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Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana

- Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana is a welfare measure being implemented by the Employee's State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) on pilot basis for a period of 2 years initially. It has been extended to June 30, 2021.
- Introduced w.e.f. July 01, 2018, it offers cash compensation to Insured Persons (IPs) when they are rendered unemployed.
- **Eligibility** for the scheme are,
 - a. Employees covered under Section 2(9) of the ESI Act 1948.
 - b. IP should have completed 2 years of Insurable employment.
 - c. IP should have contributed not less than 78 days during each of the preceding 4 contribution periods preceding to the claim of relief.
 - d. The contribution in respect of him should have been paid or payable by the employer.
- **Changes made** - The eligibility conditions have been relaxed as follows for IPs who became unemployed from 24th March, 2020 onwards,
 - a. Rate of relief has been doubled from 25% to 50% average per day earning of employee.
 - b. IPs must have contributed for not less than 78 days in the contribution period immediately preceding the unemployment.
 - c. IPs must have contributed 78 days in one of the remaining 3 contribution periods in 2 years prior to unemployment.
 - d. Claim shall become due 30 days after date of unemployment. Earlier, this period was 90 days.
 - e. The claim may be submitted by an IP (need not be forwarded by the employer) in the prescribed claim form duly completed online or directly to the branch office.

Other Measures for Welfare of Unemployed

- **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana** (ABRY) Scheme incentivizes creation of new employment along with social security benefits and restoration of loss of employment during Covid-19 pandemic.
- This scheme is being implemented through the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).
- To know more about the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana, [click here](#).

- **National Career Service** (NCS) Project is a Mission Mode Project is implemented by the Ministry of Labour & Employment.
- It aims to provide a variety of employment related services in the country like job matching, career counseling, internships, etc.
- These services available on the NCS Portal are accessible to all users including job-seekers, employers, skill providers, etc.

Ken-Betwa Link Project

- A memorandum of agreement was signed between Union Minister of Jal Shakti and the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to implement the Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP).
- Ken-Betwa Link Project is the first project under the **National Perspective Plan** for interlinking of rivers (Peninsular component).
- Under this project, water from the River Ken will be transferred to the River Betwa. Both these rivers are tributaries of river Yamuna. The project has two phases,
 - a. **Phase-I** - Daudhan dam complex and its appurtenances like Low and High Level Tunnel, Ken-Betwa link canal and Power houses
 - b. **Phase-II** - Lower Orr dam, Bina complex project, Kotha barrage
- Daudhan dam comes within the core habitat of Panna Tiger Reserve.
- **Benefit** - The project is expected to provide annual irrigation, drinking water supply and also generate 103 MW of hydropower.
- It will be of immense benefit to the drought-prone Bundelkhand region, which spreads across 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

National Perspective Plan (NPP)

- In 1980, the Ministry of Irrigation prepared a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for water resources development.
- This was introduced for inter basin water transfer in the country.
- Based on the NPP, the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) identified 30 river links. The NPP comprised two components:
 - a. 14 river links under Himalayan Rivers Development Component;
 - b. 16 river links under Peninsular Rivers Development Component.
- The clearances required for a river-linking project are,
 - a. Techno-economic (given by the Central Water Commission);
 - b. Forest and Environmental clearance (Environment Ministry);
 - c. Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) Plan of Tribal Population (Ministry of Tribal Affairs) and
 - d. Wildlife clearance (Central Empowered Committee).

Inter-state Tiger Relocation Project

- As the first attempt under this project was unsuccessful, Sundari, the tigress, started from Odisha's Satkosia Tiger Reserve to her home in Madhya Pradesh's Kanha National Park.
- In 2018, as part of India's first Inter-state Tiger Relocation Project, Mahavir and Sundari were the first pair of tiger and tigress sent from Panna and Bandhavgarh respectively to Satkosia.
- Sundari and Mahavir were brought to Odisha as a solution to the dwindling tiger population in Odisha.
- This project was approved by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in 2017 to augment and recover tiger population in Odisha.

Basic Customs Duty

- The government has decided to levy basic customs duty (BCD) on solar cells and modules from April 1, 2022, which will lead to increase in solar power tariff rates.
- BCD would also be applicable for already bid out projects. So, the time-frame for which BCD would be applicable is uncertain, which results in an additional risk for domestic manufacturers in incurring capex.
- Further, it would reduce the overall attractiveness of solar projects to off-takers and end-consumers.
- As BCD covers imports from all countries, it minimises any scope for imports being routed from any country outside India.
- If domestic manufactures become competitive with time by reducing their cost against the imported modules and cells, BCD may come down.

International Lunar Research Station

- **China** National Space Administration and **Russian** space agency Roscosmos would build an International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) on the lunar surface and/or on the lunar orbit.
- Russia and China will adhere to the principle of co-consultation, joint construction, and shared benefits, and facilitate extensive cooperation in the ILRS.
- Scientific research activities such as the lunar exploration and utilization, lunar-based observation, basic scientific experiment and technical verification will be carried out in ILRS.
- ILRS will be open to all interested countries and international partners, strengthen scientific research exchanges, and promote humanity's exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purpose.

French Military Exercises in Space

- The French military will conduct first military exercises in space, as part of its strategy to become the world's third-largest space power.
- During the drill, the French military will monitor a potentially dangerous space object as well as a threat to its own satellite from another foreign power possessing a considerable space force.
- The scenario is based on a crisis between a state with space capabilities and another that has a military assistance agreement with France.
- The new US Space Force and German space agencies are taking part in the French exercises.
- The French Space Forces Command, Commandement de l'Espace (CdE) aims to militarize space.
- France also planned to develop anti-satellite laser weapons and to strengthen surveillance capabilities in an area that it believes could become a major theater of confrontation between powers on Earth.

Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991

- The Supreme Court asked the Centre to respond to a plea challenging the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991.
- **Section 3** of the Act prohibits conversion of any place of worship and maintains the "religious character" of places of worship as it was in 1947.
- **Section 4(2)** says that all suits, appeals or other proceedings regarding converting the character of a place of worship, that were pending on August 15, 1947, will come to an end when the Act commences.
- It states that no fresh proceedings can be filed. But, legal proceedings can be initiated if the conversion took place after the cut-off date.
- **Exception** - Section 5 says that the act does not to apply to Ram Janma Bhumi Babri Masjid, Uttar Pradesh. The Act also exempted,
 1. Any place of worship that is an ancient and historical monument or an archaeological site, or is covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958;
 2. A suit that has been finally settled or disposed of;
 3. Any dispute that has been settled by the parties or conversion of any place that took place by acquiescence before the Act commenced.
- **Section 6** prescribes a punishment of maximum 3-years imprisonment along with a fine for contravening the provisions of the Act.

Petition

- The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 was challenged on the

ground that it violates secularism.

- The petitioner argued that the cut-off date is arbitrary, and it prohibits Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs from approaching courts to “re-claim” their places of worships which were encroached.
- There is an argument that the Centre has no power to legislate on “pilgrimages” or “burial grounds” which is under the state list.
- But, the government had said that the law was legislated using the residuary power under Entry 97 of the Union List.
- [**Entry 97** confers residuary powers to the Centre to legislate on subjects that are not enumerated in any of the three lists.]

Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express, Down To Earth, Financial Express

