

July 31st news:

National:

Complete draft of NRC published in Assam

The complete draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), bearing the names of over two crore citizens of Assam has been published. The NRC draft figures the names of 2 crore 89 lakh 83 thousand 677 citizens of the state. A total of 3 crore 29 lakh 91 thousand and 384 persons had applied for inclusion of their names in the NRC updation process. Names of 40 lakh 7 thousand and 707 people have not been included in the draft. Meanwhile, Central Government categorically denied any role in finalising the draft list of NRC saying, it is being done under the direction and supervision of the Supreme Court.

Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2018 Passed in Lok Sabha

The Lok Sabha has passed the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2018 which replaces the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance promulgated on April 21 this year.

The bill stipulates stringent punishment for perpetrators of rape, particularly of girls below 12 years and death sentence has been provided for rapists of girls under 12 years.

According to the bill, in case of rape of a girl under 16 years, the minimum punishment has been increased from 10 to 20 years, extendable to life imprisonment.

The punishment for gangrape of a girl below 16 years will invariably be imprisonment for the rest of life of the convict. The measure also provides for speedy investigations and trial. The time limit for investigation of all cases of rape has been prescribed, which has to be mandatory completed within two months.

The deadline for the completion of trial in all rape cases will be two months. A six-month time limit for the disposal of appeals in rape cases has also been prescribed, the bill says, adding that there will also be no provision for anticipatory bail for a person accused of rape or gangrape of a girl under 16 years.

It has also been prescribed that a court has to give notice of 15 days to a public prosecutor and the representative of the victim before deciding on bail applications in case of rape of a girl under 16 years of age.

Across India, high levels of toxins in groundwater

Discharge of toxic elements from industries and landfills and diffused sources of pollution like fertilizers and pesticides over the years has resulted in high levels of contamination of groundwater with the level of nitrates exceeding permissible limits in more than 50% districts of India.

Apart from nitrate contamination, the presence of fluoride, iron, arsenic and heavy metals has also touched worrying levels, information provided by the government to Parliament reveals.

According to WHO, nitrate in drinking water can cause methemoglobinemia or the decreased ability of blood to carry vital oxygen around the body.

These alarming details, including numbers of affected districts, show that seven of Delhi's 11 districts have reported excess fluoride, eight excess nitrates, two excess arsenic and three excess lead in groundwater.

Overall, the groundwater is contaminated with the presence of excess nitrate in as many as 386 districts followed by fluoride in 335 districts, iron in 301 districts, salinity in 212, arsenic in 153 districts, lead in 93 districts, chromium in 30 districts and cadmium in 24 districts of different states across India. Many districts have more than one, two or three toxic elements in their groundwater.

Drinking of arsenic-rich water over a long period results in various health effects including skin cancer, cancers of the bladder, kidney and lung, and diseases of the blood vessels of the legs and feet, and possibly also diabetes, high blood pressure and reproductive disorders, according to WHO.

Similarly, presence of other chemicals beyond their permissible limits are known to cause severe health hazards in humans and animals.

The chemical quality of groundwater (GW) is monitored once a year by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) through a network of about 15,000 observation wells located all over the country. The monitoring details show that states like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and West Bengal reported presence of all types of toxic elements, including heavy metals, in the groundwater of their one or the other district

Economy:

India imposes safeguard duty on solar cells imports from China, Malaysia

India imposed safeguard duty on solar cells imports from China and Malaysia for two years to protect domestic players from steep rise in the inbound shipments of the product.

This comes following recommendations by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), under the commerce ministry. As per the notification of the finance ministry, 25 per cent safeguard duty have been imposed for one year starting from 31st July. The duty will be 20 per cent during July 30, 2019 to January 29, 2020 and 15 per cent during January 30, 2020 to July 29, 2020.

DGTR in its investigations has concluded that the increased imports of solar cells in India have caused "serious injury" and "threaten to cause serious injury" to the domestic producers.

India is targeting to 100 gigawatt (GW) solar capacity by 2022. Solar cells, electrical devices that convert sunlight directly into electricity, are imported primarily from China, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan. Imports of the cells from these countries account for more than 90 per cent of the total inbound shipments in the country.

Science and Technology:

Govt launches free software for editing text on scanned images

The IT ministry on 30th July launched a desktop software e-Aksharayan to enable editing of text printed on scanned documents and it can be downloaded for free from its website.

"e-Aksharayan is a desktop software for converting scanned printed Indian language documents into a fully editable text format in Unicode encoding. The software supports editing in seven Indian languages - Hindi, Bangla, Malayalam, Gurmukhi, Tamil, Kannada & Assamese.

Sports:

Bajrang Punia wins 2nd consecutive international gold at Yasar Dogu International

In Wrestling, Bajrang Punia has won his second consecutive international gold while Sandeep Tomar had to be content with a silver medal at the Yasar Dogu International in Istanbul, Turkey. Indian wrestlers returned with 10 medals, including seven by women, from the ranking event.

Bajrang had won a gold at the Tbilisi Grand Prix in Georgia early this month. Vicky won a bronze in the 57 Kg. In the women's competition, Pinki was the lone gold medallist in the 55kg category over Ukraine's Olga Shnaider in the final.

In the women's 53kg and 57kg categories, Seema and CWG silver medalist Pooja Dhanda won silver. In the 62kg, Sarita grabbed a bronze. In the three-player 72 kilogram category, Rajni settled for silver after finishing second. Sangeeta Phogat won bronze medals in their categories.