Prelim Bits 23-10-2017

RTI Act and CBI

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- A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court for an early hearing of a petition challenging a 2011 government notification regarding RTI.
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- The notification includes the CBI on the list of "**intelligence and security organisations**" under the second schedule of RTI.
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- Section 24 under 2nd schedule of RTA says that provisions of revealing information to the public will not apply to intelligence and security organisations, which include IB, RAW, NIA, CBI and the Enforcement Directorate.
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- However, the act clearly states that the information pertaining to the allegations of corruption and human rights violations will not fall under Section 24.
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- Earlier, the Delhi High court has ruled that the allegations of corruption do not attract blanket exemption given to the CBI under Section 24.
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- It can be denied only if they fell under Section 8(1) of the RTI Act which gives 10 grounds on which information can be denied.
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- This case had been transferred to the apex court following the government's claim of multiplicity of such petitions in several High Courts.
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RORO Ferry Service

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- Prime Minister has recently inaugurated the first phase of the 'roll-on-roll-off' (RORO) ferry service between Ghogha in Saurashtra and Dahej in south Gujarat in the Gulf of Khambhat region.

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- This is the first of its kind world class RORO ferry service project for passengers in South Asia.
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- In RO-RO service, vessels have either built-in or shore-based ramps that allow the cargo to be efficiently rolled on and off the vessel when in port.
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- This is in opposite to the lift-on and lift-off (lo-lo) vessels, which use a crane to load and unload cargo.
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- The project will reduce travel time of 8 hours to 1 hour only.
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- It will reduce a distance of 360 kms by road to 31 kms only by sea.
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Tawny Lark

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- Tawny Lark belongs to a family of larks well-known for their mimicking abilities.
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- It is one of India’s 22 lark species.
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- It is found only in the arid grasslands and scrub lands of central and west-central India including Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.
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- Recently, a team of scientists found that male Tawny larks imitate the calls of 34 other bird species, including babblers and lapwings, squirrels and even whistles of local shepherds.
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- Rapid urbanization and conversion of grassland and scrub habitats into farms endanger its habitat.
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Butterfly Region in West Bengal

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- According to the recent study by Zoological Survey of India, Singur in West Bengal's Hoogly district is home to atleast 69 species of Butterflies.
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- Five of the species found in Singur are rare and to be protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
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- They include species like the Tree Flitter, Striped Albatross, Pea Blue, Common Indian Crow and Danaid Eggfly.
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- Singur is not only rich in butterfly diversity but also in the diversity of frogs and birds.
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- It has no forested land and the area is known for rice, potato and vegetable cultivation.
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Removing Fluoride Contamination in Water

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- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad have used activated jamun seed powder to bring the fluoride content in drinking water to less than the WHO limit of 1.5 mg per litre.
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- The activated jamun seed acquires a positive charge at low pH and the positive charge attracts the fluoride ions while the negative charge in an alkaline medium repulses the fluoride ions.
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- The fluoride ion removal increases with a decrease in pH, with maximum adsorption found at pH 3.
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- They tested it using groundwater taken from Nalgonda village, which is one of the worst fluoride-affected villages in India.
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- The fluoride content was successfully reduced to 1.5 mg per litre in the groundwater.
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Source: The Hindu, PIB

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