Prelim Bits 18-05-2017

Maternity Benefit Program

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- The Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval to Pan-India implementation of Maternity Benefit Program **which now has been extended to all districts of the country.**
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- The Maternity Benefit Program will **provide compensation for the wage loss** in terms of cash incentives so that the women can take adequate rest before and after delivery and not be deprived of proper nutrition.
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- The cash incentives provided would lead to improved health seeking behaviour amongst the Pregnant Women and Lactating Mother (PW&LM) to reduce the effects of under-nutrition namely stunting, wasting and other related problems.
\n
- All eligible Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM), excluding the Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers who are in regular employment with the Central Government or State Government or Public Sector Undertakings or those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being.
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- Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers who are eligible will receive a **cash benefit of Rs.5,000/- in three installment**.
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National Technical Research Organisation

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- The Home Ministry issued a notification listing NTRO under **The Intelligence Organisations (Restriction of Rights) Act, 1985**.
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- The NTRO, which reports to the PMO and the National Security Advisor, will now have the same “norms of conduct” as the Intelligence Bureau and the

Research and Analysis Wing.
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- The Act prevents employees of a notified agency from forming unions/associations, puts restrictions on the employee's freedom of speech, bars any communication with the press, or publishing a book or other document without the permission of the head of the intelligence organisation.
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- The **NTRO was created after the 1999 Kargil conflict** as a dedicated technical intelligence agency.
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- The organisation does hi-tech surveillance jobs, including satellite monitoring, terrestrial monitoring, internet monitoring, considered vital for the national security apparatus.
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SHAKTI

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- Benefits of **Scheme for Harnessing and Allocating Koyala (Coal) Transparently in India**:\n\n
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    - Coal available to all Power Plants in transparent and objective manner.
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    - Auction to be made the basis of linkage allocations to Independent Power producers.
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    - Cheaper and affordable 'Power for All'.
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    - The Stress on account of non-availability of linkages to Power Sector Projects shall be overcome. Good for the Infrastructure and banking Sector.
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    - Power Purchase Agreement holders to reduce tariff for linkage; Direct benefit of reduced tariff to Discom/consumers.
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National Biotechnology Development Strategy

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- The National Biotechnology Development Strategy 2015-2020 announced by the Department of Biotechnology lays emphasis on making India ready to meet the challenge of **achieving US $100 billion biotech industry by 2025.**
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- The focus is on generation of biotech products, processes and technologies for affordable and accessible health care, promoting innovation R&D, establishing India as world class biomanufacturing hub, and building the required skilled workforce.
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- To achieve this, it is important to **promote industry-academia interface**.
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- The CCEA has given its approval for Industry-Academia Collaborative Mission for accelerating discovery research to early development for biopharmaceuticals - "Innovate in India (13) empowering biotech entrepreneurs & accelerating inclusive innovation" to be funded by the Government of India.
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- The Mission will be implemented by **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** - a Public Sector Undertaking of Department of Biotechnology (DBT).
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- The Mission will focus on Development of specific products - vaccines, biotherapeutics, medical devices and diagnostics; establishment of shared infrastructure and facilities; building and strengthening domain specific knowledge and management skills; creating and enhancing technology transfer capabilities in public and private sector.
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