

My Notes....

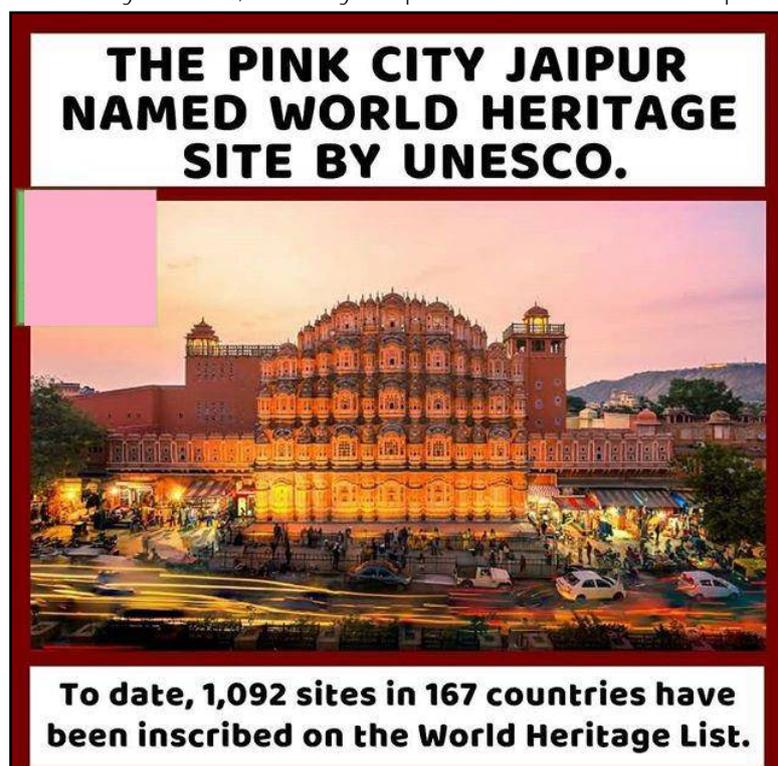
NATIONAL

PINK CITY DECLARED WORLD HERITAGE SITE

UNESCO's World Heritage Committee inscribed Jaipur the 'Pink City of India' among its World Heritage Sites. In a meeting held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The UNESCO Committee decided to include seven cultural sites of different nations in its world heritage list. **The decision was made by the UNESCO's Committee in its 43rd session** where the Committee had to examine 35 nominations for inscription in the World Heritage site list.

What

1. Jaipur a city of Rajasthan in India has been inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage site.
2. Among other sites that UNESCO added to the List are situated in Australia, Bahrain, **China, Indonesia, Japan and the People's Democratic Republic of Lao.**
3. The Pink City, Jaipur was selected for inscription because despite being a region surrounded by cities located in hilly terrain, the city Jaipur was established on plain and was build according to grid plan interpreted according to the Vedic architecture.
4. The UNESCO mentioned that the streets of Jaipur feature continuous colonnaded businesses that run along the centre, creating large public squares know as 'Chaupars'.
5. The construction is beautiful as the markets, stalls, residences and temples have uniform faces and are build in such a manner that all face the main streets.
6. The City has remarkable urban planning the gives the aroma of the idea of its planning is a representation of the ancient Hindu and modern Mughal cultures with finch of Western cultural influence.
7. The Six other sites **that were also selected as UNESCO's world heritage site alongside Jaipur** are Dilmun Burial Mounds (Bahrain), Budj Bim Cultural Landscape (Australia), Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City (China), Ombilin Coal Mining Heritage of Sawahlunto (Indonesia), Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan (Japan), Megalithic Jar Sites in Xiengkhouang — Plain of Jars (Lao **People's Democratic Republic**).



NITI AAYOG'S EASE OF DOING FARM BUSINESS

Maharashtra achieved first rank in NITI Aayog launched “Agricultural Marketing and Farmer Friendly Reforms Index (AMFFRI), which ranks states based on the degree of reforms they have undertaken in agricultural marketing. The State has implemented most of the marketing reforms and it offers best environment for doing agri-business among all the States/UTs. Gujarat ranks second with a score of 71.5 out of 100, closely followed by Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh,” the Economic Survey 2018-19 highlighted.

What

1. NITI Aayog launched in 2016 an index to rank States and UTs based on implementation of seven provisions proposed under model APMC Act like joining e-NAM initiative, special treatment to fruits and vegetables for marketing and level of taxes in mandis.
2. These indicators reveal ease of doing agribusiness as well as opportunities for farmers to benefit from modern trade and commerce and have wider option for sale of her/his produce. These indicators also represent competitiveness, efficiency and transparency in agri markets.
3. The second area of reforms captured by the index includes facilitation and liberalization of land lease.
4. The third area included in the index represent freedom given to farmers for felling and transit of trees grown on private land. These represent opportunity to diversify farm business.
5. No state in the country has implemented the entire set of market reforms. Also, land leasing and harvest and marketing of some tree species on private farm land are subjected to various degrees of restrictions in almost all the States/UTs.
6. The State of Karnataka, which is considered progressive in implementing market reforms, did not figure among the top states for two reasons.

GLOBAL MPI 2019

India lifted 271 million people out of poverty between 2006 and 2016, recording the fastest reductions in the multidimensional poverty index values during the period **with strong improvements in areas such as “assets, cooking fuel, sanitation and nutrition, a** report by the United Nations said. The 2019 global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) from the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) was released. The report said that in the 101 countries studied — 31 low income, 68 middle income and 2 high income - 1.3 billion **people are “multidimensionally poor”, which means that poverty** is defined not simply by income, but by a number of indicators, including poor health, poor quality of work and the threat of violence.

What

1. The report identifies 10 countries, with a combined population of around 2 billion people, to illustrate the level of poverty reduction, and all of them have shown statistically significant progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1, **namely ending poverty “in all its forms, everywhere”**.
2. The 10 countries are Bangladesh, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru and Vietnam.
3. The report said that within these 10 countries, data shows that 270 million people moved out of multidimensional poverty from one survey to the next.

4. This progress was largely driven by South Asia. In India, there were 271 million fewer people in poverty in 2016 than in 2006, while in Bangladesh the number dropped by 19 million between 2004 and 2014.
5. The report noted that of the 10 selected countries for which changes over time were analysed, India and Cambodia reduced their MPI values the fastest — and they **did not leave the poorest groups behind. India’s MPI value reduced from 0.283 in 2005-06 to 0.123 in 2015-16.**
6. Noting the examples of pro-poor reduction, where the poorest regions improved the fastest, the report said that Jharkhand in India reduced the incidence of multidimensional poverty from 74.9% in 2005-06 to 46.5% in 2015-16. Mondol Kiri and Rattanak Kiri in Cambodia reduced it from 71.0% to 55.9% between 2010 and 2014.
7. Ethiopia, India and Peru significantly reduced deprivations in all 10 indicators, namely nutrition, sanitation, child mortality, drinking water, years of schooling, electricity, school attendance, housing, cooking fuel and assets.
8. In 2005-2006, the population in India living in multidimensional poverty stood at about 640 million people (55.1%) and this reduced to 369 million people (27.9%) living in poverty in 2015-16.
9. India saw significant reductions in number of people who are multidimensionally poor and deprived in each of the 10 indicators over this time period.
10. India reduced deprivation in nutrition from 44.3% in 2005-06 to 21.2% in 2015-16, child mortality dropped from 4.5% to 2.2%, people deprived of cooking fuel reduced from 52.9% to 26.2%, deprivation in sanitation from 50.4% to 24.6%, those deprived of drinking water reduced from 16.6% to 6.2 %.
11. In all 10 countries rural areas are poorer than urban areas. In Cambodia, Haiti, India and Peru poverty reduction in rural areas outpaced that in urban areas — demonstrating pro-poor development — and in Bangladesh and Democratic Republic of the Congo poverty fell at the same speed in rural and urban areas.
12. Child poverty fell markedly faster than adult poverty in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Haiti, India and Peru. But children fell further behind in Ethiopia, and their progress—together with that of adults—stalled in Democratic Republic of the Congo and Pakistan.

Flashback

1. The 2019 global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) from the UN Development Programme (UNDP), shows that, in the 101 countries studied – 31 low income, 68 middle income and 2 high income – 1.3 billion people **are “multidimensionally poor” (which means that poverty is defined not simply by income, but by a number of indicators, including poor health, poor quality of work and the threat of violence).**
2. “Action against poverty is needed in all developing regions”, **the report states, noting that Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are home to the largest proportion of poor people, some 84.5 per cent.**
3. Within these regions, the level of inequality is **described as “massive”:** in Sub-Saharan Africa it ranges from 6.3 per cent in South Africa to 91.9 per cent in South Sudan. The disparity in South Asia is from 0.8 per cent in the Maldives, to 55.9 per cent in Afghanistan

13. Globally, of the 1.3 billion people who are multidimensionally poor, more than two-thirds of them—886 million— now live in middle-income countries. A further 440 million live in low-income countries.

DHR HERITAGE TAG UNDER THREAT

India's continuing failure to conserve the 140-year-old Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR), a World Heritage Site, has prompted UNESCO to take steps to assess the state of the railway system and see whether the property is worth the global heritage tag. Not satisfied with the information the Indian Railways has been furnishing about the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site, UNESCO will send its **Reactive Monitoring Mission, comprising experts from UNESCO's World Heritage Committee and the International Council on Monuments and Sites**, to Darjeeling to ascertain the condition of the property jointly with the Indian Railways. It will identify priorities for action and report on these while also formulating a set of recommendations for the Railways aimed at preventing further erosion of the property's 'Outstanding Universal Value', **according to draft minutes of UNESCO's annual meeting last week in Azerbaijan.**

What

1. In the meeting, the World Heritage Committee red-flagged erosion of attributes bearing the Outstanding Universal Value, **“as a result of management issues faced by the property over the 20 years since its inscription, and failure to implement the recommendations formulated by ICOMOS at the time of inscription”.**
2. The Indian Railways has been struggling to conserve heritage assets for years — tracks, buildings, bridges and even rolling stock. UNESCO has in the past raised the issue of erosion of heritage value of mountain railways in India, especially the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. The latest move is a wake-up call.
3. As per UNESCO guidelines, Reactive Monitoring teams are sent in when a World Heritage Site is in danger and may require to be removed from the prestigious global list.
4. According to the World Heritage Committee, the Indian Railways, despite requests, did not furnish information between 2017 and 2019 regarding the lack of monitoring and general maintenance, and encroachment and waste dumping along the tracks – all considered violation of global heritage conservation norms.
5. Railways have also not defined a boundary or a buffer zone for the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

Flashback

1. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, also known as the DHR or the Toy Train, is a 2 ft (610 mm) gauge railway that runs between New Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling in the Indian state of West Bengal.
2. Built between 1879 and 1881, it is about 88 km (55 mi) long. It climbs from about 100 m (328 ft) above sea level at New Jalpaiguri to about 2,200 m (7,218 ft) at Darjeeling, using six zig zags and five loops to gain altitude.
3. On 2 December 1999, UNESCO declared the DHR a World Heritage Site. Two more railway lines were later added, and the site became known as one of the mountain railways of India.

6. For the past few years, Indian Railways and UNESCO have been jointly formulating a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Mountain Railways of India. UNESCO has requested Railways to implement the plan.
7. Railway heritage conservation bodies such as the UK-based Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Society and the India-based Rail Enthusiasts Society are planning to petition the Railway Board about the urgent need to save the DHR. The Rail Enthusiasts Society shortly intends to express its grave concern in writing to the Railway Board, said Sanjoy Mookerjee, convener of the society.
8. Two decades ago, UNESCO had included the DHR in its list of World Heritage Monuments as **“an outstanding example of the influence of an innovative transportation system on social and economic development to serve as a model for similar developments in many parts of the world.”**
9. **The DHR was also hailed for illustrating in “an exception and seminal fashion” how “the development of railways in the 19th century had a profound influence on social and economic developments in many parts of the world.”**

INDIA'S ATO GETS EASA APPROVAL

A significant moment for the Indian aviation sector, **country's first Airbus A320 neo full flight simulator** has received EASA (European Union Aviation Safety Agency) approval. Now, those Indian carriers with A320 neo fleet will no longer have to send their pilots abroad for getting the requisite training, thereby saving their valuable time and money. The Flight Simulation Technique Center (FSTC) will be **India's 6th fully functional simulator** and the 7th one which again will be for A320 neo is expected to be **operational in a month's time**.

What is EASA?

1. It is a universally recognized body and with this approval, the FSTC can target International Airlines as well as pilots who are looking to undergo their training on such a simulator.
2. India based FSTC is presently operating from two locations– Delhi and Hyderabad and have two B737 NG, 2 A320, 1 A320neo, and 1 Bombardier Dash8 Q400 simulator. With pilot training demand going up in the country, FSTC has established mutually beneficial partnerships with various SIM operators across the region.
3. Countries including Thailand, Philippines, Middle East, and Europe are part of this initiative. To meet global standards of excellence these Centers have state of the art training infrastructure, classrooms, pilot lounge, MFTD/APT instruments.
4. On being recognized as a quality training service provider in the region, Capt Sanjay Mandavia, Managing Director – FSTC, It is a great achievement for FSTC to secure yet another EASA level D approval.

About FSTC

1. FSTC, with its State of the Art Training Centre, located in Gurgaon, is a leading provider of training support for Aviation Professionals and Airlines.
2. It is country's first registered standalone Approved Training Organization (ATO) by DGCA, India.
3. It is the largest in the region with most number of full flight simulators catering to all the airlines in India flying various fleet types.

5. The A320neo supports CAT III B training and this is going to help in training requirements for all weather operations such as AWO/LVTO.
6. Being accredited by EASA, Airbus, and Boeing, **FSTC, is country's first registered** standalone Approved Training Organization (ATO) and has the largest number of full flight simulators catering to all the airlines.
7. According to the company, so far more than 1000 pilots have already been trained and are inducted by all the major airlines in the country including Indigo, Vistara, Jet Airways, Spice Jet, GoAir and Air India.

TEACHERS RESERVATION BILL PASSED

Lok Sabha on 1 July 2019 passed a bill that proposes to make university or college as a unit instead of department for the purpose of providing reservation for filling teachers posts in central education institutions. The Central Educational Institutions **(Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Bill 2019**, which will allow filling about 8,000 existing vacancies in 41 central universities and also provides 10 per cent reservation for economically weaker sections, was introduced to replace an ordinance issued in March this year.

What

1. The bill will give a major push to reforms in the education sector, making it inclusive and fulfilling aspirations of people from different categories.
2. It aims to provide for reservation of posts in appointments by direct recruitment of person belonging to the SC, ST, Socially and Economically Backward Classes and **Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) to teachers' cadre in certain Central Education Institution.**
3. There is provision of 10 per cent reservation for Economically Weaker Section (EWS) in this bill also and government has already approved allocation of Rs 770 crore for reservation of EWS.
4. The ordinance was issued as the Supreme Court declined to consider the government view and rejected a review petition.
5. In March, the Cabinet had cleared an ordinance on reservation mechanism for appointment of faculties in universities.
6. The University Grants Commission had announced in March last year that an individual department should be considered as the base unit to calculate the number of teaching posts to be reserved for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates, following an order by the Allahabad High Court in April 2017.
7. The Supreme Court had in February dismissed a review petition filed by the HRD Ministry after its special leave petition against the court order was rejected by the apex court.

NIA (AMENDMENT) BILL 2019 PASSED

The Lok Sabha on 15 July 2019 passed the National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Bill, 2019. The bill seeks to **broaden the NIA's powers** and can be seen as part of NDA's policy of zero tolerance against terrorism. The NIA was set up in 2009 in the wake of the Mumbai terror attack which had claimed 166 lives.

What

1. The bill provides for a national-level agency to investigate and prosecute offences listed in a schedule (scheduled offences). Further, it allows for creation of Special Courts for the trial of scheduled offences. The bill was in national interest as it gives more power to the investigative body.
2. NIA has been doing a good work and secured conviction in over 90% of cases. It has so far registered 272 cases out of which judgment has been delivered in 52.

Scheduled offences

1. The schedule to the Act specifies a list of offences which are to be investigated and prosecuted by the NIA.
2. These include offences under Acts such as the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967.
3. The Bill seeks to allow the NIA to investigate the following offences, in addition: (i) human trafficking, (ii) offences related to counterfeit currency or bank notes, (iii) manufacture or sale of prohibited arms, (iv) cyber-terrorism, and (v) offences under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.

UN CONFERENCE ON COMBATING DESERTIFICATION

India will host a UN conference on combating desertification in September. At present, **23% of the world's geographical area is affected** by Degradation while India faces this problem in nearly 30% of its land due to multiple reasons including deforestation. It is like every minute we lose up to 23 hectares of land globally. Every day the land degradation is costing humanity up to \$1.3 bn, said Ibrahim Thiaw, executive secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

What

1. The signing ceremony was attended by Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar and environment secretary C K Mishra. The Conference (COP14) will be held at Greater Noida from September 2-13.
2. Nearly 200 countries will participate in the Conference which is expected to review the progress made to control and reverse further loss of productive land from desertification, land degradation and drought.
3. We will celebrate 25 years of UNCCD, of science and legislation and action on the ground by many countries including India.
4. It is extremely important that in the next 25-30 years we align ourselves to achieve the global climate goals, said Thiaw.
5. As part of its actions to check desertification, India had last month launched a pilot project to restore its degraded forests in five states - Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland and Karnataka - in a time-bound manner.
6. The project, launched in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), will be scaled up to cover remaining states across **the country in due course as part of India's voluntary pledge to restore 13 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2020 and additional 8 million hectares by 2030.**
7. India had in 2015 voluntarily committed to restore 13 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2020 **as part of its 'Bonn Challenge' pledge.**

8. The 'Bonn Challenge' is a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded land into restoration by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030.

Flashback

1. Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding international Agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.
2. The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the dry lands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.
3. The new UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework is the most comprehensive global commitment to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in order to restore the productivity of vast expanses of degraded land, improve the livelihoods of more than 1.3 billion people, and reduce the impacts of drought on vulnerable populations to build.
4. **The Convention's 197 parties** work together to improve the living conditions for people in dry lands, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought.
5. The UNCCD is particularly committed to a bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification and land degradation.
6. The Rio Conference called on the United Nations General Assembly to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INCED) to prepare, by June 1994, a Convention to Combat Desertification, particularly in Africa.

NAG MISSILE TESTS SUCCESSFUL

Moving closer toward the induction of the Nag anti-tank guided missiles into the Army, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) carried out three successful test firings of the missiles in the Pokhran firing ranges. The missiles were test-fired during both day and night on 7 July 2019 during the trials. All three tests were successful. The missile is in the final stages of being inducted into the Army which will use it by mounting them on the modified armoured vehicles.

What

1. The Defence Acquisition Council has last year approved the procurement of DRDO's designed and developed NAG Missile System (NAMIS) at the cost of Rs 524 crore.
2. The system includes a third generation Anti-Tank Guided Missile, the NAG, along with the Missile Carrier Vehicle (NAMICA).
3. The NAG missile is a third generation anti-tank guided missile, which has top attack capabilities that can effectively engage and destroy all known enemy tanks during day and night.
4. The successful induction of the NAG missile into the Army is expected to give a quantum boost to the Army's capability against enemy armour.
5. The Army and DRDO are supposed to carry out more tests of the missiles also to further validate the missile's capabilities.
6. Nag was one of the first five strategic missiles planned to be developed under the Integrated Missile Development Programme initiated in the 1980s.

7. The other missiles developed under the project include the Agni, Prithvi and Akash and all three of them have been successfully developed and inducted into the armed forces.
8. The Trishul project was shut down after being developed as a technology demonstrator.
9. Successful induction of this missile will give our armoured divisions capability to target enemy armour between a distance of three kilometres to eight kilometres.

About IGMDP

1. The Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) was conceived by renowned scientist Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam to enable India attain self-sufficiency in the field of missile technology.
2. Dr. Kalam, the then Director of Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), headed a Missile Study Team to weigh the feasibility of the programme.
3. The team included members from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Army, Navy and Air Force, and Defence Production.
4. Keeping in mind the requirements of various types of missiles by the defence forces, the team recommended development of five missile systems.
5. The IGMDP finally got the approval from the Government of India on July 26, 1983. The ambitious, time-bound project brought together the country's scientific community, academic institutions, R&D laboratories, industries and the three Services in giving shape to the strategic, indigenous missile systems

VERTICAL STEEP DIVE VERSION OF BRAHMOS

India has successfully test-fired a vertical deep dive version of the indigenous BrahMos supersonic missile. The upgraded version of the **world's fastest supersonic** cruise missile with an enhanced range of up to 500 km is also ready. It was possible to increase the range of this missile since India was now a part of the elite Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

What

1. India now the only country in the world to integrate long-range missiles onto fighter jets after the BrahMos missile was test-fired from a Sukhoi 30 aircraft of the Indian Air Force. Brahmos missile, which cruises at almost three times the speed of sound at Mach 2.8, is the heaviest weapon to be deployed on the Su-30 fighters.
2. The Army, the Navy and the Air Force, Brahmos has become a weapon of choice and the steep 90-degree version has become an ultimate aircraft carrier killer. The technologies that BrahMos Aerospace has developed did not exist either in India or Russia earlier.
3. BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture company owned by the governments of India and Russia and its missiles are produced in India.
4. The steep dive version of the missile is a game changer for mountain warfare (of the kind that was witnessed during the Kargil war).
5. India has officially joined the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) as a full member on July 2018 after its failed NSG bid due to stiff opposition from China and other countries like South Africa, Norway, Brazil, Austria, New Zealand, Ireland and Turkey. India becomes the 35th member of the MTCR.

Flashback

1. MTCR was established in April 1987 by G-7 countries – USA, UK, France, Germany, Canada, Italy, and Japan, to check the spread of unmanned delivery systems capable of carrying nuclear weapons of above 500kg for more than 300km. In 1992, it was extended for all types of weapons of mass destruction.
2. Now, it has 35 full members including India **and 4 “non-adherent members”** – Israel, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia.
3. China is not a member of this regime but it had verbally pledged to adhere to its original guidelines but not to the subsequent additions.
4. These efforts of non-proliferation of ballistic missile systems had further been **strengthened by “The International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation”, also known as the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOG)**, which was established on 25 November 2002 as an arrangement to prevent the proliferation of ballistic missiles with 136 UN member countries including India.

ARBITRATION BILL PASSED

The Lok Sabha passed a Bill to set up an independent and autonomous regime for arbitration. The New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (NDIAC) Bill, 2019, seeks to replace an ordinance issued in March this year by the previous government. It would also acquire and transfer undertakings of the International Centre For Alternative Dispute Resolution (ICADR) to the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (NDIAC) with effect from March 2 this year.

What

1. The existing arbitration body has resolved 45 cases out of 55 in 25 years and 10 cases are still pending.
2. **Observing that a new kind of “imperialism” is taking place, there is** hardly any instance where an arbitration judgment has gone against American companies. This kind of new imperialism is not acceptable.
3. The proposed New Delhi International Arbitration Centre will be headed by a chairperson, who has been a judge of the Supreme Court or a judge of a high court or an eminent person having special knowledge and experience in the field.
4. There is also a provision for appeal and Section 29 deals with the time-frame in which arbitration cases are disposed off, they had to be disposed off within a year.

MODEL TENANCY LAW PROPOSED

The Centre has **proposed a “model tenancy law” under which the** landowner will give a notice in writing three months before revising rent, a move aimed at regulating renting of premises in the country. The proposed law also advocates appointing district collector as rent authority and heavy penalty on tenants for overstaying. According to it, tenants overstaying will have to pay double the rent for two times and four times thereafter. The security deposit to be paid by the tenant in advance will be a maximum of two months’ **rent. The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has put the draft of ‘The Model Tenancy Act, 2019’ in public for some for consultation.**

What

1. It states that both landlord and tenant will have to submit a copy of rent agreement to the district Rent Authority which will also have the power to revise or fix rent following a request either by landlord or tenant.

2. States, which will be free to adopt the law owing to land being state subject, will be required to constitute rent courts and rent tribunal.
3. In the **event of tenant's refusal to carry out scheduled or agreed repairs**, the landowner shall get the repairs done and deduct the amount from the security deposit.
4. If the landowner refuses to carry out the required repairs, the tenant can get the work done and deduct the same from periodic rent.
5. It also stated that a landowner cannot enter the rented premises without 24-hour prior notice to carry out repairs or replacement.
6. According to the proposed law, a landowner cannot cut power and water supply in case of a dispute with the tenant.
7. The Rent Authority may direct for compensation on the person responsible for cutting off or withholding the essential supply.
8. The Rent Authority may levy a penalty be paid to the landowner or tenant if it finds that the application was made frivolously or vexatiously.

GARUDA EXERCISE

Indian Air Force (IAF) landed at Mont-de-Marsan Air Base in France to participate in the two-week **'Garuda' exercise** with the French Air Force starting on 1 July 2019.

According to the embassy of France, as part of their Indo-Pacific cooperation, the fortnight-long Garuda exercise, was took place at Mont de Marsan (southwest of France). It is a tactical Indo-French exercise aimed at enhancing the interoperability level of the French and Indian crews in air defense and ground attack missions.

What

1. The Garuda exercise is alternately held in France and India, under the framework of bilateral cooperation between the two nations.
2. The **'Garuda-VI' exercise was held at France's Mont-de-Marsan** air base, has been termed as one of the biggest air exercises that is being planned between the two Air Forces.
3. This is the 6th edition of the exercise which allows the air forces to exercise together and learn best practices each one has to offer.
4. The previous exercise was conducted at Air Force Station Jodhpur in Jun 2014.
5. This is one of the biggest air exercises that were planned between the two Air Forces.

INTERNATIONAL

IRAN REDUCES COMMITMENT IN NUCLEAR DEAL

Iran on 7 July 2019 announce an increase in uranium enrichment to 5%, a concentration above the limit set by its 2015 nuclear deal, an Iranian official told, in a move signalling a deepening challenge to escalating U.S. sanctions pressure. The declaration comes at a time of sharply increased U.S.-Iranian confrontation; a year after Washington quit the pact and reimposed sanctions that had been lifted under the accord in exchange for Tehran curbing its nuclear work.

What

1. In a sign of heightening Western concern, French President Emmanuel Macron **said he and Iran's President** Hassan Rouhani had agreed to seek conditions for a resumption of dialogue on the Iranian nuclear question by July 15.
2. **Macron's office added that** he would keep on talking with Iranian authorities and other involved parties to **"engage in a de-escalation of tensions related to Iranian nuclear issue."**
3. The deal is aimed at extending the time Iran would need to produce a nuclear bomb, if it chose to, to a year from roughly 2-3 months. Iran says its nuclear programme is only for peaceful purposes, such as power generation, and not to make bombs.
4. Under its deal with six world powers, Iran can enrich uranium to 3.67 percent fissile material, well below the 20 percent it was reaching before the deal and the roughly 90 percent suitable for a nuclear weapon.

Flashback

1. The Iran nuclear deal framework was a preliminary framework agreement reached in 2015 between the Islamic Republic of Iran and a group of world powers: the P5+1 (the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, France, and China—plus Germany) and the European Union.
2. On July 14, 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the P5+1 and EU, a comprehensive agreement based on the April 2015 framework, was announced.
3. On May 8, 2018, United States President Donald Trump announced the United States was withdrawing from the deal.

ILO REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

A report from the International Labour Organization estimated that in 2030, 2.2 percent of total working hours worldwide will be lost because of higher temperatures. The percentage is expected to be more than double that in the hardest-hit regions, **western Africa and southern Asia, according to the report "Working on a warmer planet: The impact of heat stress on labour productivity.**

What

1. This represents an economic losses totalling 1.4 percent of global gross domestic product, or \$2.4 trillion (2.1 trillion euros), ILO said. This is roughly equivalent to the size of the United Kingdom economy.
2. The UN labour body stressed that this is "a conservative estimate", **since it is based** on assumptions that warming will be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. Current estimates suggest that the planet could see warming double that amount.
3. **ILO's findings also assume that** work in agriculture and construction — the two industries most affected by heat stress — can be carried out in the shade, which is obviously not always the case.
4. Even in the best-case scenario, heat stress will lead to dramatic consequences for employers and for workers, local economies and even the global economy.

5. Heat stress refers to heat in excess of what the body can tolerate without suffering physiological impairment, and usually occurs at temperatures over 35 degrees Celsius, in high humidity.
6. At very high temperatures, workers also risk suffering heatstroke, which can be deadly. Monday's report came as Europe continued to sizzle in a weeklong heatwave, which has officially claimed eight lives, including a 17-year-old harvest worker and a 33-year-old roofer.
7. ILO economist Nicolas Maitre said that while southern Asia and western Africa would suffer most from growing heat stress, Europe should not expect to be spared.
8. The construction sector will also be heavily affected, accounting for an estimated 19 percent of all working hours lost due to heat stress over the same period.
9. The report found that people in the poorest regions of the world will suffer the greatest economic losses and workers there will also suffer the most.

CFAMM 2019

India has urged the Commonwealth to expedite readmission of the Maldives as a member country. **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar conveyed India's stand at the 19 Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting in London.** The External Affairs Minister congratulated the member countries on the 70th anniversary of the Commonwealth.

What

1. The Minister called for fast-tracking of the process of readmission of the Maldives to the Commonwealth.
2. The support came after Mr. Modi visited Male in his first overseas trip after his re-election. The Maldives withdrew from the Commonwealth during the tenure of President Abdullah Yameen in 2016 after the Commonwealth expressed serious concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in the country. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih was elected President in a democratic wave against the rule of Mr. Yameen.
3. Mr. Jaishankar interacted with his counterparts from Australia, Canada, Bangladesh and British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Flashback

1. The Commonwealth of Nations, normally known as the Commonwealth, is a political association of 53 member states, nearly all of them former territories of the British Empire.
2. The chief institutions of the organisation are the Commonwealth Secretariat, which focuses on intergovernmental aspects, and the Commonwealth Foundation, which focuses on non-governmental relations between member states.
3. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) is a biennial summit meeting of the heads of government from all Commonwealth nations.
4. Every two years the meeting is held in a different member state and is chaired by that nation's respective Prime Minister or President who becomes the Commonwealth Chair-in-Office until the next meeting.
5. The first CHOGM was held in 1971 in Singapore, and there have been 25 held in total: the recent was held in London, England.

4. **He thanked the British government for supporting Mr. Modi's initiative** to build a global Coalition of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.
5. Jaishankar, visited London, United Kingdom on 9-11 July to participate in the 19th Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFAMM) hosted by the UK in its capacity as Chair-in-Office and hold bilateral meetings with his counterparts from UK and some other Commonwealth member countries.
6. The CFAMM undertook a review of implementation of the mandates of CHOGM 2018 and held discussions on the CHOGM 2020 to be held at Kigali in June next year. During the CFAMM, Foreign Ministers adopted the 70th anniversary Affirmation.
7. Agreed recommendations submitted by the Board of Governance after assiduously deliberating on two High-Level Group reports prepared in accordance with mandate given by the Heads at CHOGM 2015 were considered.
8. The participation of India at Ministerial level is a reaffirmation of the importance that India attaches to the Commonwealth.
9. He also held separate bilateral talks with Foreign Affairs Ministers of Australia and Canada, and State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh on the margins of CFAMM and covered a wide range of bilateral issues.
10. During the visit, Jaishankar also interacted with a large number of MPs, Lords and key representatives of think tanks and media to exchange views on a range of issues to find ways and means to further cement the multifaceted India – UK ties.

KARTARPUR DRAFT AGREEMENT

Pakistan and India agreed "80 per cent and beyond" on the draft agreement and operationalisation of the landmark Kartarpur corridor on 14 July 2019 after a marathon meeting between the officials of the two countries in Wagah. The corridor will connect Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Kartarpur with Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district and facilitate visa-free movement of Indian Sikh pilgrims, who will have to just obtain a permit to visit Kartarpur Sahib, which was established in 1522 by Sikh faith founder Guru Nanak Dev.

What

1. Both countries have agreed 80 per cent and beyond regarding the Kartarpur corridor agreement the two sides would resolve the remaining 20 per cent issues in the next meeting.
2. The first round of talks was held in Attari on March 14 in the shadow of escalating bilateral tensions following the Pulwama terror attack by a suicide bomber of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed on February 14.
3. The second round of talks, which were originally scheduled on April 2, was cancelled by India after Pakistan nominated Khalistani separatist like Gopal Singh Chawla in a 10-member Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee (PSGPC).
4. Pakistan dropped Chawla from its team which held talks with India on 14 July 2019 after New Delhi objected to the presence of the Khalistani separatists in the committee which would facilitate Sikh pilgrims after opening of the corridor. Chawla is the secretary-general of the PSGPC.
5. Chawla has been removed from the secretary general post and he is no longer a member of the PSGPC. Chawla is also not part of the Pakistani delegation which is

taking part in the second round of talks in Wagah, a senior official of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) told.

6. The ETPB is a statutory board that manages religious properties and shrines of Hindus and Sikhs who had migrated to India following the partition.
7. Pakistan is building the corridor from the Indian border to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib while the other part from Dera Baba Nanak up to the border will be constructed by India.
8. Last November, India and Pakistan agreed to set up the border crossing linking Gurudwara Darbar Sahib, the final resting place of Guru Nanak Dev, to Dera Baba Nanak shrine.
9. Kartarpur Sahib is located in Pakistan's Narowal district across the river Ravi, about four km from the Dera Baba Nanak shrine.
10. The funds will be used for land acquisition and development of infrastructure of Kartarpur under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for the next financial year 2019-20.

BETHLEHEM'S NATIVITY CHURCH REMOVED FROM UNESCO

Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, built on the site where Christians believe Jesus was born, was removed from UNESCO's list of endangered world heritage sites on 2 July 2019 following restorations there. The church was named a UNESCO world heritage site in 2012 and placed on its endangered list the same year due to its poor condition.

What

1. Church and Palestinian officials have since overseen high-quality work restoring "roof, exterior facades, mosaics and doors.
2. A previous plan of concern to UNESCO to dig a tunnel underneath Manger Square, in front of the church, was also abandoned.
3. The committee reached the decision to remove it from the endangered list during a meeting in Baku, which began on June 30 and continues until July 10, it said in a statement.
4. The Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Armenian churches share custody of the site located in the city which is today in the Israeli-occupied West Bank under Palestinian Authority controls. An initial church was built there in the fourth century AD.
5. It was replaced with a new structure in the sixth century but floor mosaics from the original church remain. Later alterations were made to the church.

GREEKS VOTE IN 1ST PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

Greeks were voting on 7 July 2019 in the first parliamentary election since their country emerged from three successive international bailouts but still struggles with a crippling nearly decade-long financial crisis. The vote was called three months earlier than originally planned after left-wing Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras suffered a stinging defeat in European and local elections in May and early June.

What

1. The vote comes as the country gradually emerges from a brutal financial crisis **that saw unemployment and poverty levels skyrocket, and Greece's economy slashed by a quarter.**

2. Greece was dependent for survival until last summer on international bailouts, and had to impose deep reforms, including massive spending cuts and tax hikes, to qualify for the rescue loans.
3. Tsipras, 44, says his Syriza party can overturn the sizeable gap in opinion polls running up to vote, and has increasingly been appealing to the middle class, which has been struggling under a heavy tax burden, much of it imposed by his government.

FIRST DELIVERY OF S-400 MISSILE SYSTEM

Turkey received the first batch of Russia's S-400 missile defence system on 12 July 2019, the defence ministry said, despite repeated warnings from its NATO ally United States against the purchase. The delivery of the first shipment of parts of the S-400 long range regional air missile defence system began as of July 12, 2019 to Murted air base in Ankara. The delivery, which was made by plane, is likely to escalate tensions with the US after Washington warned this week that there would be "real and negative" consequences if Ankara bought the Russian defence system.

What

1. Turkish officials are fully aware of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, a law passed by Congress in 2017 that mandates sanctions for any "significant" purchases of weapons from Russia.
2. Washington has threatened to remove Turkey from its F-35 fighter jet programme, giving Ankara until July 31 to cancel the S-400 purchase or have its pilots kicked off the training course and expelled from the US.
3. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said after meeting US counterpart Donald Trump last month that he was confident Ankara would not face sanctions for buying the Russian missile system.

Flashback

1. The S-400 Triumph previously known as the S-300 PMU-3, is an anti-aircraft weapon system developed in the 1990s by Russia's Almaz Central Design Bureau as an upgrade of the S-300 family.
2. It has been in service with the Russian Armed Forces since 2007. In 2017 the S-400 was described as "one of the best air-defence systems currently made".
3. Development of the S-400 system began in the late 1980s, and the system was announced by the Russian Air Force in January 1993.
4. On 15 October 2016 during the BRICS Summit, India and Russia signed an Inter-governmental Agreement (IGA) for the supply of five S-400 regiments?
5. The deal worth of \$US 5.43 billion (₹40,000CR) was formally signed on 5 October 2018, ignoring America's CAATSA act.
6. The deliveries are expected to commence in 24 months, by the end of 2020. The S-400 is expected to be inducted into Indian service in October 2020.

ECONOMY

ECONOMIC SURVEY 2018-19

The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the Economic Survey 2018-19 in the Parliament on 4 July 2019. The Key Highlights of Economic Survey 2018-19 are as follows:

Shifting gears: Private Investment as the Key Driver of Growth, Jobs, Exports and Demand

1. Survey states that pathways for trickle-down opened up during the last five years; and benefits of growth and macroeconomic stability reached the bottom of the pyramid.
2. Sustained real GDP growth rate of 8% needed for a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25.
3. **“Virtuous Cycle” of savings, investment and exports catalyzed** and supported by a favorable demographic phase required for sustainable growth.
4. Private investment- key driver for demand, capacity, labor productivity, new technology, creative destruction and job creation.
5. Survey departs from traditional Anglo-Saxon thinking by viewing the economy as being either in a virtuous or a vicious cycle, and thus never in equilibrium.

Key ingredients for a self-sustaining virtuous cycle:

1. Presenting data as a public good.
2. Emphasizing legal reforms.
3. Ensuring policy consistency.
4. Encouraging behavior change using principles of behavioral economics.
5. Nourishing MSMEs to create more jobs and become more productive.
6. Reducing the cost of capital.
7. Rationalizing the risk-return trade-off for investments.
8. **Policy for Real People, Not Robots: Leveraging the Behavioral Economics of “Nudge”**

Key principles of behavioral economics:

1. Emphasizing the beneficial social norm.
2. Changing the default option.
3. Repeated reinforcements.
4. Using insights from behavioral economics to create an aspirational agenda for social change:
5. **From ‘Beti Baco Beti Padhao’ to ‘BADLAV’** (Beti Aapki Dhan Lakshmi Aur Vijay Lakshmi).
6. **From ‘Swachh Bharat’ to ‘Sundar Bharat’.**
7. **From ‘Give it up’ for the LPG subsidy to ‘Think about the Subsidy’.**
8. **From ‘Tax evasion’ to ‘Tax compliance’.**
9. Nourishing Dwarfs to become Giants: Reorienting policies for MSME Growth

India's Demography at 2040

1. Sharp slowdown in population growth expected in next 2 decades. Most of India to enjoy demographic dividend while some states will transition to ageing societies by 2030s.
2. National Total Fertility Rate expected to be below replacement rate by 2021.
3. Working age population to grow by roughly 9.7mn per year during 2021-31 and 4.2mn per year during 2031-41.
4. Significant decline to be witnessed in elementary school-going children (5-14 age group) over next two decades.
5. States need to consolidate/merge schools to make them viable rather than build new ones.
6. Policy makers need to prepare for ageing by investing in health care and by increasing the retirement age in a phased manner.

State of the Economy in 2018-19: A Macro View

1. India stills the fastest growing major economy in 2018-19.
2. Growth of GDP moderated to 6.8 per cent in 2018-19 from 7.2 per cent in 2017-18.
3. Inflation contained at 3.4 per cent in 2018-19.
4. Non-Performing Assets as percentage of Gross Advances reduced to 10.1 per cent at end December 2018 from 11.5 per cent at end March 2018.
5. Investment growth recovering since 2017-18:
6. Growth in fixed investment picked up from 8.3 per cent in 2016-17 to 9.3 per cent next year and further to 10.0 per cent in 2018-19.
7. Current account deficit manageable at 2.1 percent of GDP.
8. Fiscal deficit of Central Government declined from 3.5 percent of GDP in 2017-18 to 3.4 percent in 2018-19.
9. Prospects of pickup in growth in 2019-20 on the back of further increase in private investment and acceleration in consumption.

Sustainable Development and Climate Change

1. **India's SDG Index** Score ranges between 42 and 69 for States and between 57 and 68 for UTs:
2. Kerala and Himachal Pradesh are the front runners with a score of 69 amongst states.
3. Chandigarh and Puducherry are the front runners with a score of 68 and 65 respectively among the UTs.
4. Namami Gange Mission launched as a key policy priority towards achieving the SDG 6, with a budget outlay of INR. 20,000 crore for the period 2015-2020.
5. For mainstreaming Resource Efficiency approach in the development pathway for achieving SDGs, a national policy on Resource Efficiency should be devised.
6. A comprehensive NCAP launched in 2019 as a pan India time bound strategy for:
7. Prevention, control and abatement of air pollution
8. Augmenting the air quality monitoring network across the country.

Achievements in CoP 24 in Katowice, Poland in 2018:

1. Recognition of different starting points for developed and developing countries.
2. Flexibilities for developing countries.
3. Consideration of principles including equity and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities.
4. Paris Agreement also emphasizes the role of climate finance without which the proposed NDCs would not fructify.
5. Though the international community witnessed various claims by developed countries about climate finance flows, the actual amount of flows is far from these claims.
6. **Scale and size of investments required to implement India's NDC requires mobilizing international public finance and private sector resources along with domestic public budgets.**

UNION BUDGET 2019

The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman has presented the Union Budget 2019-20 before the Parliament. The key highlights of Union Budget 2019 are as follows:

10-point Vision for the decade

1. Building Team India with Jan Bhagidari: Minimum Government Maximum Governance.
2. Achieving green Mother Earth and Blue Skies through a pollution-free India.
3. Making Digital India reach every sector of the economy.
4. Launching Gaganyaan, Chandrayan, other Space and Satellite programmes.
5. Building physical and social infrastructure.
6. Water, water management, clean rivers.
7. Blue Economy.
8. Self-sufficiency and export of food-grains, pulses, oilseeds, fruits and vegetables.
9. Achieving a healthy society via Ayushman Bharat, well-nourished women & children, safety of citizens.
10. Emphasis on MSMEs, Start-ups, defence manufacturing, automobiles, electronics, fabs and batteries, and medical devices under Make in India.

Towards a 5 Trillion Dollar Economy

1. **"People's hearts filled with Aasha (Hope), Vishwas (Trust), Aakash (Aspirations)".**
2. Indian economy to become a 3 trillion dollar economy in the current year.
3. Government aspires to make India a 5 trillion dollar economy.
4. **"India Inc. is India's job-creators and nation's wealth-creators".**

Need for investment in:

1. Infrastructure.
2. Digital economy.
3. Job creation in small and medium firms.
4. Initiatives to be proposed for kick-starting the virtuous cycle of investments.

5. Common man's life changed through MUDRA loans for ease of doing business.

Grameen Bharat / Rural India

1. Ujjwala Yojana and Saubhagya Yojana have transformed the lives of every rural family, dramatically improving ease of their living.
2. Electricity and clean cooking facility to all willing rural families by 2022.
3. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) aims to achieve "Housing for All" by 2022:
4. Eligible beneficiaries to be provided 1.95 crore houses with amenities like toilets, electricity and LPG connections during its second phase (2019-20 to 2021-22).
5. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)
6. A robust fisheries management framework through PMMSY to be established by the Department of Fisheries.
7. To address critical gaps in the value chain including infrastructure, modernization, traceability, production, productivity, post-harvest management, and quality control.
8. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)
9. Target of connecting the eligible and feasible habitations advanced from 2022 to 2019 with 97% of such habitations already being provided with all weather connectivity.
10. 30,000 kilometers of PMGSY roads have been built using Green Technology, Waste Plastic and Cold Mix Technology, thereby reducing carbon footprint.
11. 1,25,000 kilometers of road length to be upgraded over the next five years under PMGSY III with an estimated cost of Rs. 80,250 crore.
12. **Scheme of Fund for Upgradation and Regeneration of Traditional Industries' (SFURTI)**
13. Common Facility Centres (CFCs) to be setup to facilitate cluster based development for making traditional industries more productive, profitable and capable for generating sustained employment opportunities.
14. 100 new clusters to be setup during 2019-20 with special focus on Bamboo, Honey and Khadi, enabling 50,000 artisans to join the economic value chain.
15. Scheme for Promotion of Innovation, Rural Industry and **Entrepreneurship' (ASPIRE)** consolidated.
16. 80 Livelihood Business Incubators (LBIs) and 20 Technology Business Incubators (TBIs) to be setup in 2019-20.
17. 75,000 entrepreneurs to be skilled in agro-rural industry sectors.
18. Private entrepreneurs to be supported in driving value-**addition to farmers'** produce from the field and for those from allied activities.
19. Dairying through cooperatives to be encouraged by creating infrastructure for cattle feed manufacturing, milk procurement, processing & marketing.
20. 10,000 new Farmer Producer Organizations to be formed, to ensure economies of scale for farmers.
21. Government to work with State Governments to allow farmers to benefit from e-NAM.
22. **Zero Budget Farming in which few states' farmers are already being trained to be replicated in other states.**

Shahree Bharat/Urban India

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-Urban)-

1. Over 81 lakh houses with an investment of about Rs. 4.83 lakh crore sanctioned of which construction started in about 47 lakh houses.
2. Over 26 lakh houses completed of which nearly 24 lakh houses delivered to the beneficiaries.
3. Over 13 lakh houses so far constructed using new technologies.
4. More than 95% of cities also declared Open Defecation Free (ODF).
5. Almost 1 crore citizens have downloaded Swachhata App.
6. **Target of achieving Gandhiji's resolve of Swachh Bharat to make India ODF by 2nd October 2019.**
7. To mark this occasion, the Rashtriya Swachhta Kendra to be inaugurated at Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat on 2nd October, 2019.
8. Gandhipedia being developed by National Council for Science Museums to sensitize youth and society about positive Gandhian values.
9. Railways to be encouraged to invest more in suburban railways through SPV structures like Rapid Regional Transport System (RRTS) proposed on the Delhi-Meerut route.
10. Proposal to enhance the metro-railway initiatives by:
11. Encouraging more PPP initiatives.
12. Ensuring completion of sanctioned works.
13. Supporting transit oriented development (TOD) to ensure commercial activity around transit hubs.

Achievements during 2014-19

1. 1 trillion dollar added to Indian economy over last 5 years (compared to over 55 years taken to reach the first trillion dollar).
2. India is now the 6th largest economy in the world, compared to 11th largest five years ago.
3. Indian economy is globally the 3rd largest in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms.
4. Strident commitment to fiscal discipline and a rejuvenated Centre-State dynamic provided during 2014-19.
5. Structural reforms in indirect taxation, bankruptcy and real estate carried out.
6. Average amount spent on food security per year almost doubled during 2014-19 compared to 2009-14.
7. Patents issued more than trebled in 2017-18 as against the number in 2014.
8. Ball set rolling for a New India, planned and assisted by the NITI Aayog.

Roadmap for future

1. Simplification of procedures.
2. Incentivizing performance.
3. Red-tape reduction.
4. Making the best use of technology.
5. Accelerating mega programmes and services initiated and delivered so far.

CENTRE RATIFIES BEPS

The Government announced on 2 July 2019 that it had ratified the international agreement to curb base erosion and profits shifting (BEPS), a bid to stop companies from moving their profits out of the country and depriving the government of tax revenue. India has ratified the Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (multilateral instruments (MLI)), which was signed by the Finance Minister in Paris on June 7, 2017 on behalf of India, along with representatives of more than 65 countries, the Finance Ministry said.

What

1. Base erosion and profit shifting refers to the phenomenon where companies shift their profits to other tax jurisdictions, which usually have lower rates, thereby eroding the tax base in India.
2. The MLI is a result of concerted work by the G20 countries to tackle the issue of base erosion and profit shifting, something that affects them all.
3. India was part of the Ad Hoc Group of more than 100 countries and jurisdictions from the G20, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and other interested countries, which worked on the finalising the text of the Multilateral Convention.
4. **The MLI will modify India's tax treaties** to curb revenue loss through treaty abuse and base erosion and profit shifting strategies by ensuring that profits are taxed where substantive economic activities generating the profits are carried out.
5. The MLI will be applied alongside existing tax treaties, modifying their application in order to implement the BEPS measures.
6. Out of 93 tax treaties notified by India, 22 countries have already ratified the MLI so far and the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with these countries will be modified by MLI.
7. For the remaining countries with tax treaties with India, the MLI will come into force when they ratify it. The MLI will come into force for India from October 1, 2019.

RBI FORMS WORKING GROUP CICS

The Reserve Bank on 3 July 2019 said it has constituted a working group that will review the regulatory and supervisory framework for core investment companies.

In August 2010, RBI had introduced a separate framework for the regulation of systemically important core investment companies (CICs), recognising the difference in the business model of a holding company relative to other non-banking financial companies.

What

1. Over the years, corporate group structures have become more complex involving multiple layering and leveraging, which has led to greater inter-connectedness with the financial system through their access to public funds. The central bank said there is a need to strengthen the corporate governance framework of CICs.
2. The six-member working group is to be headed by Tapan Ray, non-executive chairman, Central Bank of India and former secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
3. The terms of reference of the working group include examination of the current regulatory framework for CICs in terms of adequacy, efficacy and effectiveness of every component thereof and suggest changes therein.

4. It will also assess the appropriateness of and suggest changes to the current approach of RBI towards registration of CICs including the practice of multiple CICs being allowed within a group.
5. The working group will also suggest measures to strengthen corporate governance and disclosure requirements for CICs; assess the adequacy of supervisory returns submitted by CICs; and suggest appropriate measures to **enhance RBI's off-sight surveillance and on-site supervision over CICs**. The working group shall submit its report by October 31, 2019.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NEW GENE LINKED TO SCHIZOPHRENIA

After 18 years of research, Indian and Australian scientists have identified a new gene directly linked to schizophrenia. Scientists from the University of Queensland in Australia and a team of Indian researchers searched the genomes of over 3,000 individuals and found those with schizophrenia were more likely to have a particular genetic variation. The team of Indian researchers was led by R. Thara, co-founder and director of the Chennai-based Schizophrenia Research Foundation.

What

1. This study identified a gene called NAPRT1 that encodes an enzyme involved in vitamin B3 metabolism — we were also able to find this gene in a large genomic dataset of schizophrenia patients with European ancestry.
2. NAPRT1 gene in zebrafish, brain development of the fish was impaired — we are now working to understand more deeply how this gene functions in the brain.
3. Our studies aim to shed more light on what makes people susceptible to schizophrenia and possible treatments for the future.
4. According to a statement released by the university, Dr. Mowry and Dr. Thara met in the late 1990s when they discussed studying a population in India.

FIRST EVER ATMOSPHERE OF A MIDSIZE EXO-PLANET

In a first, scientists have **identified the detailed chemical “fingerprint” of a planet** between the sizes of Earth and Neptune to uncover clues about its nature and **origin, using NASA's Spitzer and Hubble space telescopes**. No planets like this can be found in our own solar system, but they are common around other stars. The planet, Gliese 3470 b (GJ 3470 b), may be a cross between Earth and Neptune, with a large rocky core buried under a deep, crushing hydrogen-and-helium atmosphere. Weighing in at 12.6 Earth masses, the planet is more massive than Earth but less massive than Neptune, which are over 17 Earth masses. **Many similar worlds have been discovered by NASA's Kepler space observatory, whose mission ended in 2018, as many as 80 per cent of the planets in our galaxy may fall into this mass range.**

What

1. However, astronomers have never been able to understand the chemical nature of such a planet until now. By inventorying the contents of **GJ 3470 b's atmosphere, astronomers are able to uncover clues about the planet's nature and origin.**
2. This is a big discovery from the planet-formation perspective. The planet orbits very close to the star and is far less massive than Jupiter — **318 times Earth's mass** — but has managed to accrete the primordial hydrogen/helium atmosphere that is **largely 'unpolluted' by heavier elements.**

3. Astronomers enlisted the combined multi-wavelength capabilities of Hubble and Spitzer space telescopes to do a first-of-a-**kind study of GJ 3470 b's atmosphere**.
4. This was accomplished by measuring the absorption of starlight as the planet passed in front of its star (transit) and the loss of reflected light from the planet as it passed behind the star (eclipse).
5. The space telescopes observed 12 transits and 20 eclipses. The science of analysing chemical fingerprints based on **light is called "spectroscopy."**
6. The atmosphere of GJ 3470 b turned out to be mostly clear, with only thin hazes, enabling the scientists to probe deep into the atmosphere.
7. **Other exoplanets, called "hot Jupiters," are thought to form far from their stars and over time migrate much closer. But this planet seems to have formed just where it is today.**
8. The most plausible explanation, is that GJ 3470 b was born precariously close to its red dwarf star, which is about half the mass of our Sun.
9. It started out as a dry rock and rapidly accreted hydrogen from a primordial disk of **gas when its star was very young. The disk is called a "protoplanetary disk."**

Flashback

1. A red dwarf is the smallest and coolest kind of star on the main sequence.
2. Red dwarfs are by far the most common type of star in the Milky Way, at least in the neighborhood of the Sun, but because of their low luminosity, individual red dwarfs cannot be easily observed.
3. From Earth, not one that fits the stricter definitions of a red dwarf is visible to the naked eye.
4. Proxima Centauri, the nearest star to the Sun, is a red dwarf, as are fifty of the sixty nearest stars.

PARTIAL LUNAR ECLIPSE

On July 16, 2019 a partial lunar eclipse will take place and it will be visible in South America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia, according to NASA, which has listed out all eclipses till 2100. The partial lunar eclipse will also be visible in parts of India, **according to NASA's chart for the event**. The last total lunar eclipse took place on January 21, 2019 and the next total lunar eclipse will be visible on May 26, 2021. There will be penumbral eclipses till then, though these are not total or partial lunar eclipses.

How does it occur?

1. A eclipse takes place when the Sun, Moon and Earth are aligned in a line. During a solar eclipse, the Moon comes between the Earth and the Sun and casts a shadow. During a lunar eclipse, the Earth comes between the path of the Moon and the Sun and casts a shadow on its satellite.
2. Lunar eclipses only take place at full moon and a total lunar eclipse is very rare as it can only happen when the Sun, Earth and Moon are perfectly aligned. In case of a partial lunar eclipse, which is taking place on July 16, only a part of the Moon **comes under Earth's shadow**.
3. **In a partial eclipse, Earth's shadow appears very dark on the side of the Moon facing Earth. Only a part of Earth's shadow appears on the Moon and because this is a not a total lunar eclipse, the Moon will not have the blood red effect. So this is not a blood moon either.**

4. According to NASA, at least two partial lunar eclipses happen every year, but total lunar eclipses are very rare. A lunar eclipse can last for a few hours.

MISCELLANEOUS

GLOBAL STUDY ON HOMICIDE 2019

Asia, which accounts for 60% of the global population, recorded the lowest rate of homicide in 2017 with only 2.3 killings per 1, 00,000 people while the Americas had the highest homicide rate, according to a UN report. The Global Study on Homicide 2019 published by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said that about 4, 64,000 people across the world were victims of homicidal violence in 2017, an increase from 395,542 in 1992. The number of homicides in 2017 far surpassed the 89,000 killed in armed conflicts in the same period.

What

1. The global homicide rate, measured as the victims of homicide per 1, 00,000 people, declined from 7.2 in 1992, to 6.1 in 2017.
2. The lowest regional rate of homicide in 2017 was reported in Asia, with 104,000 victims representing a rate of 2.3 per 100,000 population. Asia accounted for 23% of total homicide victims worldwide.
3. The study seeks to shed light on gender-related killings, lethal gang violence and other challenges, to support prevention and interventions to bring down homicide rates.
4. The study shows that the overall number of people who suffered a violent death as a result of homicide increased in the past quarter of a century, from 395,542 in 1992 to 464,000 in 2017.
5. However, because the global population has risen faster than the increase in recorded homicide victims, the overall risk of being killed in homicides has declined steadily.

Flashback

1. UNODC was established in 1997 as part of the United Nations reform combining the previous UN Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention.
2. The mandate of the Office is enshrined in UN conventions like the three UN Conventions on Drugs, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols on Trafficking in Persons, on Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air and on Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, the UN Convention against Corruption, the universal instruments against terrorism and the UN standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice.
3. With the help of these instruments, UNODC helps Member States address the issues of illicit drugs, crime and terrorism.

6. The global homicide rate, measured as the victims of homicide per 100,000 people, declined from 7.2 in 1992, to 6.1 in 2017.
7. Organized crime alone was responsible for up to 19 per cent of all homicides in 2017. Since the start of the twenty-first century, organized crime killed about as many people as all armed conflicts across the world combined. Moreover, just like armed conflicts, organized crime destabilizes countries, undermines socioeconomic development and erodes the rule of law.
8. Globally, some 81 per cent of homicide victims recorded in 2017 were men and boys, and more than 90 per cent of suspects in homicide cases were men, according to the most recent estimates. However, the study shows that the gender disparity among victims changes with age.
9. Girls and boys aged nine and under are killed at roughly equal rates, in marked contrast to all other age groups, in which males make up more than 50 per cent of the victims, according to data from 41 countries.
10. Although women and girls account for a far smaller share of victims of homicide in general than men, they continue to bear by far the greatest burden of intimate partner and family-related homicide.

FIRST INDIAN WOMAN CFO

The World Bank (WB) Group announced that Anshula Kant, an Indian national, has been appointed its next MD and CFO. Ms. Kant will be the first woman CFO of the Bank. Anshula brings more than 35 years of expertise in finance, banking, and innovative use of technology through her work as CFO of the State Bank of India, World Bank Group president David Malpass said.

What

1. **She's excelled at a diverse array of leadership challenges including risk, treasury, funding, regulatory compliance and operations.**
2. Ms. Kant will be responsible for financial and risk management and report to Mr. Malpass. Her duties will include risk management and financial reporting and she will **work with the Bank's CEO to mobilise financial resources.**
3. Ms. Kant has holds an Honours degree in Economics from Lady Shri Ram College and a post-graduate degree in Economics from the Delhi School of Economics.

About World Bank

- Founded in 1944, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development—soon called the World Bank—has expanded to a closely associated group of five development institutions.

- Originally, its loans helped rebuild countries devastated by World War II. In time, the focus shifted from reconstruction to development, with a heavy emphasis on infrastructure such as dams, electrical grids, irrigation systems, and roads.
- With the founding of the International Finance Corporation in 1956, the institution became able to lend to private companies and financial institutions in developing countries.
- The World Bank Group is an extended family of five international organizations, and the parent organization of the World Bank, the collective name given to the first two listed organizations, the IBRD and the IDA:
 1. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
 2. International Development Association (IDA)
 3. International Finance Corporation (IFC)
 4. Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)
 5. International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)

NOTICE ON DECRIMINALISE ABORTION

The Supreme Court on 15 July 2019 issued a notice to the Centre after agreeing to hear a PIL filed by three women seeking directions to decriminalise abortion. The petition says women should have a right to decide on reproduction and abortion. The PIL filed by the three women challenges the law that makes abortion permissible only to save life and seeks to decriminalise it. It further mentions that the restrictions and exceptions in the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act violate women's rights**.

What

1. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act of 1971 permits abortions after consultation with a doctor for up to 12 weeks. Between 12 to 20 weeks, the medical opinion of two doctors is required.
2. Moreover, only a registered allopathic physician in a registered facility is authorised to conduct the procedure. Beyond the 20 week ceiling, exceptions are legally permissible only if continuation of pregnancy poses a threat to the mother's life.
3. **The Act does not recognise a woman's choice in asking for an abortion as legally she remains at the disposal of a physician's judgment even in the early stages of pregnancy.**
4. Swati Agarwal, Garima Sekseria and Prachi Vats, said in their plea, that a provision of the MTP Act permitted that the opinion of a doctor would be needed to terminate pregnancy and the abortion after 20 weeks can be allowed only if continuation of pregnancy poses a threat to the mother's life. **This violated the women's right to health, reproductive choice and privacy.**

5. The provision imposed severe restriction on the exercise of the reproductive choice of the woman by providing for a precondition of an opinion by the medical practitioner about there being a risk to the life of the lady or of grave physical or mental injury or risk of serious fetal abnormalities if the pregnancy is continued.
6. The restriction puts an undue burden on the exercise of free reproductive choice and renders it meaningless. This provision in substance makes right to terminate pregnancy an exception which is otherwise recognized as an important facet of right to life, human dignity, autonomy and self determination.
7. The petition also sought direction to declare section 3(2)(b) restricting the termination of pregnancy not exceeding 20 weeks on the ground of risk to the life of the woman or the child when born, as unconstitutional and void.
8. The state cannot compel a woman to continue a pregnancy against her will when continuance of pregnancy will entail physical, mental and socio-economic consequences which far outweigh the consequences that ensue as a result of termination of pregnancy.