside-the-farm gate activities, like transportation, energy and food processing industries, are included, emissions from global activities that put food on our table could account for as high as 37 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions. The report urges more sustainable agriculture and land-use practices. If emissions associated with pre- and post-production activities in the global food system are included, the emissions are estimated to be 21 to 37 per cent of total net anthropogenic (man-made) GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions, the report says. It also says that over a quarter of the food produced is either lost or wasted. Even in its decomposition, it releases emissions.

What

1. **This new report on 'Climate Change and Land', released on 8 August 2019,** is second in the series of special focused reports that IPCC has been preparing on the specific request of governments and other organisations.
2. The first in the series was the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degree Celsius that was released in October last year.
3. The land report released is an assessment of how land systems are contributing to global warming and are in turn being impacted by the resultant climate change. It also suggests more sustainable land management pathways.
4. The report says that human beings use nearly 70 per cent of the global ice-free land for various purposes. Activities on land, like agriculture or forestry, are sources of greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, the soil, trees and vegetation also absorb carbon dioxide, thus acting as carbon sinks.

5. Agriculture, forestry and other land uses together accounted for about 23 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions, globally, between the years 2007 and



2016, releases at least 12 billion tonnes of CO₂-equivalent (all greenhouse gases) in the atmosphere every year during this period.

6. This included about 13 per cent of all carbon dioxide, 44 per cent of all methane, and 82 per cent of all nitrous oxide being emitted every year. During the same time, soil, vegetation and forests absorbed nearly 11.2 billion tonnes of CO₂ every year.

7. Since the pre-industrial period, changes in land cover due to human activities have led to both a net release of CO₂, contributing to global warming, and an increase in global land albedo (ratio of heat absorbed to heat reflected), causing surface cooling. Over the historical period, the resulting net effect on globally averaged surface temperature is estimated to be small.
8. It says that the global rise in temperature has been much faster over land than over the entire planet. The mean land surface air temperature in the period 2006 to 2015 was about 1.53 degree Celsius above the average of pre-industrial period of 1850 to 1900. During the same time the global mean surface temperature, that accounts land as well as oceans, was higher only by 0.87 degree Celsius.
9. This additional warming over land could have led to increased frequency, intensity and duration of heat-related events, like heat waves, across the world.
10. Both global warming and urbanization (a result of land use change) can enhance warming in cities and their surroundings, especially during heat related events, including heat waves.
11. Night time temperatures are more affected by this effect than daytime temperatures. Increased urbanization can also intensify extreme rainfall events over the city or downwind of urban areas.
12. To restrict the emissions from land, forests and agriculture, the report suggests more sustainable agriculture practices, reduction and elimination of food waste, consumption of balanced diet, arresting deforestation and restoration of damaged ecosystems.

POCSO AMENDMENTS PASSED

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which provides the death penalty for aggravated sexual assault on children, was passed in Lok Sabha. It was passed by Rajya Sabha on July 29. Fast-track courts would be set up in the next two years under the Bill. Eighteen states have already come forward to join hands with the Centre to set up these courts. Each court will be given Rs 75 lakh as administrative expenses. The Bill aims at making offences against children gender-neutral. The Bill defines child pornography so that sexual predators indulging in such heinous crimes could be punished.

What

1. **Under the Act, a person commits “penetrative sexual assault” if he: (i) penetrates his penis into the vagina, mouth, urethra or anus of a child, or (ii) makes a child do the same, or (iii) inserts any other object into the child’s body, or (iv) applies his mouth to a child’s body parts.**
2. The Bill increases the minimum punishment from seven years to ten years. It further adds that if a person commits penetrative sexual assault on a child below the age of 16 years, he will be punishable with imprisonment between 20 years to life, with a fine.
3. **The Act defines certain actions as “aggravated penetrative sexual assault”. These include cases when a police officer, a member of the armed forces, or a public servant commits penetrative sexual assault on a child.**
4. The Bill adds two more grounds to the definition of aggravated penetrative sexual assault. These include: (i) assault resulting in death of child, and (ii) assault committed during a natural calamity, or in any similar situations of violence.

5. The Bill increases the minimum punishment from ten years to 20 years, and the maximum punishment to death penalty.
6. **Under the Act, “sexual assault” includes actions where a person touches the vagina, penis, anus or breast of a child with sexual intent without penetration.**
7. Aggravated sexual assault includes cases where the offender is a relative of the child, or if the assault injures the sexual organs of the child, among others.
8. The Bill adds two more offences to the definition of aggravated sexual assault. These include: (i) assault committed during a natural calamity, and (ii) administering or help in administering any hormone or any chemical substance, to a child for the purpose of attaining early sexual maturity.

DAM SAFETY BILL 2019

A bill seeking to set up an institutional mechanism for surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of specified dams across the country was passed by Lok Sabha with the centre asserting it has no intention of taking over power of the states. The provisions of the bill are proposed to be applied to all specified dams in the country which have height of more than 15 metres, or between 10 metres to 15 metres.

What

1. The bill envisages a two-tier structure at national as well state level to ensure safety of dams in the country.
2. There are 5,745 reservoirs in the country of which 293 are more than 100 years old. The age of 25 per cent of dams is between 50 to 100 years and 80 per cent are over 25 years old.
3. The bill also seeks to resolve the inter-state issues concerning maintenance and safety of dams, as many as 92 per cent of dams in the country are on inter-state river basins.
4. 40 dams have collapsed in India since Independence and worst such disaster occurred in Gujarat in 1979 leading to loss of thousands of lives of people.
5. The present bill is based on the earlier draft bill which could not be pushed in the previous Lok Sabha. It includes various suggestions of the Standing Committee which had scrutinised the earlier bill.
6. The bill envisages constitution of a National Committee on Dam Safety headed by the Chairman, Central Water Commission.
7. The panel will formulate policies and regulations regarding dam safety standards and prevention of dam failures, and analyse causes of major dam failures and suggest changes in dam safety practices.
8. The legislation also envisages setting up of a National Dam Safety Authority to be headed by an officer not below the rank of an Additional Secretary, to be appointed by the central government.
9. The main task of the National Dam Safety Authority includes implementing the policies formulated by the National Committee on Dam Safety, resolving issues between State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs), or between a SDSO and any dam owner in that state, specifying regulations for inspection and investigation of dams.
10. The NDSA will also provide accreditation to agencies working on construction, design and alteration of dams.

11. The proposed legislation also envisages constituting a State Dam Safety Organisation whose functions will be to keep perpetual surveillance, inspection, monitoring the operation and maintenance of dams, keeping a database of all dams, and recommending safety measures to owners of dams.
12. The bill provides for two types of offences --- obstructing a person in the discharge of his functions, and refusing to comply with directions issued under the proposed law.
13. As per the provisions of the bill, offenders will be punishable with imprisonment of up to one year, or a fine, or both. If the offence leads to loss of lives, the term of imprisonment may be extended up to two years.
14. Offences will be cognisable only when the complaint is made by the government, or any authority constituted under the bill.

TRANSGENDER PERSONS PROTECTION OF RIGHTS BILL

The Lok Sabha on 5 August 2019 passed a bill which provides a mechanism for social, economic and educational empowerment of transgenders. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2019 was passed by a voice vote. The Bill was introduced on July 19. It makes provision for establishing a national authority for safeguarding rights of transgenders.

What

1. According to the 2011 Census there are more than 4.80 lakh transgenders in the country. The Bill there are provision for penalty and punishment in cases of offences and sexual harassment against transgender persons.
2. A contentious provision that criminalised begging by transgender people has been removed from the Bill. The provision was part of the Bill when it was introduced by the previous government. The Bill had lapsed.
3. According to the Bill, a transgender is a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man or trans-woman (whether or not such person has undergone sex reassignment surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy), person with inter-sex variations, gender-queer and person having such socio-cultural identities as 'kinner', 'hijra', 'aravani' and 'jogta'.
4. Going by the Bill, a person would have the right to choose to be identified as a man, woman or transgender, irrespective of sex reassignment surgery and hormonal therapy. It also requires transgender persons to go through a district magistrate and district screening committee to get certified as a transperson.

BILL TO INCREASE NUMBER OF SC JUDGES

Parliament on 7 August 2019 passed a bill which seeks to increase the number of Supreme Court judges from the present 30 to 33 with a view to reducing pendency of cases. Moving "The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2019" for consideration and return, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said.

What

1. The bill comes days after Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to increase the number of Supreme Court judges.

2. In 1988, about three decades ago, the judge strength of the SC was increased from 18 to 26, and then again after two decades in 2009, it was increased to 31, including the CJI, to expedite disposal of cases to keep pace with the rate of institution.
3. As of now, the Supreme Court has a sanctioned strength of 30 judges, plus the chief justice of India -- 31 judges.
4. The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 was last amended in 2009 to increase the judges strength from 25 to 30 (excluding the CJI).
5. The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 originally provided for a maximum of 10 judges (excluding the CJI).
6. This number was increased to 13 by the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 1960, and to 17 in 1977.
7. The working strength of the Supreme Court was, however, restricted to 15 judges by the cabinet (excluding the chief Justice of India) till the end of 1979.
8. As on the June 1, there were 58,669 cases pending in the Supreme Court.

QRSAM SUCCESSFULLY TESTED

Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) on 4 August 2019 successfully flight-tested its state-of-the-art Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missiles (QRSAM) against live aerial targets from Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur. Two missiles, developed by DRDO, were tested against two live targets meeting complete mission objectives of engaging the targets. QRSAM, with many state of the art technologies, engaged the targets at different ranges and altitudes.

What

1. The systems have been tested in final configuration with RADAR mounted on a vehicle & missiles on the launcher.
2. The systems are equipped with indigenously-developed Phased array radar, Inertial Navigation System, Data Link & RF seeker.
3. The entire mission was captured by various Electro Optical Tracking Systems, Radar Systems and Telemetry Systems.
4. The system is being developed for Indian Army with search and track on move capability with very short reaction time.
5. QRSAM uses solid-fuel propellant and has a range of 25-30 km. The first trial of the QSRAM was conducted on June 4, 2017.
6. On February 26, 2019, two rounds of trials were successfully carried out on the same day.

Flashback

1. Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM) is a missile developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in association with Bharat Electronics Limited and Bharat Dynamics Limited for the Indian Army.
2. The missile is all-weather, all-terrain missile with electronic counter measures against jamming by aircraft radars.
3. The missile can be mounted on a truck and is stored in a canister. QRSAM uses solid-fuel propellant and has a range of 25-30 km.

7. The two missiles were tested for different altitude and conditions. The test flights had successfully demonstrated their aerodynamics, propulsion, structural performance and high manoeuvring capabilities.
8. The development comes two months after the Indian Air Force successfully test-fired the aerial version of the supersonic BrahMos cruise missile from a Su-30 MKI fighter aircraft.

SECOND STATE IN RECOGNISING FOREST RIGHTS CLAIMS

Chhattisgarh has become the second state in the country after Odisha to recognise the forest rights claims as well as the forest lands acquired by Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers.

What

1. So far, four lakh individual and 24,000 community forest rights certificates have been distributed in the state while recognition has been given to 3.42 lakh-hectare lands in individual claims and 9.50 lakh-hectare land in community claims.
2. Chhattisgarh stands second at the national level both in terms of providing recognition to forest rights claims and forest lands.
3. According to the figures by Union tribal affairs ministry, Odisha is the number one State in distribution of forest rights certificates.
4. While Maharashtra is number one in providing recognition to forestlands. Chhattisgarh, on the other hand comes number two in the list of both the categories.
5. Forest Rights Act 2006 has been implemented to provide recognition to communities having acquired forest land rights.

INTERNATIONAL

INF MISSILE TREATY

The United States officially withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty on 2 August 2019, clearing the way for a new arms race with Russia — and throwing China into the mix. The treaty — concluded in 1987 by then US president Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev — limited the Cold War powers' medium-range missiles, both conventional and nuclear. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called the demise of the treaty a dangerous step that “will likely heighten, not reduce, the threat posed by ballistic missiles.”

What

1. **U.S. President Donald Trump's administration says** the treaty is effectively dead already because of Russian violations — a charge Russia denies. The White House launched the six-month procedure for leaving the treaty on February 1.
2. The United States will remain in compliance with all of our obligations until August 2nd — and after that point in time, we will continue to pursue what is in our best interest
3. In response, Russian President Vladimir **Putin signed off on Moscow's participation in** the INF on July 3.

4. Under the deal, missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 kilometers (310-3,420 miles) were eliminated. That paved the way for the mothballing of Russian SS-20 missiles and American Pershing missiles deployed in Europe.
5. Even if European nations have expressed concerns about the consequence of a new arms race, NATO has endorsed the U.S. position, saying **Russia's 9M729 missile had** violated the INF agreement. Moscow insists the new projectile has a maximum range of 480 kilometers — within INF parameters.
6. The 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty limited the use of medium-range missiles, both conventional and nuclear.

ECONOMY

CHANGES IN IBC APPROVED

Parliament approved changes in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), providing greater clarity over the distribution of proceeds of the auction of loan defaulting companies, with the Lok Sabha passing the Bill with voice vote. Seven sections of the code are being amended. The Bill was passed by Rajya Sabha. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2019, gives the committee of creditors of a loan defaulting company explicit authority over the distribution of proceeds in the resolution process, and fixes a firm timeline of 330 days for resolving cases referred to the IBC.

What

1. The amendments would also bring in more clarity on various provisions, including the time-bound disposal for resolution plan at the application stage, as well as the treatment of financial creditors.
2. Once the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) begins, it has to be completed in 330 days, including litigation stages and judicial process.
3. The approved resolution plan would be binding on Central and state governments as well as various statutory authorities.
4. The proposed amendments also respond to issues pertaining to financial creditors in the wake of a recent ruling with respect to financial and operational creditors.
5. Recently, the National **Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) had ruled in the Essar Steel Ltd's** case that the Committee of Creditors (CoC) had no role in the distribution of claims, and brought lenders (financial creditors) and vendors (operational creditors) on par. The provisions of the Bill empower home buyers.

About NCLAT

1. National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) was constituted under Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013 for hearing appeals against the orders of National Company Law Tribunal(s) (NCLT), with effect from 1st June, 2016.
2. NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by NCLT(s) under Section 61 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC), with effect from 1st December, 2016.
3. NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India under Section 202 and Section 211 of IBC.

6. The government will endeavour to do full justice to them, adding that the government was also looking at ways to resolve the issue concerning buyers of flats from JP Group of companies.

WAGE CODE BILL PASSED

The Rajya Sabha passed the Code on Wages Bill, 2019, which allows the Centre to set a minimum statutory wage, a move expected to benefit 500 million workers across the country. The bill has been already passed in the Lok Sabha and will now go for President's assent following which it will become an Act. This is the first in a series of four labour codes **proposed in the government's labour reform initiative**. The minimum wage fixed by the Centre will no longer be based on employment but on geography and skills. As many as 17 labour laws are more than 50 years old and some even belong to the pre-Independence era.

What

1. The code ensures minimum wages along with timely payment of wages to all employees and workers.
2. Many unorganised sector workers like agricultural workers, painters, persons working in restaurants and dhabas and chowkidars, who were outside the ambit of minimum wages, will get legislative protection of minimum wages after the bill becomes an act.
3. Besides, the bill will ensure that employees getting a monthly salary are paid by the 7th of the following month. Those working on a weekly basis will be paid on the last day of the week and daily wagers should get them on the same day.
4. The push to merge labour laws, which has been in the works for over four years, comes on the back of finance **minister Nirmala Sitharaman's** budget statement that the government proposed to streamline the multiple labour laws into a set of four labour codes.
5. This will ensure that process of registration and filing of returns will get standardised and streamlined. With various labour-related definitions getting standardised, it is expected that there shall be less dispute.
6. The Code on Wages seeks to universalise the provisions of minimum wages and timely payment of wages, which will be computed based on minimum living

Flashback

1. The bill was first introduced in the Lok Sabha in 2017 and was referred to the parliamentary standing committee, which submitted its report in December 2018. However, the bill lapsed after the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha.
2. Under the code on wages, the labour ministry plans to streamline the definition of wages by amalgamating four related statutes: the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965, and the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
3. There are currently about half a dozen definitions of wages in various acts across the Centre and the states, which employers must grapple with.
4. The labour ministry has decided to amalgamate 44 labour laws into four codes — on wages, industrial relations, social security and safety, health and working conditions.

conditions. It is envisaged that states will notify payment of wages to workers through digital mode.

INDIA SLIPS TO 7TH LARGEST ECONOMY

India has been pushed to the seventh place in the global GDP rankings in 2018 with the UK and France forging ahead to the fifth and sixth spots, data compiled by the World Bank showed. In 2017, India had emerged as the sixth largest economy, while France was pushed to the seventh place in the global GDP league table. The US remains the top economy with a GDP of \$20.5 trillion in 2018. China was the second largest economy with \$13.6 trillion, while Japan took the third place with \$5 trillion. **India's** GDP was at \$2.7 trillion in 2018, while UK and France were at \$2.8 trillion.

What

1. In 2017, India was at \$2.65 trillion, UK at \$2.64 trillion and France at \$2.5 trillion, helping the third-largest economy in Asia to emerge as the fifth largest economy at that time. Economists said India taking the seventh largest global economy tag in 2018 was largely due to the currency fluctuations and slowdown in growth.
2. In 2017, the rupee appreciated against the dollar, and in 2018 it depreciated against the dollar. So, it is largely due to currency fluctuation and the growth slowdown.
3. India still remains the fastest-growing major economy in the world, although growth is estimated to slow to 7% in the current fiscal year that ends in March.
4. China is expected to face a sharper slowdown due to the ongoing tariff war with the US. Last month, research firm IHS Markit had said that India will overtake the UK as the fifth largest economy in the world in 2019 and is likely to shoot past Japan to emerge as the third-largest economy by 2025.
5. The government has unveiled a plan to emerge as a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25 and the Economic survey for 2018-19 has said that the country needs to sustain a real GDP growth rate of 8% to achieve the goal.

CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL 2019 GETS PARLIAMENTARY NOD

The Parliament on 7 August 2019 gave its nod to the landmark Consumer Protection Bill, 2019 which aims to protect the rights of consumers by establishing authorities for timely and effective administration and settlement of **consumers'** dispute. The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on 30th July, 2019 and was passed by Rajya Sabha through a voice vote. The Bill will replace the more than three decades old Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

What

1. The new legislation would ease the overall process of consumer grievance redressal. The new bill will provide a better mechanism to dispose consumer complaints in a speedy manner and will help in disposal of large number of pending cases in consumer courts across the nation.
2. This bill was a long pending legislation and all the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee were incorporated in the bill except for five recommendations.

3. The bill, among other things, proposes setting up of a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class. The CCPA would make interventions to prevent consumer detriment arising from unfair trade practices. The agency can also initiate class action, including enforcing recall, refund and return of products.
4. The Bill also envisages simplified dispute resolution process, has provision for Mediation and e-filing of cases. The Consumer will be able to file cases in the nearest commission under the jurisdiction of which he resides.
5. For the first time there will be an exclusive law dealing with Product Liability. A manufacturer or product service provider or product seller will now be responsible to compensate for injury or damage caused by defective product or deficiency in services.
6. Additional swift executive remedies are proposed in the bill through CCPA. There are provisions for deterrent punishment to check misleading advertisements and adulteration of products.
7. Product liability provision to deter manufacturers and service providers from delivering defective products or deficient services. The Bill also enables regulations to be notified on E-commerce and direct selling with focus on protection of interest of consumers.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NSIL GETS FIRST BOOKING

NEWSPACE INDIA Limited (NSIL), the newly created second commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation, has bagged its first contract. A private US space services provider has booked **ISRO's Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)**, which is yet to be tested, for launching a spacecraft. The US provider, Spaceflight, announced on August 8 that it has clinched a deal with NSIL for using the second developmental flight of the under-development **SSLV rocket to launch a spacecraft for an "undisclosed US-based satellite constellation customer"**.

What

1. SSLV is perfectly suited for launching multiple microsattellites at a time and supports multiple orbital drop-offs. **We're excited to add SSLV to our launch portfolio and** manage many launches together — first to LEO (low earth orbit) mid-inclinations this year and SSO missions starting in the fall of 2020, Curt Blake, CEO and President of Spaceflight, said.
2. There are more than 500 industries contributing to ISRO programmes at present; more than half of the project budget outlay for space programmes flows to these industries.
3. ISRO is looking at deepening these ties through NSIL with private players manufacturing some of the high turnover rockets like the PSLV and the SSLV, which has been indigenised 100 per cent over the years.
4. Spaceflight has had nine launches in the past with ISRO involving over 100 spacecraft on the workhorse Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). Spaceflight has in the past tied up with Rocket Lab and SpaceX among others to provide launch services.
5. **ISRO's SSLV was originally** scheduled to have its first development flight in July but the flight has been pushed to the end of the year. One of the mandates of

NSIL is to mass produce and manufacture the SSLV and the more powerful PSLV with the private sector in India through technology transfers.

6. The SSLV can carry satellites weighing upto 500 kg to low earth orbit while the PSLV can launch satellites weighing in the range of 1,000 kg.
7. **The SSLV “is** the smallest vehicle at 110-tonne mass at ISRO. It will take only 72 hours to integrate, unlike the 70 days taken now for a launch vehicle.
8. The aim of NSIL, which was mentioned in the Budget by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, is to use research and development carried out by ISRO over the years for commercial purposes through Indian industry partners.
9. There are more than 500 industries contributing to ISRO programmes at present; more than half of the project budget outlay for space programmes flows to these industries.

Flashback

1. Antrix Corporation Limited is the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
2. Its objective is to promote the ISRO's products, services and technologies. It was incorporated as a private limited company owned by the Indian government on 28 September 1992.
3. The company is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU), wholly owned by the Government of India. It is administered by the Department of Space (DoS).
4. It had dealings with EADS Astrium, Intelsat, Avanti Group, WorldSpace, Inmarsat, and other space institutions in Europe, Middle East and South East Asia.
5. It was awarded 'Miniratna' status by the government in 2008 and achieved a turnover of Rs. 18 billion in 2014–15.

FIRST NEARBY SUPER-EARTH

Scientists have characterised the first potentially habitable world outside our own solar system located about 31 light-years away. The super-Earth planet — named GJ 357 d — was **discovered in early 2019 owing to NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS)**, a mission designed to comb the heavens for exoplanets. This is **humanity's first nearby** super-Earth that could harbour life — uncovered with help from TESS, our small, mighty mission with a huge reach.

What

1. The exoplanet is more massive than our own blue planet and the discovery will provide **insight into Earth's heavyweight planetary cousins**.
2. Astronomers from the Institute of Astrophysics of the Canary Islands and the University of La Laguna, both in Spain, announced the discovery of the GJ 357 system in the journal Astronomy & Astrophysics.
3. They showed that the distant solar system — with a diminutive M-type dwarf sun, about one-third the size of our own sun — harbours three planets, with one of those **in that system's habitable zone: GJ 357 d**.

4. Last February, the TESS satellite observed that the dwarf sun GJ 357 dimmed very slightly every 3.9 days, **evidence of a transiting planet moving across the star's face**. That planet was GJ 357 b, a so-called **"hot Earth"** about 22 per cent larger than Earth, according to the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, which guides TESS.
5. Follow-up observations from the ground led to the discovery of two more exoplanetary siblings: GJ 357 c and GJ 357 d. The international team of scientists collected Earth-based telescopic data going back two decades — to reveal the newly found **exoplanets' tiny gravitational tugs on its host star**, according to NASA.

ONLY STAR THAT ESCAPED A SUPERMASSIVE BLACK HOLE

Scientists have discovered the only space object – a lone star, that has managed to escape the force of a supermassive black hole. This is unique because the gravitational pull in a black hole is supposed to be so strong that nothing can escape from it, not even light. The news about the star which escaped the force of the black hole comes a few months after astronomers across the world showed the first-ever image of a black hole.

What

1. Scientists have successfully tracked down the star, named S5-HVS1, which was kicked out of Sagittarius A, which is a supermassive black hole lurking at the heart of the Milky Way.
2. The supermassive black hole is claimed to be moving at a speed of 1,700 kilometers per second, according to research by a team of space researchers.
3. **According to a research paper titled 'The Great Escape: Discovery of a nearby 1700 km/s star ejected from the Milky Way by Sgr A*, the star has already spent around 4.8 million years on a lonely journey in the space after it was kicked away from the Sagittarius A* black hole.**
4. When integrated backwards in time, the orbit of the star points unambiguously to the Galactic Centre, implying that S5-HVS1 was kicked away from Sgr A* with a velocity of **~ 1800 km/s,**".
5. The discovery was made during a project called the Southern Stellar Stream Spectroscopic Survey. **The scientists said their data proved the runaway star 'can be unambiguously traced back to the Galactic Centre'**.
6. In a previous report, NASA says that the Sagittarius A* black hole is just 26,000 light-years away from Earth, and it is one of the very few black holes in the universe where we can witness the flow of matter nearby.

"CLOAKED" BLACK HOLE DISCOVERED

Astronomers from American space agency NASA have discovered evidence for the **farthest "cloaked" black hole found so far**. The discovery was made by the Chandra X-ray Observatory. The astronomers have claimed the cloaked black hole at only 6 per cent of the current age of the universe. NASA says that this is the first indication of a black hole hidden by gas at such an early time in the history of the cosmos. Supermassive black holes are often millions to billions of times more massive than our Sun and typically grow by pulling in material from a disk of surrounding matter.

What

1. Based on current theories, a dense cloud of gas feeds material into the disk surrounding a supermassive black hole during its period of early growth.
2. The rapid growth generates large amounts of radiation in a very small region around the black hole. Scientists call this extremely bright, compact source a **“quasar.”**
3. Scientists say **it’s extremely difficult to find out quasars in the cloaked** stage because so much of their radiation is absorbed and cannot be detected by current instruments.
4. The new finding came from observations of a quasar called PSO167-13, which was first discovered by Pan-STARRS, an optical-light telescope in Hawaii.
5. The team used Chandra to observe PSO167-13 and found that only three X-ray light photons were detected from PSO167-13 after 16 hours of observation.

MISCELLANEOUS

MEDIATION PANEL FAILS TO FIND SOLUTION

The Supreme Court-appointed mediation panel on 1 August 2019 said it was unable to arrive at a solution to the 2.77-acre Babri Masjid-Ram Janmoabhoomi land dispute issue in Ayodhya. The court will begin hearing the matter from 2 August 2019. The SC had in March appointed a three-member panel to find an amicable solution to the Ayodhya dispute. The panel comprises Supreme Court justice F M Ibrahim Kalifulla, Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravishankar and senior advocate Sriram Panchu. On 1 August 2019, the panel conveyed to the SC that it had failed to strike a consensus among parties for a negotiated settlement.

What

1. The mediation panel was formed by the apex court when it was hearing petitions seeking a review of the Allahabad high court verdict on September 30, 2010.
2. The HC verdict had ordered the disputed 2.77 acres to be divided into three equal parts among the Nirmohi Akhara sect, Sunni Central Wakf Board, Uttar Pradesh, and Ramlalla Virajman, but the verdict was challenged by all three parties.
3. A bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, justices S A Bobde, D Y Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S Abdul Nazir will hear the appeals challenging the HC verdict from 2 August 2019.

The case

1. It pertains to the ownership of over 2.77 acres of land in Ayodhya, where the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi disputed structure stood since 1528 till its demolition on December 6, 1992.
2. In 2010, Allahabad HC divided the disputed land equally among three parties - Ram Lalla, Nirmohi Akhara and Sunni Waqf Board.
3. In May 2011, the Supreme Court stayed that verdict. There are 16 appeals and **petitions by Hindu and Muslim parties that challenge the Allahabad HC’s** verdict, saying a three-way division of the disputed land is not the solution.

- The main parties to the case are the Nirmohi Akhara, Ram Lalla (represented by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad-run Ram Janmabhoomi Trust) and the Sunni Waqf Board.

RAMON MAGSAYSAY AWARD 2019

NDTV journalist Ravish Kumar has been chosen for the Ramon Magsaysay Award this year. Kumar, NDTV India Managing Editor who has been with the company since 1996, is the only Indian among the five recipients of the award this year. The four others are Ko Swe Win, a journalist based in Myanmar; **Thailand's Angkhana Neelapajit**; Raymundo Pujante Cayabyab of Philippines; and **South Korea's Kim Jong Ki**. **The citation for Kumar said he has been awarded for "harnessing journalism to give voice to the voiceless".**

What

- In electing Ravish Kumar to receive the 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Award, the board of trustees recognizes his unfaltering commitment to a professional, ethical journalism of the highest standards; his moral courage in standing up for truth, integrity and independence; and his principled belief that it is in giving full and respectful voice to the voiceless, in speaking truth bravely yet soberly to power, that journalism fulfills its noblest aims to advance democracy.
- It also **appreciated Kumar's** style of journalism: **"As an anchor, Ravish is sober, incisive, and well-informed.** He does not dominate his guests but affords them the chance to express themselves.
- The Ramon Magsaysay Award is considered one of the most prestigious awards in Asia.

Flashback

- The Ramon Magsaysay Award is an annual award established to perpetuate former Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay's example of integrity in governance, courageous service to the people, and pragmatic idealism within a democratic society.
- The prize was established in April 1957 by the trustees of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund based in New York City with the concurrence of the Philippine government.

SUSHMA SWARAJ PASSED AWAY

Senior BJP leader and former foreign minister Sushma Swaraj passed away after a massive cardiac arrest in Delhi late on 6 August 2019 evening. She was 67. The popular politician, who made the foreign ministry accessible through social media, had health complications arising from diabetes, but was not suffering from any immediate health emergency. She underwent a kidney transplant in 2016 and despite a few spells of hospitalisation, was understood to be getting better.

What

- Swaraj did not contest the 2019 Lok Sabha polls having ruled her out of electoral politics. Her health and the decision to bid goodbye to the electoral arena were seen to be reasons for her exclusion from the new Modi cabinet that took oath after the BJP repeated its feat of scoring a majority.

2. She continued to follow current events closely and congratulated the government for its success in nullifying the provisions of Article 370.
3. A nine-time parliamentarian, a fabulous orator and a gifted administrator, Sushma Swaraj became the youngest minister of a state, Haryana, back in 1977.
4. A former lawyer of Supreme Court, she started her political career with Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad in the 1970s.

TRIBUNAL FOR SFJ

Centre has set up a tribunal to adjudicate whether or not there is sufficient reason to impose a ban on pro-Khalistan group Sikhs For Justice, which was declared as an unlawful organisation last month. While imposing the ban, the Union Home Ministry had said the group's primary objective is to establish an "independent and sovereign country" in Punjab and it openly espouses the cause of Khalistan and in that process, challenges the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India.

What

1. Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 5 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (37 of 1967), the central government hereby constitutes an Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal, consisting of Mr Justice D N Patel, Chief Justice, High Court of Delhi, for the purpose of adjudicating whether or not there is sufficient cause of declaring the Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) as an unlawful association, a notification issued by the Home Ministry said.
2. Such a tribunal is constituted under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) to give an opportunity to the banned entity to present its case but is usually a no-show.
3. The US-based Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) pushes for Sikh Referendum 2020 as part of its separatist agenda.
4. The fringe organisation, run by a few radical Sikhs of foreign nationality in the US, Canada, the UK, etc., was declared unlawful under the provisions of Section 3(1) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
5. The SFJ is mostly active in online platforms and has more than two lakh supporters but physical presence is miniscule, with just eight to 10 active members.
6. Paramjeet Singh Pamma, an active member of the SFJ, recently attended a cricket world cup match, where he had raised anti-India slogans.
7. The SFJ is also planning to conduct a Khalistan referendum on pilgrims who would visit the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara in Pakistan in the future.

KAJIN SARA LAKE

A newly-discovered lake in Nepal is likely **to set a new record of being the world's** highest lake replacing Tilicho, which is situated at an altitude of 4,919 metres in the Himalayan nation and currently holding the title. The Kajin Sara lake in Manang district was discovered about a few months ago by a team of mountaineers. It is located at Singarkharka area of Chame rural municipality.

What

1. As per the measurement of the lake taken by the team, it is located at an altitude of 5,200 metres, which is yet to be officially verified.
2. It is estimated to be 1,500-metre-long and 600-metre-wide,” Chame rural municipality Chair Lokendra Ghale was quoted as saying by the report.
3. **The lake would be the world’s highest lake if its altitude of 5000-plus metres is officially verified.**
4. The Tilicho lake, situated at an altitude of 4,919 metres, is 4 km long, 1.2 km wide and around 200 metres deep.
5. Tilicho Lake is a lake located in the Manang district of Nepal, 55 kilometres (34 mi) as the crow flies from the city of Pokhara.
6. It is situated in the Annapurna range of the Himalayas and is called the highest lake for its size in the world, even though there are lakes at higher altitude even in Nepal, and larger, higher lakes in Tibet.
7. Tilicho Lake is the destination of one of the most popular side hikes of the Annapurna Circuit trek.

SCHEME FOR STUDY OF PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS

The Rajya Sabha on 12 August 2019 launched a scheme to promote research and study of the functioning of parliamentary institutions, impact of legislations on socio-economic transformation and efficacy of various parliamentary devices, such as committees. Approved by Upper House Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu, the 'Rajya Sabha Research and Study Scheme' has three components -- one Dr S Radhakrishnan Chair with a grant of Rs 22.50 lakh, four Fellowships of Rs 8.50 lakh each, and 10 Rajya Sabha Student Engagement Internships with a stipend of Rs 10,000 each per month, adding up to a total of Rs 58.50 lakh.

What

1. To ensure research and study reports are submitted on time, grants will be released based on progress made on the projects and awardees will have to submit reports every six months.
2. The duration of Dr S Radhakrishnan Chair is two years while that of the fellowships is 18 months. Internships will be offered to graduates and post-graduates for two months every year during the summer vacation to get familiar with the functioning of the Rajya Sabha. Applications for the Dr Radhakrishnan Chair and four Fellowships can be sent until the end of this month.
3. The research scheme was formulated after extensive discussions, chaired by Vice-President Naidu, with members of the Rajya Sabha, present and former secretaries-General of both Houses of Parliament and noted academics and researchers.

FIRST INDIAN TO CLAIM A WORLD TITLE IN MOTORSPORTS

Aishwarya Pissay became the first Indian to claim a world title in motorsports, **annexing the FIM World Cup in the women’s category after the final round of the championship.** The 23-year old from Bengaluru also finished second in the FIM Junior category. Aishwarya, who won the first round in Dubai and was placed third (Portugal),

fifth (Spain) and fourth (Hungary) in the subsequent outings, finished with a tally of 65 points, just four ahead of Portugal's Rita Vieira in the final overall standings for women.

What

1. She was placed second in the junior category with 46 points, behind championship winner Tomas de Gavardo (60) of Chile.
2. Going into the Hungarian Baja, Aishwarya (52) and Vieira (45) were the top contenders for the World Cup. The fourth-place finish earned the Indian 13 points while Vieira, who was placed third, garnered 16.
3. It was a tough phase of my life, but I believed in myself and was determined to get back on the bike which I did after nearly six months.
4. So, winning the World Cup is huge for me and I will look to better my performance having gained this experience.

CORAS LAUNCHED

Minister of Railways and Commerce & Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal launched CORAS (Commando for Railway Security) of Indian Railways and new establishment manual for Railway Protection Force. The induction of CORAS was planned in Railway Protection Force. CORAS team will be provided best, most modern equipment and world class training. Lauding the efforts of RPF soldier Shivcharan Gurjar, who rescued eight lives in flood stricken areas of Gujarat, Shri Goyal appreciated the commendable work of RPF soldiers. Shri Goyal urged the people to crack down on touts and immediately inform the authorities so the menace of ticket touting may be eliminated permanently.”

What

1. Shri Goyal announced that a new state of the art commando training centre to be established in Jagadhri, Haryana. Shri Goyal added that a new network of CCTV cameras at every station will be set up to enhance the security of Railway passengers.
2. The link of these cameras will be given to the local stations, GRP, RPF, **Divisional office and to the Minister's office.**
3. CORAS, a special Railway Unit is a result of detailed policy formulation. Railway Protection Force is always involved in protecting Railway passengers and Railway property in far and inaccessible threat prone areas.
4. To meet the challenges to Railway security, CORAS, a separate Commando Unit of RPF has been established. This special unit is given world class training and best facilities. This special unit will be able to meet any challenging situation.

Background of CORAS

1. To develop world level capabilities of specialized responder for any situation pertaining to damage, disturbance and disruption of train operations, attack/hostage/hijack and disaster situations in railway areas.
2. Following the doctrine of graded response, minimum effective force shall be used for providing fool proof security to Indian Railways and its users.