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INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Bengaluru, Karnataka

- Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) unveiled a fleet of 175 electric taxis on World Environment Day, promoting sustainable travel. These eco-friendly taxis, bookable at terminal stands or via the BLR Pulse app, come in teal and pink (operated by women for women passengers). BIAL also offers complimentary 'Pink Cards' for enhanced passenger safety.
- The city has seen a surge in complaints about fallen trees and branches due to recent moderate rains, with 21 trees and 59 branches reported fallen across all BBMP zones.
- The Department of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized over Rs 6.29 crore worth of gold at Bengaluru airport. Acting on a tip, DRI officers inspected a Thai Airways flight from Bangkok and found 6.834 kg of gold hidden in abandoned handbags. Two passengers were apprehended and confessed to hiding the gold, valued at Rs 4.77 crore by a government-certified assayer.

Gujarat

- Police recovered thirteen unclaimed packets of cocaine worth Rs 130 crore from a creek near Gandhidham in Gujarat's Kutch district early Wednesday (05 June). Preliminary investigations indicate that smugglers hid the drugs to evade capture, said Kutch-East division Superintendent of Police Sagar Bagmar. This marks the second major drug seizure in the same area.
- In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP won 25 out of 26 seats in Gujarat, maintaining their stronghold. Congress managed to secure one seat in Banaskantha with Geniben Thakor's victory, breaking the BJP's complete sweep from the previous elections

Hyderabad, Telangana

- The city's IT corridor has been identified as a significant location for road accidents, according to data gathered from Hyderabad, Cyberabad, and Rachakonda's police commissionerates. In 2023, the western zone recorded nearly 800 accidents, causing 123 deaths and injuring 685 people. The accident-prone areas in this zone include Narsingi, Madhapur, Gachibowli, and Raidurgam.
- After the election fervor subsided, discontent has risen within the liquor industry in Telangana due to significant outstanding dues. The Telangana government owes over 4,000 crore to the liquor industry, with 1,200 crore pending for the beer sector alone since October 2023. This issue has severely impacted cash flows and working capital, affecting the financial stability of liquor companies as they await payment from the government.

Mumbai, Maharashtra

- Several police officials were severely injured after locals pelted stones at them during an anti-encroachment drive in Mumbai's Powai region. The incident, involving Mumbai Police and Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) officials, led to an increased police presence near Jai Bhim Nagar and the immediate halt of the drive.
- Air Canada announced new non-stop flights from Toronto to Mumbai and a seasonal flight from Calgary to Delhi via London Heathrow for its winter schedule. This expansion will bring the airline's total flights between Canada and India to 25 per week, offering approximately 7,400 seats weekly.

Pune, Maharashtra

- Fearing shutdowns, several pubs in Pune have barred entry to anyone under 25. Other establishments have stopped serving liquor and are open only for food. This follows strict checks by the excise department after the Pune Porsche accident that killed two IT professionals. Restaurant owners are concerned about the hassle of ensuring underage customers don't consume hard liquor.
- Residents of Dhanori, Bavdhan, Koregaon Park, Kharadi, and nearby areas faced severe waterlogging during heavy rains, leading to chaos and frustration. Poorly-planned concrete roads were blamed for ineffective rainwater drainage, causing extensive damage to vehicles, homes, and shops. Despite calls for assistance, the PMC's disaster management response was criticized as inadequate, reflecting ongoing civic neglect in the face of recurring monsoon challenges.

Upcoming News/Events

Bengaluru, Karnataka

- The BBMP will resume its property tax collection drive on June 10 after pausing for the Lok Sabha elections. A one-time settlement scheme, offering concessions on penalties and interest, is available until July 31 to encourage taxpayers to clear their dues.
- Air India will begin direct flights between Bengaluru and London Gatwick (LGW) on August 18, with five weekly flights, catering to both business and leisure travelers. Bengaluru is now the first Indian city to connect with airports in two major London cities, as announced by Bangalore International Airport Ltd.
- KPTCL's maintenance work will cause strategic power cuts in parts of Bengaluru from June 8 to June 12, as announced by Bescom. Residents are advised to prepare for the week-long disruption.

Click the link for more information- <https://www.timesnownews.com/bengaluru/bangalore-power-supply-cut-alert-planned-outages-till-june-12-check-dates-time-and-areas-article-110790057>

Gujarat

- Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) will establish a drone robotics center in association with a private firm, stemming from the development of rooster drone technology initiated in April 2022. A refined prototype is set to be handed over to the Indian Army in November 2023 after undergoing significant improvements.

Hyderabad, Telangana

- Heavy rains lashed parts of Telangana on Friday 07 June, with Jangaon recording 70 mm and Kadthal in Rangareddy 46 mm. Mahbubnagar, Wanaparthy, Narayanpet, and Nalgonda saw over 10 mm. Hyderabad experienced moderate rainfall in Patancheruvu, Shaikpet, and Khairatabad, with light showers elsewhere. A yellow alert is in effect for the next four days due to monsoon activity, with the IMD forecasting widespread heavy rains across Telangana.

Mumbai, Maharashtra

- With monsoon season approaching, the BMC reports that only 25% of Mumbai's road concretisation project has been completed, focusing on the eastern and western suburbs. The initiative, launched in August 2022 to make the city pothole-free, has yet to start in the island city.
- The 'city of dreams' is eagerly awaiting rainfall after a relatively dry pre-monsoon season. Following brief showers on May 13 and May 16, Mumbaikars can expect more pre-monsoon rain in the coming week before the southwest monsoon arrives. According to the IMD, thundershowers are predicted from June 7, though the crucial southwesterly stream for heavy rainfall is currently absent off the Konkan coast.

Pune, Maharashtra

- Vedangi Kulkarni, a 25-year-old cyclist from Pune, is set to embark on a 29,251-km solo unsupported bicycle ride, starting in mid-July from Finland and ending there as well. She aims to become the fastest woman to cycle around the globe, attempting to complete the journey in under 124 days. In 2018, she cycled around the world in 159 days, becoming the fastest Asian to do so. Her route will take her through Finland, Estonia, Russia, Mongolia, Australia, New Zealand, the US, Canada, Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden.
- Pune IT City Metro Rail Ltd (PITCMRL) has unveiled the inaugural train set for Metro Line 3, marking a significant advancement in urban transportation. Produced by Alstom at its Sri City facility in Andhra Pradesh under the 'Make in India' initiative, this train promises to redefine urban commuting in Pune.

GLOBAL UPDATE**Highlights of this week****China**

- China has vehemently opposed U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and demanded their immediate withdrawal, as stated by its defense ministry on Friday. The ministry lodged a complaint with the United States and reaffirmed its commitment to strengthen military capabilities to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Japan lodged a protest against Beijing on Friday after four armed Chinese coastguard vessels entered waters Tokyo considers its territory. This incident marks the first time four Chinese vessels, visibly armed with cannons, intruded into Japan's territorial waters in the East China Sea around the disputed Senkaku islands (Diaoyu in Beijing's terminology). Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi labeled the intrusion a breach of international law, while China's coastguard defended its actions as routine patrols to safeguard sovereignty, counter Japan's actions, and maintain peace and stability.

Europe

- The Russian Defence Ministry accused Ukrainian forces of firing five U.S.-supplied ATACMS missiles at Luhansk, resulting in 20 injuries, including children. According to the region's governor, three deaths and 35 casualties, including three children, were reported. The Defence Ministry claimed to have intercepted four missiles but said one caused deliberate damage to residential buildings, with 33 structures damaged, including schools and kindergartens, prompting ongoing rescue efforts.

Middle East

- As efforts to renew the ceasefire in the ongoing eight-month-old Gaza war faltered, Israel launched new airstrikes in central and southern areas on Friday 7 June. The attacks resulted in the deaths of at least 28 Palestinians, while tank forces moved towards the western outskirts of Rafah.
- Hamas has reportedly experienced significant losses, with about half of its forces eliminated during the eight-month war, according to U.S. and Israeli officials. The group's fighter numbers have decreased to between 9,000 and 12,000, down from previous estimates of 20,000-25,000. Instead of engaging in sustained skirmishes, Hamas is using hit-and-run tactics and improvised bombs to target Israeli forces in Gaza.

Pakistan

- Chinese state media reported that China's President Xi Jinping held a meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Beijing on Friday 7 June. This meeting comes just before Pakistan's annual budget presentation and its application for a new International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan. Pakistan's strategic location on the Arabian Sea holds significance for China as it offers an overland route to the Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal, allowing Chinese ships to bypass the potential bottleneck of the Malacca Strait.
- In a thrilling match in Dallas on Thursday, the United States pulled off a major upset by defeating Pakistan in a Super Over, securing their second win in the Twenty20 World Cup. Despite Pakistan's recovery to score 159-7, the U.S. managed to equalize and win in the Super Over, making 18-1 and then restricting Pakistan to 13-1. U.S. captain Monank Patel hailed the victory as a significant achievement, especially as it was their first encounter against Pakistan.

United Kingdom

- Britain's construction sector experienced a notable increase in activity in May, marking the first rise in house-building since Liz Truss' mini-budget. The S&P Global UK Construction Purchasing Managers' Index rose to 54.7, its highest level in two years, signaling renewed growth and optimism. Despite a slight drop in the all-sector PMI due to slower services sector growth, firms are gearing up for further expansion with increased employment and purchasing activity.
- In a recent setback to his election campaign, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak apologized on Friday 7 June for leaving D-Day commemorations early to conduct an interview where he criticized the main opposition party. Sunak's decision was met with disappointment within his Conservative Party, particularly as opinion polls indicate a potential significant defeat in the upcoming national election on July 4.

United States

- On Thursday 6 June, the United States imposed sanctions on the Palestinian militant group Lions' Den, marking the first Palestinian target under an executive order by President Joe Biden in February aimed at addressing West Bank violence. The State Department cited attacks by Lions' Den on both Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank since 2022, emphasizing a condemnation of all acts of violence in the region and a commitment to holding accountable those who threaten peace and stability.
- On Friday 7 June, the families of the Sandy Hook massacre victims achieved a victory in Alex Jones' bankruptcy case. They accepted his proposal to sell his assets, including InfoWars, to partially fulfill legal judgments for spreading falsehoods about the 2012 U.S. school shooting.

Upcoming News/Events**China**

- Vietnam has significantly increased its dredging and landfill activities in the South China Sea, generating nearly as much new land in just a few months as it did in the previous two years combined, according to U.S. researchers on Friday. Since November 2023, Vietnam has created 692 new acres (280 hectares) of land, compared to 404 acres in the first 11 months of 2023 and 347 acres in 2022, as reported by the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Asia Maritime.

Europe

- Germany is considering purchasing an additional eight F-35 fighter jets from Lockheed Martin, in addition to the 35 it has already ordered, according to a military source on Friday. The potential purchase is being evaluated for costs, with the F-35s regarded as highly advanced stealth aircraft. The decision to order 35 F-35s was made in 2022 for about 10 billion euros, aiming to replace the aging Tornado jets currently carrying U.S. nuclear bombs in Germany, with plans to phase out the Tornado between 2025 and 2030.
- Russia has given the go-ahead for a major project to construct a high-speed railway connecting Moscow and St. Petersburg, funded by billions from the state budget. The 679 km railway, allowing trains to run at 360 km/hour, aims to slash travel time between the cities to 2-2.5 hours. The project, costing over \$25.97 billion, will be carried out by Russian company VSM Two Capitals with state and private funding. The Russian government plans to provide loans and subsidies to support the initiative.

Middle East

- Israel's military has been included in a global list of offenders for violating children's rights in 2023, alongside Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, according to Israel's U.N. envoy Gilad Erdan. This decision, announced by U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, covers six violations including killing, sexual violence, and attacks on schools and hospitals. Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz expressed concern about the decision's impact on Israel's relations with the U.N., noting the ongoing contentious relationship, especially during the Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu plans to address the U.S. Congress on July 24 in Washington, where he aims to discuss the truth about the war with Hamas in Gaza, according to Republican leaders. Netanyahu will speak before a joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate, as announced by House Speaker Mike Johnson and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Pakistan

- Pakistan expressed its desire for cooperative relations with all neighbors, including India, ahead of Narendra Modi's third term as India's Prime Minister. The Foreign Office spokesperson emphasized Pakistan's advocacy for resolving disputes through talks, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan had downgraded ties with India after the suspension of Article 370 in 2019, while India maintains its stance for normal relations but stresses the need for a terrorism-free environment for engagement.

United Kingdom

- British Conservative Party member Penny Mordaunt announced during a BBC television debate on Friday 7 June that the party will unveil its election manifesto next week.
- British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, in anticipation of next month's election, has pledged to reduce immigration levels if his Conservative Party secures victory, emphasizing it as a key battleground issue. Sunak aims to differentiate his party from the opposition Labour Party, which currently leads in opinion polls by over 20 points. Immigration remains a significant political concern in Britain, with voters citing pressure on housing, education, healthcare services, and social cohesion due to large influxes as key issues.
- Britain's King Charles will welcome Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako for a state visit in June, highlighting the monarch's recovery from cancer. The visit will include a state banquet at Buckingham Palace, attended by Prince William and other royals, marking Charles' first state event since returning to work. Notably, Kate, Duchess of Cambridge, was not mentioned in the plans due to her ongoing cancer treatment.

United States

- French President Emmanuel Macron is set to host U.S. President Joe Biden for a state visit, focusing on discussions about trade, Israel, and Ukraine. The visit will include ceremonial events like a welcoming ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe and a parade down the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, followed by policy talks and dinner. The discussions are expected to cover a range of topics including Russia's conflict with Ukraine, Israel's situation with Hamas in Gaza, Indo-Pacific cooperation, and global policy issues such as climate change and supply chains.

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