

July 18th and 19th news:

International:

Israel places new restrictions on cargo crossing into Gaza

Israel placed new restrictions on the only cargo crossing with the Gaza Strip in response to continued Hamas hostilities, even after it agreed to a cease-fire. Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said, Israel will cease transferring gas and fuel through the *Kerem Shalom* crossing until Sunday but will allow food and essential medication to cross.

The commercial cargo was suspended last week. Lieberman also said Israel was tightening its naval blockade to limit Palestinians from sailing beyond three nautical miles off Gaza's coast. Israel previously allowed sailing up to six nautical miles.

The tightening of the blockade comes after the heaviest exchange of fire between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza since a 2014 war

Israel says it has no interest in engaging in another war with Hamas, but says it will no longer tolerate the Gaza militant campaign of flying incendiary kites and balloons across the border that have ignited fires damaging Israeli farms and nature reserves.

National:

SC directs Centre, States to curb mob lynching incidents

The Supreme Court asked Parliament to consider enacting a new law to effectively deal with incidents of mob lynching. A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra said, horrendous acts of mobocracy cannot be allowed to become a new norm and has to be curbed with an iron hand.

The apex court also passed a slew of directions to provide preventive, remedial and punitive measures to deal with offences, such as mob violence and cow vigilantism.

The bench said it is the duty of state governments to ensure law and order in society and States cannot turn a deaf ear to such incidents.

The top court passed the order on a plea seeking formulation of guidelines to curb such violent incidents in the country.

The court posted the matter for further hearing on the 28th of August and asked the Centre and state governments to take steps to deal with such offences in pursuance of its directions.

India accounts for one fifth of flood-related deaths in the world

A World Bank study suggests that India accounts for close to one-fifth of the total flood-related deaths across the world. Approximately 50 million people in the South Asian cities like Kolkata, Mumbai, Dhaka and Karachi may face severe flood-related damage in the coming century.

Data from the Central Water Commission shows that 1,07,487 people died due to heavy rains and floods across India between 1953 and 2017. Damage to infrastructure and crops was pegged at Rs 3,65,860 crore.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in India said that close to 40 million hectares (mha) out of 329 mha of India is prone to floods.

Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh would be the worst affected states by 2050, while the most affected districts will belong to Vidarbha in Maharashtra.

The report suggests that climate change would have a greater impact on floods in the country. "Temperatures have been rising across the [South Asia] region, and are projected to continue increasing for the next several decades under all plausible climate scenarios," the World Bank study said.

Flood-prone states in India include Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab

Govt sets up committee to find ways to strengthen NCC, NSS

In a bid to address issues such as "manpower deficiency" in the NCC and NSS, the government has decided to form a committee under former education secretary Anil Swarup, seeking suggestions to revamp and strengthen the two youth institutions.

The Committee will deal with issues like expansion, strengthening training infrastructure, rationalising resources, reducing manpower deficiency affecting NCC and NSS (National Service Scheme)

The Committee will also submit recommendations for building "synergy" between these two institutions. At present, there are 13.5 lakh cadets in NCC in the age group of 12 to 26 years with pan India presence in about 703 out of 716 districts

There is also an existing shortage in the NCC manpower across the categories ranging from 5 per cent to 36 per cent. The NCC has an annual budget of about Rs 2200 crore with the central government's share being about Rs 1600 crore, according to the ministry data.

Economy:

Trade conflicts increasing threat: IMF

The International Monetary Fund has said, trade conflicts between the United States and its trading partners are an increasing threat to global economic growth. In its latest world outlook, the IMF said growth is becoming more uneven and risks are mounting.

It said the rate of expansion appears to have peaked in some major economies. The IMF also warned that an escalation of trade tensions could undermine the stability of financial markets. It calls on emerging economies to strengthen financial resilience to prepare for more volatility in markets.

Government raises Fair & Remunerative price of Sugarcane

In a major effort to boost the income of farmers Government decides to raise the fair and remunerative price of sugarcane to ₹ 275 per quintal.

The government has increased the fair and remunerative price (FRP) of sugarcane by ₹ 20 per quintal to ₹ 275 for the forthcoming 2018-19 sugar season, beginning October.

The decision on FRP was taken at Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs meeting. The FRP is the minimum guaranteed price that farmers can get for their sugarcane crop. The states, however, have the freedom to fix a higher price.

Sugarcane price is normally linked to a basic recovery of 9.5 per cent. For every 0.1 per cent point increase in recovery, farmers get an additional Rs 2.68 per quintal. Over the years, recovery levels have improved in most sugar-producing states, helping farmers to earn more from their crop.

Extension of Scholarships to Minorities.

Cabinet has approved extension of pre-matric, post-matric and merit scholarships for Minority students by 3 years. Nearly 1 Crore 66 lakh students have benefited from these scholarships.

Special Remission to Prisoners On 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

Cabinet has also approved Special Remission to Prisoners on the occasion of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. As part of this decision prisoners who fall in 5 categories are will be granted clemency. This includes those not accused of heinous crimes or sedition and have completed 50% of their sentence

Special Irrigation Package to Maharashtra

In another decision, Vidarbha, Marathwada and other chronically drought prone areas of Maharashtra will get irrigation projects. A Special Package for utilization of irrigation potential of about 3.77 lakh hectare has been approved.

Sports:

USA win first Athletics World Cup

The USA won the first Athletics World Cup as Great Britain came third at the London Stadium. America took the crown by 57 points ahead of Poland and Great Britain, who finished on 155 points – seven behind second spot-

GB would have claimed second had they not been disqualified from the men's 4x400m – the final event – and finished ahead of Poland after a last-minute injury left them with just three runners.

The USA were the overnight leaders and comfortably took the crown, with athletes winning points for their country in each event as they competed for a £1.5million prize pot