Prelim Bits 23-12-2018

Government Agencies to Monitor Computers

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- Union Home Ministry has recently issued a notification allowing 10 government agencies to monitor and decrypt any information stored in any computer on grounds of internal security.
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- It is in accordance with the power conferred upon the government under Section 69 of the Information Technology Act, 2000.
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- The agencies will now be able to snoop on exchange of information and material between individuals and banned or militant groups.
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- Each case of interception, monitoring, decryption is to be approved by the Union home secretary and reviewed every 2 months by the cabinet secretary.
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- The central agencies being given power under the notification are,
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1. Intelligence Bureau,
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2. Narcotics Control Bureau,
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3. Enforcement Directorate,
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4. Central Board of Direct Taxes,
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5. Directorate of Revenue Intelligence,
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6. Central Bureau of Investigation,
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7. National Investigation Agency,
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8. Cabinet Secretariat (R&AW),
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9. Directorate of Signal Intelligence (for service areas of Jammu and Kashmir, North-East and Assam only) and
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10. The Commissioner of Police, Delhi.
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Pokkali Paddy

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- Pokkali paddy variety is a saltwater-tolerant paddy grown in the coastal fields of Alappuzha, Ernakulam and Thrissur districts of Kerala.
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- It is endemic to Kerala and was given Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
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- It grows to a height of up to 2 m and it survived the recent devastating floods in farmlands across the State.
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- The single-season paddy is raised in saltwater fields between June and November followed by a season of fish-farming.
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- After the harvest, the paddy stubble in the fields acts as food and shelter for shrimp and small fish.
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- Fish excreta and scales, along with the decomposed stubble, provide excellent natural manure for another season of Pokkali.
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- The cultivation is labour intensive and this farming tradition is under threat due to lack of labour.
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States’ Startup Ranking

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- The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) announced results of the first ever States’ Start-up Ranking 2018 recently.
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- The key objective of the exercise was to encourage States/UT to take proactive steps towards strengthening the Start-up ecosystems in their states.
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- The States have been identified under different categories - Start-up policy leaders, incubation hubs, seeding innovation, scaling innovation, regulatory change champions, procurement leaders, communication champions, North-Eastern leader, and hill state leader.
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- Based on these categories, the States have been recognised as the Best Performer, Top Performers, Leaders, Aspiring Leaders, Emerging States and Beginners.
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- Gujarat has been identified as the **best performer.**
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- Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, and Rajasthan have been identified as the **top performers.**
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- Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Telangana have been identified as leaders.
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Windfarm in Norway

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- Norway is planning to build megawatt Storheia wind park in Northwest coast.
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- It is part of Europe’s largest onshore wind power project.
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- United Nations calls to suspend the project because the area is used fore reindeer grazing, a traditional activity of the Sami people.
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- The sight and sound of the turbines in the park during winter months, could frighten the animals.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu

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