

## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JULY 13, 2023**

### **TAMIL NADU**

- **The forest department - has notified new rules for electric fences around farmlands in the vicinity of reserve forests in Tamil Nadu**
- ✓ As per the rules which come into effect immediately, those wanting to erect electric fences or those run on solar energy for the first time are mandated to seek prior permission
- ✓ However, those who have already erected fences within 5km of a notified reserve forest need to mandatorily register with the district forest officer concerned.
- ✓ To ensure compliance of the rules, a joint team of Tangedco officials and forest department staff will take up field-level inspections once a fortnight and record the details.
- ✓ Anyone receiving the permission from the department should erect the fence within 90 days and then apply for registration along with an undertaking.
- ✓ Farmland owners who have already erected electric/solar fences shall apply within 60 days to the district forest officer for obtaining the registration certificate.
- ✓ The quality of the fences will be reviewed once in three years by a joint team of forest department staff and Tangedco officials for providing a fitness certificate.
- ✓ It has to be recalled that 89 elephants have been electrocuted in the last 10 years.

### **NATIONAL**

- **On July 12, the government - cleared amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957**
- ✓ This will allow the commercial mining of six critical minerals — lithium, beryllium, niobium, tantalum, titanium and zirconium — and deep-seated minerals like gold, silver and copper by private companies
- ✓ Currently, commercial mining of these critical minerals by private companies is prohibited.
- ✓ Only government agencies were allowed in exploration and mining operations.

- ✓ These minerals are key components of all modern technologies and utilised in the making of mobile phones, electric vehicles, solar panels, semiconductors, and wind turbines, among others.
- ✓ India is totally dependent on imports for meeting demand for critical minerals, especially lithium, cobalt, nickel etc., whereas China accounts for 70% supplies globally.
- ✓ In February this year, the Geological Survey of India discovered a 5.9-million-tonne reserve of lithium in Jammu & Kashmir's Reasi district.
- ✓ The amendments, once cleared by Parliament, will also allow the government to grant a single exploration licence to companies through auction.
- ✓ The MMDR Act regulates the mining sector in India and mandates the requirement for granting leases for mining operations.
- ✓ This is the fifth time that the MMDR Act, 1957, will be amended.
- ✓ Further, the Union Cabinet also cleared amendments to the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002, which seek to allow commercial mining of mineral resources in offshore areas.
- ✓ Currently, the private sector is not allowed to mine mineral resources in offshore areas, which include territorial waters, continental shelves, exclusive economic zones, and other maritime zones of India under the Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and Other Maritime Zones Act.
- ✓ Both the amendment bills will be introduced in Parliament during the monsoon session, which starts 20 July.

## INTERNATIONAL

- **The International Monetary Fund - approved a much-awaited \$3 billion bailout for Pakistan on July 12, a move that's likely to save the nation from defaulting on its debt repayments.**
- ✓ Out of the sanctioned loan, \$1.2 billion will be immediately disbursed to help the cash-strapped nation.
- ✓ The IMF said its executive board approved an agreement to release the funds over nine months to support Pakistan's economic stabilisation program.
- ✓ Earlier this week, Pakistan also received \$2 billion in funding from Saudi Arabia and another \$1 billion from the United Arab Emirates.
- ✓ The bailout had been on hold since December when the IMF refused to release a critical \$1.1 billion part of the loan because of the country's lack of compliance with a 2019 agreement signed between the IMF and former Prime Minister Imran Khan.
- ✓ According to analysts, Pakistan needs at least \$20 billion in the next two years to pay back foreign loans with interest.
- ✓ China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have provided financial assistance in the past five months to avoid a default on debt payments.

- ✓ Last month, the State Bank of Pakistan raised its main interest rate to a record high of 22% as it struggled to curb rising prices.
- ✓ Pakistan has taken more than 20 loans from the international lender since 1958.

## OBITUARY

- **Czech-born renowned novelist Milan Kundera - has died at the age of 94**



- ✓ Kundera's rise to international fame came with the publication of his masterpiece "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" in 1984
- ✓ The novel was later adapted into a successful movie, with Juliette Binoche and Daniel Day Lewis in the leading roles.
- ✓ His books had been banned in Czechoslovakia after criticising the Soviet invasion of 1968, and after the Soviet-backed Communist government deprived him of citizenship in 1978, he remained the country's most famous exiled writer, living in France.
- ✓ In 2019, his Czech citizenship was restored, a significant symbolic gesture that marked his return to his homeland.
- ✓ In 1967, Kundera achieved a significant breakthrough with the publication of his first novel "The Joke."
- ✓ In 2014, after a decade-long break, Kundera published a new novel, "The Festival of Insignificance."
- ✓ Kundera won several literary prizes, including the Prix Europa-Litterature and the Jerusalem Prize for the ensemble of his work.
- ✓ In 1973, his "Life Is Elsewhere" won France's coveted Prix Medicis for best foreign novel, and "The Farewell Party", set in an east European spa, won Italy's Premio Mondello in 1978.
- ✓ He was nominated several times for the Nobel Prize in literature but never won

## SPORTS

- **Indian long-distance runner Abhishek Pal - claimed a bronze medal in the men's 10,000 meter race at the Asian Athletics Championships 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand, on July 12**



- ✓ His impressive performance with a time of 29:33.26 not only secured the bronze medal but also opened India's medal account at the Bangkok meet.
  - ✓ This was his first international medal for India in a major competition.
  - ✓ Abhishek Pal's personal best in the 10,000 meter race stands at 28:54.98, achieved in Gujarat last year.
  - ✓ However, India's national record in the men's 10,000m event remains at 28:02.89, set by Beijing 2008 Olympian Surendra Singh 15 years ago.
  - ✓ In the women's javelin throw, Indian athlete Annu Rani narrowly missed out on a bronze medal, finishing fourth with a best attempt of 59.10m
- **The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) - has barred India from participating in the U-16 Women's Asian Championship**
- ✓ FIBA took the decision citing "third-party interference", after turmoil in the Basketball Federation of India (BFI) before the elections led to a legal battle, where the court appointed an administrator.
  - ✓ In February, when BFI elections were due to elect the new body for a four-year term, members of some state associations challenged the election process.
  - ✓ In the same month, sitting BFI head K Govindaraj was nominated as new president of FIBA-Asia.
    - ✓ This is the first time ever an Indian has been nominated as the president of FIBA-Asia
  - ✓ Meanwhile, the Delhi High Court in May appointed a former judge as administrator to run the affairs of Indian basketball which FIBA looks at as "third party interference".
  - ✓ Ironically, the biennial tournament was first staged in 2009 in India.
- **Tamil Nadu sports minister Udhayanidhi Stalin - announced the launch of HCL Cyclothon in Chennai on July 12.**



- ✓ The event, which will cater to professional cyclists, amateurs and hobbyists, will be held on October 8 along the ECR Road.
- ✓ The first edition of the event was held in Noida earlier this year, and Chennai will host the second one.
- ✓ The initiative, being held under the aegis of the Cycling Federation of India, features a prize purse of Rs 30 lakh — Rs15 lakh for professionals and Rs15 lakh for amateurs.
- ✓ The professional category will have a 55km road race, while the amateurs can compete in a 55km road race or a 24km mountain bike race.
- ✓ The third category, called the 'Green Race', is open for all citizens aged above 18 years.

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