

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 12-12-2023

Table of Content

SC upholds repeal of J&K's Special Status	2
10 years of PoSH Act, 2013	3
Legality of Bihar Reservation Pool	5
Global River Cities Alliance Launched	6
India's 'Bio-Economy'	6
40 years since India became Permanent Resident of Antarctica	8
NEWS IN SHORTS	
Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)	9
Rythu Bandhu Scheme	10
Germany's Debt Brake Rule	10
Cloud Facility for the Financial Sector in India	10
Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme	10

SC UPHOLDS REPEAL OF J&K'S SPECIAL STATUS

In News

- The Supreme Court in a 5-0 unanimous ruling upheld the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution.

Key Highlights of the Judgement

- **Temporary provision':** The court held that Article 370 was only a "temporary provision" to ease the accession of the then princely State to the Union at a time of internal strife and war.
- **Powers of President :** The Court upheld the power of the President to abrogate Article 370 in August 2019.
 - ♦ The power of the Parliament or the President to abrogate Article 370 did not cease to exist with the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir in 1957.
 - ♦ The Supreme Court relied heavily on its landmark 1994 judgement in *SR Bommai v Union of India* which concluded that the power of the President to dismiss a State government is not absolute.
 - It held that the declaration of State Emergency under Article 356 and the subsequent actions of the President should have a "reasonable nexus".
- **Karan Singh's Proclamation of 1949, cited by SC :** The court ruled that Jammu and Kashmir did not retain an element of sovereignty or internal sovereignty after it joined the Union of India.
 - ♦ SC recalled that in November 1949, Yuvraj Karan Singh, heir to the throne of Jammu and Kashmir, had issued a proclamation that reflected the "full and final surrender of [J&K's] sovereignty to India."
- **Truth-and-Reconciliation Commission:** The Supreme Court has ordered the establishment of a Truth-and-Reconciliation Commission to address human rights violations both by state and non-state actors in Jammu and Kashmir since the 1980s.
- **Elections :** The court accepted the assurance of the Centre to restore Statehood to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir "at the earliest".
 - ♦ It directed the Election Commission of India to hold the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections by September 30, 2024.

Special Status of J&K: Historical Linkages

- Article 370 was a key provision in the Indian Constitution that granted special status to the former state of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - ♦ In March 1948, the then Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh had appointed an interim government in the state, with Sheikh Abdullah as prime minister.
 - ♦ In July 1949, Sheikh Abdullah and three other colleagues joined the Indian Constituent Assembly and subsequently negotiated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. This led to the adoption of Article 370
 - It provided some autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir, such as allowing the state to have its own constitution, a separate flag, and limited jurisdiction for the Central government.
 - Article 35-A: Article 35A under Article 370 of the Constitution was introduced through a presidential order in 1954 to continue the old provisions of the territory regulations.
 - The article permitted the Jammu and Kashmir state legislature to define permanent residents of the region
- ### Why was J&K given special status?
- Jammu and Kashmir was accorded special status because of the circumstances in which it acceded to India soon after Independence.
 - ♦ Sandwiched between the two new Dominions of India and Pakistan, the State did not make an immediate decision on which country to join, as it had vital economic and cultural links with both.
 - ♦ Maharaja Hari Singh, in August 1947, offered to have 'Standstill Agreements', which meant that existing arrangements will continue on all matters, with both Pakistan and India.
 - ♦ However, by October 1947, the Maharaja was faced with regular military attacks from the Pakistan side .
 - In a letter to India's Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten, on October 26, 1947, he sought help from India, noting that "naturally they cannot send the help asked for" without his State acceding to the Dominion of India. Therefore, he attached an 'Instrument of Accession' with the letter.

- ◆ However, it was not unconditional. He specified matters on which the Dominion legislature may make laws for Jammu and Kashmir, but the rest of the powers were to be retained by the State.
- ◆ These subjects were Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications.

Abrogation

- On August 5, 2019, the President issued the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order which inserted a new provision, Article 367(4), in the Indian Constitution.
 - ◆ This replaced the expression 'Constituent Assembly of the State' in the proviso to Article 370(3) with 'Legislative Assembly of the State'.
- The same day had seen the Parliament abrogate Article 370 and pass the Bill to reorganise the State of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - ◆ The former State was split into two Union Territories — Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Governments view

- The decision to abrogate Article 370 was based on the government's belief that it hindered the integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of India and limited the region's development.
- It is argued that it would help bring socio-economic development, promote equal rights and opportunities, and ensure better governance in the region.
- They also contended that it would facilitate the application of national laws and programs, which were previously not fully applicable in Jammu and Kashmir.

Criticism

- Critics of the abrogation raised concerns about the decision's impact on the special status and identity of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as its potential implications for the region's autonomy and demographic composition.
- There were debates about the constitutional validity of the move.

Conclusion and Way Ahead

- The abrogation of Article 370 was the culmination of a "gradual and collaborative exercise" spread over the past 70 years between the Centre and

the State to integrate Jammu and Kashmir with the Union.

- ◆ The objective of the integration process was to make the entirety of the rights and obligations enshrined in the Indian Constitution applicable to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The region has witnessed significant changes in governance, administration, and socio-political dynamics.
- The full implications and consequences of the abrogation are still evolving.

Additional Information

- 1994 judgement in SR Bommai v Union of India : In Bommai, a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court interpreted Article 356 of the Constitution to define the contours of proclamation of President's rule.
- The SC unanimously held that the President's proclamation can be subject to judicial review on grounds of illegality, malafide, extraneous considerations, abuse of power, or fraud.
- While the President's subjective appraisal of the issue cannot be examined, the Court said that the material relied on for making the decision can be reviewed.
- The verdict also made Parliamentary approval necessary for imposing President's rule. Only after the proclamation is approved by both Houses of Parliament can the President exercise the power.

Source: TH

10 YEARS OF POSH ACT, 2013

In Context

- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (PoSH) has completed 10 years of implementation.

Key Features of the PoSH Act

- **Clear Definition of Sexual Harassment:** The Act defines sexual harassment to include unwelcome acts such as physical contact and sexual advances, a demand or request for sexual favours, making sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography, and any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

- **Applicability:** The Act is applicable to all workplaces, including the organized and unorganized sectors, the public and private sectors, and government and non-government organizations.
- **Employee:** All women employees, whether employed regularly, temporarily, contractually, on an ad hoc or daily wage basis, as apprentices or interns or even employed without the knowledge of the principal employer, can seek redressal to sexual harassment in the workplace.
- **Constitution of Internal Complaints Committee (ICC):** Employers are required to constitute an ICC at each office or branch with 10 or more employees.
 - ♦ It has to be headed by a woman, have at least two women employees, another employee, and a third party such as an NGO worker with five years of experience.
- **Local Committee (LC):** It mandates every district in the country to create a local committee (LC) to receive complaints from women working in firms with less than 10 employees.
- **Procedure for Filing Complaints:** Woman can file a written complaint within three to six months of the sexual harassment incident.
 - ♦ There are two ways to resolve the issue by the committee- through conciliation between the complainant and the respondent (which cannot be a financial settlement), or committees could initiate an inquiry, taking appropriate action based on what it finds.
- **Annual Audit Report:** The employer has to file an annual audit report with the district officer about the number of sexual harassment complaints filed and actions taken at the end of the year.
- **Penalty:** If the employer fails to constitute an ICC or does not abide by any other provision, they must pay a fine of up to 50,000, which increases for a repeat offence.
- The wide applicability ensures that protections against sexual harassment are extended to a diverse range of workplaces.
- The Act emphasizes the importance of maintaining confidentiality during the inquiry process which encourages victims to come forward and report incidents.

Challenges in the Implementation of the PoSH Act

- **Lack of Awareness:** Many individuals may not be fully aware of their rights and responsibilities under the law, leading to underreporting of incidents and inadequate preventive measures.
- **Inadequate Training:** Lack of training can result in improper handling of complaints, potential biases, and a failure to create a supportive and responsive environment.
- **Non-compliance:** Some employers may not fully comply with the requirements of the PoSH Act, such as the constitution of ICCs, conducting awareness programs, and implementing preventive measures.
- **Informal Workplaces:** Challenges in addressing sexual harassment in informal or unorganized workplaces where there may be a lack of clear reporting structures, established policies, and awareness about the legal framework.
- **Inadequate Penalties:** The Act does not specify stringent penalties for non-compliance, which may reduce the deterrent effect.
- **Cross-Border Challenges:** Multinational organizations may face challenges in implementing the POSH Act across different jurisdictions with varying legal frameworks.

Way Ahead

- Stronger penalties and enforcement mechanisms could contribute to better compliance with the provisions of the law.
- Adapting the PoSH Act to address the challenges posed by changes, such as virtual harassment and decentralized work environments, is crucial.
- Regular awareness campaigns, comprehensive training programs, and continuous evaluation and updates to the legal framework can contribute to the effective implementation of the PoSH Act.

Source: TH

Significance of the Act

- Quicker and more efficient resolution of cases
- Promotion of a Safe Work Environment.
- The existence of a legal framework with penalties for non-compliance serves as a deterrent against sexual harassment at the workplace.

LEGALITY OF BIHAR RESERVATION POOL

In Context

- The Governor of Bihar approved two laws increasing the quantum of reservations in jobs and education in the State to 75%.
 - ♦ The two laws sparked debate around the permissible limits of reservations in India.

What is the 50% Rule?

- The Supreme Court has historically maintained that reservations, whether in jobs or education, should not exceed 50% of the total seats/posts.
- **Mandal Commission Case:** In 1992, SC in the Indra Sawhney case had ruled that reservation should not exceed 50%, barring certain extraordinary situations.
 - ♦ Such as to provide reservations to communities which hail from far flung areas of the country and have been kept out of the mainstream of the society. This is not a geographical test but a social one.
- **EWS Judgement:** The Supreme Court upheld the 103rd Constitutional Amendment which provides for 10% additional reservations to the EWS.
 - ♦ This means, for the time being, that the 50% limit applies only to non-EWS reservations, and States are permitted to reserve a total of 60% of the seats/posts including EWS reservations.

What Bihar Government has to Prove?

- The government of Bihar will have to prove that their case falls within the exception carved out in the Mandal Commission case.
 - ♦ That is, the communities to whom reservations have been granted hail from far flung areas or have been kept out of the social mainstream.
 - ♦ The second is the justification offered by the State government for this breach.

States that have Breached the Limit

- Chhattisgarh (72%), Tamil Nadu (69%, under a 1994 Act protected under the ninth Schedule of the Constitution), Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland (80% each).
- Lakshadweep has 100% reservations for Scheduled Tribes.

Arguments in Favour of Reservation

- **Historical Injustice:** It is seen as a corrective measure to address the historical injustices and discrimination faced by certain communities.
- **Social Equality:** It is designed to promote social equality and reduce disparities by providing opportunities for education, employment, and representation.
- **Constitutional Mandate:** The Constitution of India, under Articles 15(4) and 16(4), empowers the state to make special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens.
- **Social Upliftment:** Reservation is viewed as a tool for the social upliftment of marginalized communities, providing them with opportunities to break free from the cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and social exclusion.

Argument Against Reservation

- **Merit:** Critics argue that individuals should be selected for educational and job opportunities based on their abilities, skills, and qualifications rather than their caste or social background.
- **Reverse Discrimination:** Reservation policies lead to reverse discrimination, as individuals from certain privileged groups may face disadvantages in terms of educational and employment opportunities.
- **Creamy Layer:** The concept of the “creamy layer” refers to the economically better-off individuals within reserved categories.
 - ♦ Benefits should be targeted at those who genuinely need assistance, and there should be a reconsideration of the criteria for determining eligibility.
- **Division in Society:** Some argue that reservation policies reinforce social divisions by categorizing people based on their caste or community.

Conclusion

- It's important to note that discussions about reservation policies in India are complex, and there are varying opinions on how to strike a balance between promoting social justice and avoiding the potential pitfalls.
- Positive discrimination can lead to important advances in societies along with deep-seated social inequalities, but such systems must be periodically examined and redesigned.

Source: TH

GLOBAL RIVER CITIES ALLIANCE LAUNCHED

In Context

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has recently launched the Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) at COP28.

About the Global River Cities Alliance:

- Origins:** Inspired by India's River Cities Alliance (RCA).
- Launched:** In November 2023 at COP28 in Dubai.
- Led by:** NMCG in association with NIUA (National Institute of Urban Affairs).
- Members:** Nine-India, Denmark, Cambodia, Japan, Bhutan, Australia, Netherlands, Egypt, and Ghana.
- Vision and goals:**
 - To promote sustainable river-centric development in cities around the world.
 - To create a platform for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and peer-to-peer learning among member cities.
 - To contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation) and SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities).

River Cities Alliance (RCA)

- Launched on:** 25th November 2021, by the Government of India as a city-led movement for promulgating river-sensitive planning and development.
- Mandate:** Develop a dedicated platform for river cities in India to ideate, discuss and exchange information for sustainable management of urban rivers.
- Managed by:** NMCG, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and key partners provide dedicated technical and handholding support to the member cities of the RCA.
- The activities being undertaken are in three broad areas:**
 - A. Networking:** Organizing annual river summit; facilitating exchange of official visits for member cities; and publishing a bi-monthly newsletter.
 - B. Capacity Building:** Conducting certification training programmes for officials of member cities; annual calendar of events; and organizing webinars and expert talk.
 - C. Technical Support:** River-sensitive urban planning and interventions; Innovations in urban river management; river linked economy and rejuvenation of urban water bodies.

Current Status:

- The River Cities Alliance currently has 142 river cities in India as a member.
- Recently, on the sidelines of COP28, the National Mission for Clean Ganga signed a Memorandum of Common Purpose (MoCP) with the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI), representing 124 cities/towns situated along the banks of the Mississippi River, USA.
 - As part of the collaboration, a comprehensive water monitoring program and sharing best practices for renaturing urban areas, will be discussed.

Significance of GRCA

- The launch of GRCA signifies a momentous step in global efforts towards river conservation and sustainable water management.
- It is in line with the call for new river planning, stressing the need to mainstream rivers in urban planning without a regulatory mindset.
- River management is a matter of global interest and India is leading the efforts as an opportunity to assert its leadership at the global level.
- The inclusion of cities from different continents in the GRCA, coupled with the MoCP signed with the Mississippi River Towns And Cities Initiative, underscores the uniqueness of this initiative.

Source: IE

INDIA'S 'BIO-ECONOMY'

In Context

- The Union Health Minister recently said India's 'Bio-Economy' has grown eight times in the last eight years from \$10 billion to \$80 billion.

About

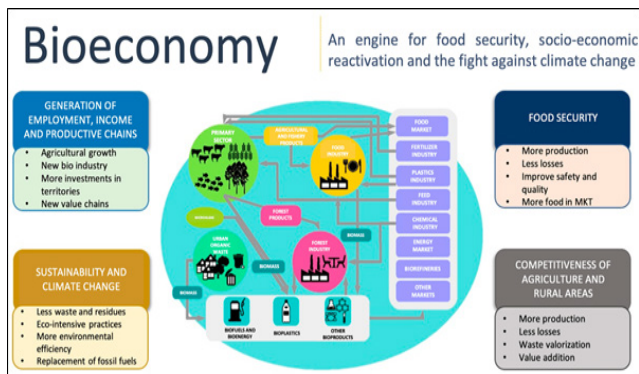
- Addressing the Pre Vibrant Gujarat Seminar on 'Biotechnology: The Path of Innovation and Wellness for Viksit Bharat' the Minister highlighted that Bio Agriculture and Bio Pharmaceuticals, Bio Services are the emerging sectors that are growing rapidly in the country.

About the Bioeconomy

- The bioeconomy refers to the use of renewable biological resources and processes to create value and products across various sectors.

- This includes activities like:
 - ♦ **Bio-based production:** Examples include biofuels from algae, bioplastics from corn starch, and enzymes from bacteria.
 - ♦ **Biotechnology:** Examples include genetic engineering, bioremediation, and vaccine development.
 - ♦ **Circular bioeconomy:** This involves practices like composting, recycling biomaterials, and using waste for energy generation.

Challenges associated



- **Research and development:** Increase government and private sector investments in R&D for advanced biotechnologies and applications.
 - ♦ Foster collaboration between research institutions, industry players, and startups.
 - ♦ Prioritize research on second-generation biofuels, bioremediation technologies, and circular bioeconomy solutions.
 - **Skilling and education:** Universities and research institutions need to focus on bioeconomy-related education and training programs, creating a future-ready workforce.
 - **Feedstock availability and sustainability:** Promote sustainable agricultural practices and crop diversification to ensure a reliable supply of feedstock.
 - **Financial incentives:** Provide targeted subsidies, grants, and tax breaks for bio-based industries and facilitate access to affordable financing for bio-based product development.
- **Technological infrastructure:** Limited access to advanced research facilities, skilled workforce, and pilot-scale testing platforms hinders innovation and commercialization.
 - **Policy and regulatory framework:** Lack of clear policies for bio-based products like genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and intellectual property rights creates uncertainty for investors and entrepreneurs.
 - **Market competitiveness:** Established fossil fuel and petrochemical industries pose competition.
 - **Investment:** Bio-based products often require higher initial investment and may face price pressure.
 - **Social acceptance:** Concerns about ethical considerations around biotechnologies need to be addressed.

Suggestions

- **Policy and regulatory framework:** Address uncertainties surrounding bio-based products like GMOs.
- **Private sector participation:** Indian companies need to invest in bio-based technologies and products and create a vibrant ecosystem for innovation and collaboration.

Government initiatives:

The Indian government has launched several programs and policies to support the bioeconomy, including,

- **The National Bioeconomy Mission:** Launched in 2021, this ambitious program aims to achieve a \$150 billion bioeconomy by 2025. It focuses on five key areas:
 - ♦ Bio-based manufacturing
 - ♦ Biotechnology
 - ♦ Bioresources and agriculture
 - ♦ Bio-infrastructure and knowledge management
 - ♦ Creating a supportive regulatory environment
- **The Biofuel Policy (2018):** It is a significant government initiative in India aimed at promoting the use of biofuels and reducing dependence on fossil fuels.
 - ♦ The policy mandates a gradual increase in the blending percentage of ethanol in gasoline and biodiesel in diesel. Currently, the target is 20% ethanol blending by 2030.
- **Scheme for Fund for Innovation (SFI):** To support research and development projects in bio-based technologies, bridging the gap between research and commercialization
- **Mission Innovation Green Biofuels Challenge:** India participates in this global initiative to accelerate development and deployment of advanced biofuels.

Way Ahead

- India's bioeconomy has the potential to drive sustainable economic growth, create new jobs, and contribute to environmental protection.
- By addressing the existing challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities, India can emerge as a global leader in this rapidly evolving field.

Source: AIR

40 YEARS SINCE INDIA BECAME PERMANENT RESIDENT OF ANTARCTICA

Context

- December marks exactly 40 years since India became a permanent resident of Antarctica.

About

- In 1983, India established the first permanent base in Antarctica named Dakshin Gangotri.
- India presently has two research stations at Antarctica namely 'Maitri' and 'Bharati'. Dakshin Gangotri is no longer in operation.
- In Antarctica scientific studies and investigations are undertaken on the continental part and contiguous shelf ice area to understand the Polar processes and phenomenon.
- The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa—an autonomous institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences—manages the entire Indian Antarctic program.

Do you Know?

- **Maitri:** It has been in operation since 1989 and is located in a rocky mountainous region known as Schirmacher Oasis in Queen Maud Land.
- **Bharati:** The new station was constructed and established in 2013. It is located between Thala Fjord & Quilty bay, east of Stornes Peninsula in Antarctica.

Significance of Research in Antarctica

- **Climate Change and Global Warming:** Antarctica plays a crucial role in regulating Earth's climate. The Research helps scientists understand the dynamics of ice melting, sea level rise, and the impact of climate change on the polar regions and beyond.

- **Ozone Layer Depletion:** Research in Antarctica monitors the recovery of the ozone layer and helps assess the effectiveness of international agreements, such as the Montreal Protocol, in addressing ozone-depleting substances.
- **Space Analog:** Antarctica's extreme conditions, including low temperatures and isolation, make it an ideal analog for studying the challenges humans might face in future space exploration, such as missions to Mars.
- **Scientific Discovery:** Antarctica provides opportunities for the discovery of the remains of ancient organisms, meteorites, and insights into Earth's geological history.

India and Antarctica

- **Antarctic Treaty:** The Treaty covers the area south of 60°S latitude. It was signed at Washington D.C. in 1959 with the objective of the Demilitarisation of Antarctica.
 - ♦ The signatories are supposed to bring laws so that no activity in contravention of the treaty takes place. India signed the treaty in 1983.
- The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR): CCAMLR was signed in Canberra in 1980 to protect and preserve the Antarctic environment and, particularly, for the preservation and conservation of marine living resources in Antarctica.
 - ♦ India ratified the CCAMLR in 1985.
- **Madrid Protocol:** The Protocol on the Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (Madrid Protocol) was signed in Madrid in 1991. It aims to strengthen the Antarctic Treaty system and develop a comprehensive regime for the protection of the Antarctic environment and dependent and associated ecosystems.
 - ♦ India ratified the Madrid Protocol in 1998.
- Council of Managers of the National Antarctic Programme (COMNAP)
 - ♦ India is also a member of the COMNAP and the Scientific Committee of Antarctica Research (SCAR), which shows the significant position that India holds among the nations involved in Antarctic research.

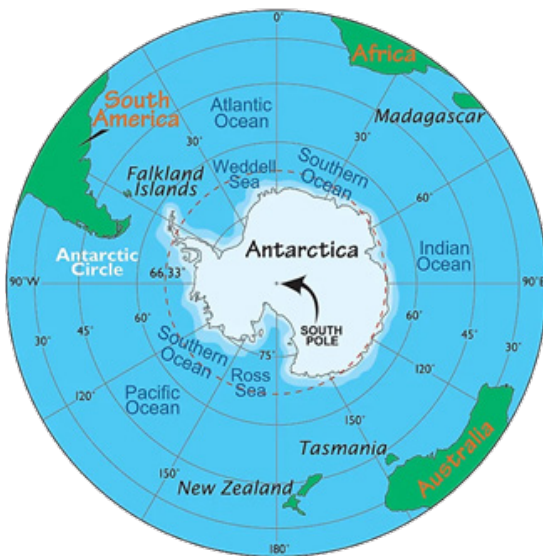
Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022

- **Objective:** To demilitarize Antarctica; use of Antarctica for peaceful purposes; promote international scientific cooperation in Antarctica.

- **Applicability:** The provisions of the Bill will apply to any person, vessel or aircraft that is a part of an Indian expedition to Antarctica under a permit issued under the Bill.
- **Prohibited activities:** The Bill prohibits certain activities in Antarctica including:
 - ♦ Nuclear explosion or disposal of radioactive wastes,
 - ♦ Introduction of non-sterile soil, and
 - ♦ Discharge of garbage, plastic or other substances into the sea which is harmful to the marine environment.

About Antarctica

- Antarctica is the world's southernmost and fifth largest continent. It is also the world's highest, driest, windiest, coldest, and iciest continent.
- The continent is divided into East Antarctica (Greater Antarctica) and West Antarctica (Lesser Antarctica). They are separated by Transantarctic Mountains.
- East Antarctica is composed of older, igneous and metamorphic rocks whereas West Antarctica, is made up of younger, volcanic and sedimentary rock.
 - ♦ West Antarctica, is part of the "Ring of Fire," a tectonically active area around the Pacific Ocean.
- Mount Erebus, located on Antarctica's Ross Island, is the southernmost active volcano on Earth.
- Longest River: Onyx
- Largest Lake: Vostok



Source: TOI

NEWS IN SHORT

PRADHAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA (PMUY)

In Context

- The number of PMUY beneficiaries taking refills has gone up to 8.41 crore in 2022-23 compared to 3.09 crore consumers who took refills in 2017-18.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

- **About:** It was launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas to provide LPG connections to women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households.
 - ♦ LPG Connection is released in the name of an adult woman of the BPL Family.
- **Phase I:** Target: To provide free LPG connections to 5 cr women members of BPL households.
 - ♦ In 2018 the scheme included all SC/ST households, PMAY(Gramin), forest-dwellers, most backward classes (MBC), Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Tribes.
- **Phase II:** Announced in the Union budget for FY 21-22; additional 1 crore connections.
 - ♦ Features: Deposit-free LPG connections to those low-income families who could not be covered under the earlier phase of PMUY.
 - ♦ There is no need for address proof by migrants, self-declaration is sufficient

Objectives & significance

- **Health Benefits:** Decrease in health hazards associated with cooking based on fossil fuel.
 - ♦ WHO estimates: About 5 lakh deaths in India due to unclean cooking fuels.
- **Women Empowerment:** Women are saved from the danger of collecting firewood by hiking long distances.
- **Socio-Economic Benefits:** Productive activities, & connection on Women's name.
- **Environment:** Less pollution due to fuel burning.

Source: IE

RYTHU BANDHU SCHEME

In News

- Telangana government is releasing funds for the Rythu Bandhu Scheme.

Rythu Bandhu Scheme

- The Rythu Bandhu Scheme is proposed by the Government of Telangana .
- It is the first ever farmer investment support scheme in India . The idea is to reduce the debt burden of the farmers.
- As per the scheme, each farmer gets a Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of Rs. 5,000/- per acre per farmer each season for purchase of inputs like Seeds, Fertilizers, Pesticides, Labour and other investments in the field operations of Farmer's choice for the crop season.
- The scheme, similar to PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, aimed to assist farmers, and the government received permission under certain guidelines.

Source: TH

GERMANY'S DEBT BRAKE RULE

Context

- The government's decision to reallocate 60 billion from unused funds designated for pandemic emergency purposes to a "climate and transformation fund" was declared unlawful by Germany's constitutional court.

What is the debt brake rule?

- It is a fiscal rule that was enacted in 2009 in Germany.
- The debt brake rule is also known as the balanced budget rule, sets a cap on how much governments can borrow to finance various public projects.
- It restricts the federal government in Germany from running a fiscal deficit in excess of 0.35% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and in effect prohibits the country's 16 regions from any deficit spending whatsoever.

Concerns highlighted by court ruling

- The court objected to the government's action of redirecting underutilized allocations from one sector to another.
- It also raised concerns about the rollover of debt from one fiscal year to the next.

Source: TH

CLOUD FACILITY FOR THE FINANCIAL SECTOR IN INDIA

In Context

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is working on establishing a cloud facility for the financial sector in India.

About

- The cloud facility will be set up and initially operated by Indian Financial Technology & Allied Services (IFTAS), a wholly-owned subsidiary of RBI.
 - ◆ Eventually it will be transferred to a separate entity owned by the financial sector participants.
- Need: Banks and financial entities are maintaining an ever-increasing volume of data.
 - ◆ Many of them are utilising various public and private cloud facilities for this purpose which may increase data security concerns.
- Significance: The proposed facility is expected to enhance the security, integrity and privacy of financial sector data.
 - ◆ It is also likely to enable scalability and business continuity.

What is Cloud Storage?

- Cloud Storage is a mode of computer data storage in which digital data is stored on servers in off-site locations.
- The servers are maintained by a third-party provider who is responsible for hosting, managing, and securing data stored on its infrastructure.

Source: HT

INDIAN FOREST & WOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEME

In Context

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change has launched the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme.

About

- The scheme aimed at promoting sustainable forest management and agroforestry across the nation.

- The scheme provides forest management certification and tree outside forest management certification.
- The scheme can provide market incentives to various entities that adhere to responsible forest management and agroforestry practices in their operations.
- It will be overseen by the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council, which will act as a multistakeholder advisory body.
 - ♦ The Council is represented by members from eminent institutions such
- Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal will act as the scheme operating agency.

Source: PIB

