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Category: POLITY

1. [Give verdict copy in the vernacular: Kovind](#)

In news:

- President Ram Nath Kovind suggested that a system be evolved for providing certified copies of High Court judgments translated in **local or regional languages of the litigants**.
- Copies of the translated judgments could be provided in 24 or 36 hours after the verdict was pronounced.
- The President pointed out that the High Courts delivered judgments in English, "but we are a country of diverse languages. The litigant may not be conversant with English and the finer points of the judgment may escape him or her. The litigating parties will thus be dependent on the lawyer or another person to translate the judgment. This can add to time and cost".
- It was important not only to take justice to the people but also to make it understandable to the litigating parties in a language they know

2. [Before polls were called, Gujarat pushed terror Bill](#)

In news:

- Days before the Gujarat Assembly elections were announced, the State government renewed its bid to revive the controversial **Gujarat Control of Terrorism and Organised Crime (GCTOC) Bill, 2015**, which authorises police officers to tap phones and submit the conversations as evidence in court.
- The Bill includes provisions to file a charge sheet within 180 days instead of the usual 90 and proposes stricter conditions for granting bail.

Inter-ministerial review:

- The Union Home Ministry has sent the Bill for inter-ministerial consultations, the fifth time since it was first conceived in 2003 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat.
- Former President Pranab Mukherjee had refused to clear the Bill, following which the Home Ministry recalled it in January 2016.
- The Ministry asked the State government for clarifications, and Gujarat had sent a fresh proposal this September.

Earlier attempts:

- The earlier **GUJCOC Bill** was reintroduced as **GCTOC Bill in 2015**. The same year the Information and Technology Ministry objected to the provisions that allowed "authorisation of interception of telephonic conversations and their admissibility as evidence in the court of law".
- As per norms, agencies such as the Research & Analysis Wing (RAW), the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, the Enforcement Directorate and the police can tap phones only with the permission of the Union Home Secretary.
- The Bill in its earlier form was rejected thrice by two former Presidents "the late A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in 2004 and by Pratibha Patil in 2008 and 2009.
- One of the provisions to which objections were raised by the Centre was Section 25, which provided immunity to the State from any legal action for "anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done in pursuance of this

Category:Â INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [India turns down Pak. offer of talks on transit trade to Afghanistan](#)

In news:

- India has rejected an offer from Pakistan for talks on transit trade to Afghanistan.
- According to sources, the offer was made by the Pakistan Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed when he met President Ashraf Ghani on October 1 in Kabul.
- During discussions on the renewal of the **Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA)**, that lapsed in 2015, President Ghani repeated concerns that trade with India over the Wagah border had been blocked by Pakistan, despite being agreed to in the APTTA.
- Days later, Indian officials at the **SCO Afghanistan-Contact group** meeting in Moscow, told the Afghan delegation that it would not take up the offer for talks.
- Pakistan has consistently refused to allow any Indian goods to travel over land Afghanistan, insisting that India use the sea-route via Karachi.
- Exasperated by Pakistanâ€™s refusal to allow the truck trade, President Ghani has said repeatedly that he would cut off Pakistanâ€™s access to Central Asia and issued a decree last week cancelling permission for Pakistani trucks to transit through Afghanistan.

New routes:

India and Afghanistan are now working on strengthening alternative routes, including the air cargo corridor launched in June this year, and the Chabahar sea route.

Category:Â HEALTH ISSUES

1. [Introduce eggs, milk in mid-day meal, ICDS diet: NHRC](#)

In news :

- Stressing that food being served under the mid-day meal scheme and Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) do not guarantee the protein intake as envisaged, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has recommended to state governments and the Ministry of Women and Child Development to introduce eggs and milk as part of the meal in all states.
- The recommendation was made during a conference organised by the NHRC on the implementation of the National Food Security Act, 2013 on Friday.
- Malnutrition continues to haunt India despite economic growth and the mid day meal scheme and the ICDS are the two biggest nutrition programmes.
- While the meal is supplied in schools, the ICDS aims at providing supplementary nutrition through anganwadi centres to children aged below 6 years, besides pregnant and lactating women.

The recommendations of the NHRC

- For the ICDS scheme, it has been recommended that adequate food testing facilities be created preferably at the district level by all states through the public health department, universities and colleges.
- For the meal scheme, it was recommended that social audit and evaluation by a third party be conducted annually for each district and the reports be published on state portals.
- It also said that no child should be deprived of the meal because of non-linking of Aadhaar.
- The NHRC also questioned the state governments whether they have strictly followed Supreme Court orders banning contractors in supplying nutrition under ICDS and also whether adequate funds have been made available for full implementation of the Maternity Benefit Scheme or not.
- Moreover, experts said cash transfers instead of hot cooked meals may be counterproductive and must not be encouraged as cash can be used for other expenditure.
- Citing Kerala and Tamil Nadu as examples, the states were asked to resolve infrastructural gaps in terms of buildings, kitchens, drinking water supply and toilets within three years, by sourcing funds from different schemes and departments.

Category:Â ECONOMICS

1. [India to leapfrog 30 places in business ease rank](#)

In news:

- India will leapfrog **30 places to the 100th position out of 190 countries** in the **World Bankâ€™s Doing Business Report** , high-level sources have confirmed.
- The report is expected to be released on October 31 â€” â€œIndia will hit a century.â€

Key Point:

- This huge jump in the countryâ€™s ranking is thanks to reforms in areas such as



starting a business, dealing with construction permits, and resolving insolvency, where it was placed a lowly 155, 185 and 136 respectively last year.

- India was ranked a poor 130 overall last year, up by just one place from 131 the previous year.
- On the future prospects for India, the source said: If India maintains this momentum, it can jump to a rank in double digits next year, adding that Mumbai and Delhi the two cities covered in the Report had responded well to the government's call for improvement. The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion systematically worked with the line ministries and State governments to get things done on the ground.
- The **World Bank's distance to frontier score** which measures the distance of each economy to the frontier that represents the best performance observed on each of the indicators across all economies in the Doing Business sample since 2005 showed that India's score gradually improved from 48.77 in 2010 to 55.27 in 2017.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. [Four Asian vulture species now on highest protection list](#)

In news:

- Several species of vultures, including four that have India on their migratory routes, were awarded the highest protection by the **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals**.
- The whale shark**, which inhabits the Indian Ocean, got global protection too. However, the proposal to extend additional protection to the **chinkara or Indian gazelle** was withdrawn.
- The convention in Manila concluded with approvals for protection of 34 species in submissions made by 24 countries **from Asia, Africa, the Americas, Europe and Oceania**.
- The Asian vultures that are set to get collaborative international protection are the **red-headed vulture, white-rumped vulture, Indian vulture and slender-billed vulture**.
- Threats**: They are faced with threats such as poisoning, hunting, collision with electricity cables and habitat degradation.
- A subspecies of the **black noddy, the yellow bunting and the lesser and great grey shrike** are the other avians on the protected list.
- Lions, chimpanzees, giraffes and leopards were marked out as species that needed additional protection.

Marine Species:

- Widespread over-fishing is driving many shark species, including the whale shark, to extinction. India is among 121 nations whose waters are home to sharks threatened with near extinction. The major threats are bycatch in nets and vessel strikes.
- Proposals for conservation of the blue shark and common guitarfish have also been accepted.
- A resolution to develop and manage protected area networks within the ASEAN region has been adopted.
- Proposals submitted by Mongolia to protect two of Central Asia's rarest species, Przewalski's horse and the Gobi bear, also got the nod.
- The Caspian seal has also been identified for conservation. It is the only marine mammal found in the world's largest inland sea, where its migration is prompted by ice formation and foraging.

About the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals:

- The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals more commonly abbreviated to just the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) or the Bonn Convention aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an international treaty, concluded under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme, concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale.
- Since the Convention's entry into force, its membership has grown steadily to include over 120 Parties from Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe and Oceania.
- The Convention was signed in 1979 in Bad Godesberg, a suburb of Bonn (hence the name), and entered into force in 1983. The depositary is the government of the Federal Republic of Germany.
- The CMS is the only global and UN-based intergovernmental organization established exclusively for the conservation and management of terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. CMS and its daughter agreements determine policy and provide further guidance on specific issues through their Strategic Plans, Action Plans, resolutions, decisions and guidelines. All maintain on their websites a list of all decisions taken, guidelines issues and Action Plans adopted by the Member States.

Nothing here for Today!!!

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F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. "The Himalayas are highly prone to landslides." Discuss the causes and suggest suitable measures of mitigation.

GS Paper IV

1. What do you understand by the following terms in the context of public service? a) Integrity b) Perseverance c) Spirit of service d) Commitment e) Courage of conviction f) Personal opinion