



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 15, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- The Tamil Nadu government - has finally awarded tenders for the Bharatnet project which aims to provide broadband connection for 12,000 villages in the state

TWISTS AND TURNS

➤ Bharatnet is a ₹2,000cr tender to set up fibre optic network for broadband connectivity to 12,000 panchayats	➤ Centre stopped the tender in June asking TN government to remove restrictive clauses
➤ NGO Arappor Iyakkam files complaints with Centre stating clauses were introduced to restrict participation	➤ Centre again stopped tender in November after complaint given by a US-based company
	➤ On February 25, Centre gives nod. Bidders given letters

- ✓ On February 25, the Union ministry of commerce and industry issued a letter to the state government giving its approval for the project.
- ✓ The project was stalled twice after the department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) received complaints from Chennai-based NGO Arappor Iyakkam and a few competing contractors on tender conditions.
- ✓ The ministry has clarified various doubts and questions raised by parties regarding issues in the tender such as network system design, specified configuration of routers, switches, network equipment, eligibility conditions of a single original equipment manufacturer (OEM) for all routers in packages and operating temperature of the equipment.

NATIONAL

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways - has announced a new set of rules known as “All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization & Permit Rules, 2021”

- ✓ The new rules announced under the scheme aims to promote state revenue and tourism and will be applicable from April 1, 2021.
 - ✓ Under the scheme, any tourist passenger vehicle operator can apply to get “All India Tourist Authorization or Permit” in the online mode.
 - ✓ The permit will be issued after submitting relevant documents and paying fees within 30 days of submitting such applications.
 - ✓ However, the existing permits will be in force until their validity.
 - ✓ These rules were notified after the 39th and 40th Transport Development Council meetings, held under the chairmanship of Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways.
- **Indian Railways – has extended the new parcel management system (PMS) to 523 locations as against the earlier 84 locations.**
- ✓ This decision was taken to ensure transportation of small consignments across a huge network of railway stations.
 - ✓ Usually, the small businesses and traders in the small cities and towns have been using these services to transport their goods from the big cities and production centers to another place where business is fast, reliable and cheap.
 - ✓ Under this system, the charging of the parcels is based on the weight and volume of the commodity and not the type of commodity.
 - ✓ The extension of the system will be undertaken in the third phase of the computerisation of the PMS

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **The Indian Naval Ship Jalashwa - has reached the port of Anjouan in Comoros on March 14 carrying a consignment of 1000 metric tonnes of rice.**



- ✓ The ship will be received by the Foreign Minister of Comoros, H.E. Dhoiher Dhoulkamal during a ceremony on March 15, 2021
- ✓ This consignment was flagged off to Comoros based on the promise made by the Vice President of India, Venkaiah Naidu during his brief visit to Comoros in the month of October 2019.

- ✓ Later, the INS Jalashwa will travel to the Port of Ehoala in Madagascar to deliver another consignment of 1000 metric tonne of rice and 1,00,000 tablets of HCQ.
 - ✓ This consignment will be delivered as per the promise of External Affairs Minister of India, S Jaishankar to deal with the humanitarian crisis in South of Madagascar because of severe drought.
 - ✓ The ship will also deploy the Indian Naval Training Team in Madagascar for capacity building and training of the Malagasy Special Forces for two weeks.
- **The United States - has become the second biggest oil supplier of India by overtaking Saudi Arabia last month**
- ✓ Iraq continued to be the top oil seller to India despite a 23% drop in purchases during the period
 - ✓ India's imports from the United States - the world's top producer - rose 48% to reach a record of 545,300 barrels per day (bpd) in February from the previous month, accounting for 14% of India's overall imports last month
 - ✓ In contrast, February imports from Saudi Arabia fell by 42% to 445,200 bpd from January to achieve the lowest in the last decade
 - ✓ Saudi Arabia, which has consistently been one of India's top two suppliers, dropped to No. 4 for the first time since at least January 2006.
 - ✓ The UAE slipped to fifth position from third in January, while Nigeria rose to third from fifth, the most since October 2019
 - ✓ India is the world's third biggest oil importer and consumer with 84% of its requirement being imported, mostly from Middle East
 - ✓ The Middle East's share of India's overall imports plunged to a 22-month low of about 52.7%, while Africa's rose to 15%, the highest since September 2020
 - ✓ Iraq has cut the annual supplies of oil to Indian refiners by 20% in 2021, while Saudi Arabia decided to implement a voluntary extra 1 million bpd output cut
 - ✓ These measures were in line with the agreement of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies (OPEC+) so as to maintain the lower production.
- **India - overtook Russia to become the nation with the fourth-largest foreign exchange reserve**
- ✓ While India's forex holdings fell by \$4.3 billion to \$580.3 billion as of March 5, Russia's drop was even sharper, resulting in its numbers coming down to \$580.1 billion, according to data from Bloomberg.
 - ✓ RBI's foreign holdings fell in the first week of March, after rising by \$689 million during the last week of February to a record \$584.5 billion
 - ✓ This was revealed by the data released by the RBI on March 12
 - ✓ The forex reserve rises when the RBI buys dollars to prevent a sharp appreciation of the domestic currency.
 - ✓ When the currency comes under pressure, the RBI ends up selling its forex reserve to defend the rupee.

SPORTS

- **On March 14, Mumbai – defeated Uttar Pradesh by six wickets to lift the Vijay Hazare Trophy at the Ferozeshah Kotla, New Delhi**



- ✓ During the tournament, Mumbai won all eight games and remained undefeated to clinch the premier domestic one-day tournament for the fourth time.
 - ✓ The team is captained by Prithvi Shaw and has a new coach Ramesh Powar
 - ✓ Mumbai's Aditya Tare scored 118 not out to slam his maiden List 'A' hundred to seal an emphatic victory for the team
 - ✓ This was after Shaw scored an electrifying 73, which came off just 39 balls and included 10 fours and four sixes.
 - ✓ Shaw became the first batsman to score 800-plus runs in a single edition of the Vijay Hazare Trophy
 - ✓ The 21-year old Shaw scored 827 runs in eight games at an average of 165.40 with 4 centuries
 - ✓ UP's Madhav Kaushik set a record for the highest individual score by an Indian player in the final of a List 'A' tournament by scoring 158 off 156 balls
 - ✓ Recently, Mumbai were knocked out in the league stage of the Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy after losing four out of five matches
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- **On March 14, Chennai-based fencer and eight-time National fencing champion Bhavani Devi - became the first Indian fencer to qualify for the Olympics.**
 - ✓ The 27-year-old will be part of the women's sabre event at the Tokyo Games to be held from July 23 to August 8, 2021
 - ✓ At the fencing World Cup in Budapest, Bhavani — despite losing in the round of 64 to Hungary's Renata Katona 15-10 — made it to Tokyo thanks to the Adjusted Olympic Rankings.



- ✓ Bhavani, ranked 42 in the world, bagged one of the two spots available for the Asia & Oceania region in the event.
- ✓ Bhavani is supported by the GoSports Foundation under the Rahul Dravid Athlete Mentorship Programme
- ✓ Bhavani Devi has been trained by Sports Authority of India (SAI) coach Sagar Lagu in the SAI Training Center at Thalassery apart from her training in Italy.
- ✓ Among her achievements, Bhavani had won bronze medal at 2009 Commonwealth Championship held in Malaysia.
- ✓ In 2010, she won Cadet Asian Championship in Philippines and bagged bronze medal in the International Open of Thailand.
- ✓ In the year 2014, Bhavani won silver medal in the Asian Championship under-23 category in Philippines and become the first Indian to achieve the medal.
- ✓ Bhavani's career went on an upswing when she won gold at the Women's World Cup satellite tournament in Iceland in 2017.
- ✓ A year later, Bhavani became the first Indian to clinch gold at the Commonwealth Championships held in Canberra, Australia.
- ✓ She also won silver at the Tournoi Satellite World level event in Belgium in 2019
- ✓ Bhavani will return to India next week to be part of the senior Nationals to be held at Uttarakhand from March 19 to 21.

