



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 18, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **The National Green Tribunal, Southern Zone - has withheld the environmental clearance granted to Uppur thermal power plant in Ramanathapuram.**
- ✓ In 2012, Tangedco had obtained the Union environment ministry's approval to set up the 1,600MW supercritical plant and foreshore facilities.
- ✓ The project was opposed by the residents of the area, who feared that it would affect nearby lakes, agricultural land, and marine life
- ✓ Further, they contended that a proposed bridge in the plant might not allow country boats with high masts to go through.
- ✓ They also alleged that Tangedco's decision to drop using 100 % imported coal and to mix domestic coal (ratio of 70:30) could worsen air pollution.
- ✓ The residents then moved the NGT to halt the commencement of the project
- ✓ During the hearing, Tangedco and other government agencies involved said only 26% of the 1,3423 acres acquired was agricultural land and that there was no violation of environmental clearance or CRZ norms.
- ✓ Finally, the NGT has directed Tangedco to do a fresh coal analysis and study the bridge issue.
- ✓ The Union environment ministry has been told to issue a revised clearance within six months after an independent inquiry by its Expert Appraisal Committee.

NATIONAL

- **The Ministry of Road Transport – has issued a draft notification proposing an increase in charges of new registration, new fitness certificate and renewal of registration of old vehicles**
- ✓ The notification has been issued as part of the overall plan of the Government to roll out the vehicle scrappage policy
- ✓ The new fee may become applicable from October this year

- ✓ Accordingly, a fee of ₹5,000 is to be paid for renewing the registration of more than 15-year-old car, which is nearly eight times higher than the current charges.
- ✓ Similarly, the charges for registration renewal of old bike would be ₹1,000 compared to the current fee of ₹300.
- ✓ Obtaining a fitness renewal certificate for a 15 year plus bus or truck would be ₹12,500, which is nearly 21 times higher than what is paid now.

CURBING POLLUTION

Proposed fee for new registration & renewal of registration for personal vehicles

Vehicle types	Registration fee	Renewal fee
Motorcycle	Rs 300	Rs 1,000
3-wheeler & quadricycle	Rs 600	Rs 2,500
LMV (Car/Jeep)	Rs 600	Rs 5,000
Imported vehicle (car & above)	Rs 5,000	Rs 40,000

Proposed fee for new fitness certificate & renewal for commercial vehicles

Vehicle type	New fitness certificate	Renewal
Motorcycle	Rs 500	Rs 1,000
3-wheeler/ quadricycle	Rs 1,000	Rs 3,500
Taxi/ cab	Rs 1,000	Rs 7,000
Medium goods/passenger	Rs 1,300	Rs 10,000
Heavy goods & passenger	Rs 1,500	Rs 12,500

Note: Renewal fee applicable for 15 year plus vehicles

- ✓ According to the proposal, delay in renewing registration of private vehicles would attract ₹300 to ₹500 penalty per month
 - ✓ Also, any delay in renewal of fitness certificate for commercial vehicles would attract daily penalty of ₹50.
- **On March 17, the Ministry of Home Affairs – clarified that there is no provision of ‘detention centres’ under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) or the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC)**
- ✓ However, such ‘detention centres’ were set up by the state governments as per their local requirements to detain illegal immigrants/ foreigners who had completed their jail sentence and were awaiting deportation for want of travel papers.
 - ✓ The details of number of such detention centres set up by the state/ UTs or the persons detained in these centres were not maintained centrally.
 - ✓ This was informed by the Minister of State (Home), Nityanand Rai in reply to a question in the Lok Sabha

- ✓ The Supreme Court had in an order dated February 28, 2012 directed that foreign nationals who had completed their sentence shall be released from jail immediately and be kept in an appropriate place with restricted movement pending their deportation/repatriation.
- ✓ Further, the Ministry of Home Affairs had on March 7, 2012 issued instructions to the state governments and UT administrations to comply with the apex court's directions.
- **The 107th report on demands for grants 2021-22 of the Ministry of Law and Justice – was tabled before the Rajya Sabha on March 16**
- ✓ The report was prepared by a Parliamentary standing committee comprising Bhupendar Yadav, MP and senior advocate as its chairman and 27 others including Tamil Nadu MP and senior advocate P Wilson.
- ✓ The report has recommended to the government to consider setting up regional benches of the Supreme Court in southern, western and eastern parts of the country to assist the poor people living in far-flung and remote areas
- ✓ It has also proposed increasing the retirement age of high court judges besides several other recommendations.
- ✓ The committee has also taken into consideration of the fact that 211 vacancies of judges are to be filled in high courts across the country.
- ✓ In this connection, it has commented that these vacancies may erode the public trust on the system as pendency of cases also increases every year
- ✓ Strongly recommending that existing vacancies in high courts be filled expeditiously, the committee wanted the composition of higher judiciary reflecting the socio-economic diversity and inclusiveness.
- ✓ The committee also noted the need to revisit the retirement age of high court judges to compensate for the large number of vacancies
- ✓ In this regard, it had recommended increase of the retirement age of High Court judges from 62 to 65, on par with the Supreme Court judges.
- **On March 16, the Union Cabinet chaired by the PM Narendra Modi - has given approval on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in sports & youth affairs between India and Maldives.**
- ✓ The MoU on cooperation in sports and youth affairs was signed in November 2020.
- ✓ It was signed between Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of India and Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment of Maldives.
- ✓ The bilateral exchange programmes under the MoU will help both countries to expand the expertise and knowledge with respect to sports science, sports medicines, coaching techniques and participation in youth festivals & camps.
- ✓ India was the first country to recognise the independence of Maldives in 1966
- ✓ The countries are founding members of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and South Asian Economic Union.

- **The railways - has connected the two ends of the main arch of the world's highest bridge on the Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district**



- ✓ On March 14, the engineers have completed the arch bottom of the bridge, which is being called as one of the engineering marvels of Indian Railways
 - ✓ The iconic bridge is being built at a height of 359 metres above the bed of the river and will be atleast 30 metres higher than the iconic Eiffel Tower in Paris, which is having a height of 324 metres
 - ✓ The arch of the bridge across the river is being built by novel method of construction using the cable car
 - ✓ The Chenab bridge is an Indian railway steel and concrete arch bridge being built in between the Bakkal and Kauri across the river Chenab.
 - ✓ The base support of the bridge was completed in November 2017 after which the construction of main arch started
 - ✓ The arch upper of the Chenab bridge is in making and will be completed soon.
 - ✓ The total length is the bridge is 1315 metre.
- **On March 15, the Rajya Sabha - has approved the “National Institute of Food Technology Bill, 2019”**
 - ✓ The Bill declares the National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, Kundli in Haryana and **Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology, Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu** as the “National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management”.
 - ✓ The Bill was introduced in the Upper House by Agriculture & Food Processing Minister Narendra Singh Tomar
 - ✓ It also seeks to establish a board of Governors which will act as the principal executive body in the institute.
 - ✓ The Bill also provides for the various routine academic functions of the institutes.
 - ✓ During the introduction of the Bill, the Agriculture Minister said that “Reservation policy will also be applicable on these institutes”.
 - ✓ He also assured that people who are working in the food technology will be given representation in these institutes.

- ✓ The “National Institute of Food Technology Bill” was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in February 2019 by the Minister of Food Processing Industries, Harsimrat Kaur Badal.
- ✓ After that, it was referred to the Standing Committee, which suggested several amendments to the bill, which were later approved by the Cabinet
- **On March 15, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) - has established an oversight committee to prevent unregulated and unscientific mining in Meghalaya.**
 - ✓ The order was passed by a 3-member bench headed by NGT chairperson, Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel
 - ✓ The committee consisting of 12 members will be headed by Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forest and Climate Change
 - ✓ It will oversee the compliance of the 2019 judgment given by the Supreme Court on the issue
 - ✓ The Regional Officer of the MoEF of Shillong will act as the Member Secretary of the Committee.
 - ✓ He will coordinate with the working of Committee and will deal with day-to-day issues as per the decisions of Committee.
 - ✓ The committee will be meeting within one month to take stock of the situation and plan for the future actions.
 - ✓ Coal mining was banned by the NGT on April 17, 2014
 - ✓ The committee was established after the NGT observed that rat-hole mining takes place in Meghalaya despite the government ban on it.
 - ✓ The digging of narrow horizontal tunnels which is usually 3-4 feet in height through which only a single person can enter and extract coal is called as the “Rat Hole Mining”.
- **On March 15, the Marine Aids to Navigation Bill 2021 - was introduced in the Lok Sabha by Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Mansukh Mandaviya.**
 - ✓ The bill seeks to provide a fresh framework so as to establish and manage the vessel traffic services.
 - ✓ It incorporates a new term “marine aids to navigation” instead of the traditional term “lighthouse” incorporating the use of modern technologies in the navigation.
 - ✓ It also seeks to rename the “Director General of Lighthouse and Lightships” as the “Director General” so as to provide a framework to establish, operate and manage the vessel traffic services and other functions such as wreck flagging, training & certification.
 - ✓ It also empowers the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL) by providing additional power and functions.
 - ✓ The bill seeks to replace the nine-decade-old law governing the lighthouses.
 - ✓ It also aims to identify and develop the heritage lighthouses.

- ✓ The bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha with the aim of repealing the colonial Lighthouse Act, 1927.
- **The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) - introduced the “Government of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in the Lok Sabha on March 15, 2021.**
- ✓ The bill proposes that the “Government” in the National Capital Territory of Delhi means “Lieutenant Governor” (L-G) of Delhi.
- ✓ It provides for the discretionary powers to L-G of Delhi even in matters where the law-making power rests with the Legislative Assembly of Delhi.
- ✓ The proposed bill further seeks to ensure that the L-G is “necessarily granted an opportunity” in order to give opinion before any decision of the Council of Ministers or Delhi Cabinet is implemented.
- ✓ The Bill was introduced in order to amend sections 21, 24, 33 and 44 of Act of 1991.
- ✓ The existing laws provide that the Legislative Assembly of Delhi has the power to make laws in all matters excluding the police, public order and land.
- **On March 16, Rajya Sabha - has passed the “National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professional Bill, 2020” by voice vote**
- ✓ The Bill seeks to regulate & maintain the standards of education & services by allied & healthcare professionals.
- ✓ It will benefit around 8 to 9 lakh existing allied and healthcare professionals.
- ✓ With the implementation of the bill, these professionals will be ready to cater the global demand of 1.80 crore professional by 2030 as predicted by WHO global workforce report.
- ✓ Allied and healthcare professions include a huge range of workers to diagnose, evaluate and treat the acute and chronic diseases.
- ✓ The Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018, was introduced in Rajya Sabha in 2018.
- ✓ It was then referred to the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee, which further recommended several amendments.
- ✓ Then, the bill was withdrawn and a new Bill called the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2020 was introduced which incorporated the recommendations made by the panel.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **China - continued to remain on top of the list of countries from where India imported goods during January-December, 2020.**
- ✓ This was informed by Minister of State (commerce and industry) Hardeep Singh Puri in Lok Sabha on March 17 in reply to a question
- ✓ In his written reply, the minister said China, USA, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Iraq were the top five countries (in that order), from where India sourced its imports.

- ✓ As per the reply, the top five countries from where India imported goods during 2020 (January- December) are China with goods worth \$58.71 billion, United States of America (\$26.89 billion), United Arab Emirates (\$23.96 billion), Saudi Arab (\$17.73 billion) and Iraq (\$16.26 billion).
- ✓ The amount of total imports from the top five countries is worth \$143.55 billion, which amounts to 38.59% of the total imports which amounts to \$371.98 billion.
- ✓ The major items of import from China, according to the minister, were “products such as telecom instruments, computer hardware and peripherals, fertilizers, electronic components/instruments, project goods, organic chemicals, drug intermediates, consumer electronics, electrical machinery etc”.

PERSONALITIES

- **The Prime Minister of United Kingdom, Boris Johnson – will be visiting India in the month of April, 2021.**



- ✓ He was earlier supposed to visit India in January 2021 for the India’s Republic Day Celebrations as the chief guest but he cancelled his visit considering the increasing Covid-19 cases in United Kingdom.
- ✓ The British PM’s visit is aimed at strengthening India-UK ties and countering the influence of China in the Indo-Pacific region
- ✓ During his visit, a British aircraft will be deployed in the region
- ✓ The ties between the UK and China were strained due to issues involving Covid-19 pandemic and controversial Hong Kong national security law.
- ✓ Further, Britain has deployed a military aircraft called “Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier” in the South China Sea to counter the aggression of Chinese forces

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **On March 16, Finnish telecom equipment maker, Nokia - announced that it has partnered with the Microsoft, Amazon web services and Google to develop a new cloud-based 5G radio solution.**
- ✓ This solution will be developed with its radio access network (RNA) technology.
- ✓ RAN is the part of a mobile telecommunication system.
- ✓ The functionality of RAN is typically provided by a silicon chip which resides in both the core network and the user equipment.

- ✓ It resides between a device like computer, mobile phone or any remotely controlled machine, providing connection with the core network.
- ✓ Some of the examples of radio access network types include – GRAN, GERAN, UTRAN and E-UTRAN
- ✓ Using the concept of RAN, a single handset or phone can be connected to multiple radio access networks simultaneously as ‘dual-mode’ handsets
- ✓ Such devices also transfer the ongoing call across different radio access networks without any disruption to users.

DEFENCE

- **The Kalyani Rafael Advanced Systems (KRAS) - has released the first batch of Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) kits for Indian Army and Indian Air Force (IAF) from its facility located near the Hyderabad international airport**



- ✓ The KRAS is a joint venture between the Kalyani Group of India and Rafael Advanced Defence Systems of Israel
- ✓ The KRAS will deliver more than 1000 MRSAM missile kits to India in the coming years
- ✓ These missile sections will then be sent for future integration to the Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).
- ✓ KRAS also address the Maintenance and Repair Operations (MRO) of the major in-service Air Defence Missile System in the Indian Air Force.
- ✓ The MRSAM was developed by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) in association with the Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and handed over to India in August 2019.
- ✓ The 4.5m-long missile system comprises one command & control system, one tracking radar, mobile launcher systems and missiles.
- ✓ Rafael Advanced Defense Systems designs, develops, manufactures and supplies a wide range of high-tech defense systems for air, land, sea, and space applications for the Israel defense forces and the Israeli defense establishment

SPORTS

- **Tamil Nadu's C Kanimozhi – won the women's 100m hurdles at the 24th Federation Cup athletics meet in Patiala on March 17**



- ✓ The 23-year-old from Chennai clocked 13.63 seconds to win the race
- ✓ Telangana's A Nandini came second with a timing of 13.88 seconds while Tamil Nadu's Nithya Ramraj came third in 14.08 seconds.
- ✓ Kanimozhi finished sixth in the women's 100m final held on March 16, which was won by S Dhanalakshmi of Tamil Nadu
- ✓ The other gold for Tamil Nadu came from P Veeramani who won the men's 110m hurdles in 14.57 seconds.
- ✓ Meanwhile, Avinash Sable of Maharashtra created a new national record time of 8 minutes 20.20 seconds as he won the men's 3000-metre steeplechase event.
- ✓ Avinash was trained by the late coach Nikolai Snesev of Belarus, who passed away on March 5
- ✓ Snesev was the country's middle and long distance coach

