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## INDIA UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Bengaluru, Karnataka

- In a move welcomed by citizen groups and resident welfare associations, the Karnataka government will keep all 1,200 parks in Bengaluru open from 5am to 10pm starting Wednesday 12 June, announced Deputy CM DK Shivakumar. However, Cubbon Park and Lalbagh, managed by the horticulture department, will maintain their hours from 5am to 8pm.
- By May, Bengaluru recorded over 2,000 road accidents, with 368 fatal incidents resulting in 376 deaths and 1,672 non-fatal incidents causing 1,736 injuries, according to Bengaluru Traffic Police data. The 2024 Violations Data reveals 39,10,980 traffic violations, highlighting major concerns such as reckless driving and over-speeding. Drink and drive cases totaled 5,433, while other significant violations included driving without a license (2,710 cases), defective registration plates (87,277 cases), and jumping traffic signals (2,46,284 cases).

#### Gujarat

- Police reports from Gujarat indicate a recent surge in drug discoveries along the shores of Kutch and Devbhumi Dwarka districts, with over 100 packets of substances such as charas and methamphetamine found washed up on the coastline. Superintendent of Police (SP) Nitesh Pandey confirmed the discovery of charas packets near Gorinja village in Devbhumi Dwarka district on June 15th.
- Gujarat's Ahmedabad, Surat, and Rajkot districts have achieved noteworthy financial recognition, securing positions among the top 10 districts in India with the highest number of active investors. Data from the National Stock Exchange (NSE) reveals that Rajkot experienced the most significant growth, reaching a 17% increase in active investors among the top 10 districts nationwide in April this year.

#### Hyderabad, Telangana

- SpiceJet has halted its direct flights from Hyderabad to Ayodhya due to low demand, ending the service just two months after its launch. The airline cited commercial viability and passenger demand as the reasons behind this decision.
- With the monsoon approaching, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and allied civic departments have deployed 534 monsoon emergency teams, including mobile, static, CRMP road, Disaster Response Force (DRF), police, electricity, and HMWSSB teams, to address waterlogging issues in low-lying areas. GHMC aims to gradually reduce water stagnation points and eliminate 32 waterlogging points by the next monsoon, urging the public to avoid littering in drains, asking IT companies to adjust schedules to ease traffic, and advising against opening manhole lids to prevent accidents.

#### Mumbai, Maharashtra

- South Mumbai grapples with prolonged power cuts, sparking frustration and inconvenience among residents, with legislators urging swift action from authorities to address the systemic issues causing the outages. Officials promise a thorough investigation and efforts to rectify the situation to ensure uninterrupted power supply and mitigate the impact on essential services and vulnerable populations.
- Mumbai's newly opened north-bound tunnel of the coastal road saw 20,450 cars on its inaugural day and 17,910 the next day. The tunnel currently operates manually from Marine Drive to Breach Candy, with limited hours and interchanger arms.

#### Pune, Maharashtra

- The heavy downpour in Pune has led to significant flooding on key roads, disrupting traffic and inconveniencing commuters. In response, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has deployed quick response teams across its 15 ward offices to address rain-related issues, particularly waterlogging caused by blocked stormwater drains. PMC Commissioner Rajendra Bhosale stated that teams are actively working to clear identified trouble spots.
- Following a fatal fire at a candle factory in Talwade, which killed 14 women, the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) will disconnect water and electricity to 29 shops that ignored fire safety notices. Inspections revealed widespread non-compliance with fire safety regulations, prompting strict action to prevent further tragedies.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Bengaluru, Karnataka

- The BMRCL plans to partially open the Yellow Line corridor's double-deck flyover between Ragi Gudda and Central Silk Board by the end of this month, with the lower deck for vehicles and the upper level for Metro trains. The ramps from Ragi Gudda to HSR Layout and Electronics City will open in June, while construction for the ramps from HSR Layout to BTM Layout will take another year.
- Following the BJP's win of 17 out of 28 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka, leaving Congress with 9, the Karnataka government is now focusing on the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) civic polls. Reports suggest the state plans to split BBMP into five city corporations through legislation in the upcoming joint session in July. A key meeting regarding this was held at CM Siddaramaiah's home office on Monday, attended by a delegation of Bengaluru legislators led by Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, who is also the Bengaluru development minister.

#### Gujarat

- Following the initial round of admissions in Gujarat University-affiliated colleges, 15,960 seats remain vacant out of 65,384 available seats in arts, commerce, and science colleges. Of the 49,424 students who applied in the first round, 24,159 were not allocated seats. New rules prevent these students from changing college preferences in the second round, necessitating a wait until the third round, potentially leading to admissions delays at the start of the academic session.

#### Hyderabad, Telangana

- The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) is implementing a traffic improvement plan targeting over 100 junctions in the city. This initiative aims to enhance traffic flow by removing obstacles and widening roads, starting with 127 key intersections such as Punjagutta, Jubilee Hills road no 36, Mehdipatnam, and Gachibowli. GHMC plans to clear encroachments to ensure smoother vehicle movement and improve overall traffic conditions.

#### Mumbai, Maharashtra

- An automated Rainfall Monitoring System has been implemented by the National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited for the safe operation of bullet train services. This system utilizes rain gauges with advanced instrumentation to provide real-time data on rainfall, including hourly and 24-hour cumulative measurements, which are transmitted to the Operation Control Centre for monitoring.
- The Dharavi slum, housing over 8 lakh people, will see an expansion of its redevelopment project with a 21-acre addition from the Kurla dairy, approved by the Maharashtra government and the Adani group. This move aims to rehabilitate slum dwellers who weren't eligible for free accommodation under the initial Dharavi project, which began in 2022 after bidding and aims to transform the area into high rises with urban amenities as per plans from 2004.

#### Pune, Maharashtra

- The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has announced immediate financial aid of ₹2,500 for residents in Pune who suffered damages from recent rains. Municipal Commissioner Dr. Rajendra Bhosale stated that the first installment of this aid will be distributed next week, following joint inspections of affected areas by PMC and district administration officials during the monsoon season.
- The new terminal at Pune's Lohegaon Airport is nearing operational readiness, with flights anticipated to commence within the next week, as per Civil Aviation Minister Murlidhar Mohol. Despite being inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March, operational activities have yet to begin at the terminal. Additionally, there are expectations for an acceleration in the progress of the Purandar Airport project.

## GLOBAL UPDATE

## Highlights of this week

**China**

- During Chinese Premier Li Qiang's visit to New Zealand, the two countries signed agreements on trade and climate change, with human rights also on the agenda, marking the highest level Chinese visit to New Zealand in seven years. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon emphasized the significant economic relationship between the two nations, which includes two-way trade in goods worth nearly NZ\$38 billion (\$23.43 billion). The visit included traditional Indigenous Maori welcomes and meetings between the leaders to discuss various issues.
- The Philippines has submitted a claim to the United Nations for an extended continental shelf (ECS) in the South China Sea, an area where tensions and disputes with China over maritime boundaries have been escalating.

**Europe**

- Putin demands Ukraine drop NATO ambitions and cede disputed territories for war's end, a move swiftly rejected by Kyiv as surrender. Russia's terms, set before a Swiss peace summit, reflect its confidence amid the conflict, prompting Ukraine to call the demands "absurd" and an attack on its sovereignty.
- During the G7 summit in southern Italy, leaders reached an outline agreement to provide \$50 billion in loans for Ukraine using interest from frozen Russian sovereign assets, a move emphasizing support for Ukraine following Russia's 2022 invasion. The agreement, a highlight of the summit attended by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, signifies international solidarity with Ukraine in addressing the ongoing conflict.

**Middle East**

- U.S. officials informed that Washington has imposed sanctions on an Israeli group accused of attacking humanitarian aid convoys headed for starving civilians in Gaza. This action is part of ongoing efforts to address actors deemed detrimental to the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians.
- A fire in Kuwait claimed the lives of at least 49 people in a building housing foreign workers. Kuwait's deputy prime minister blamed property owners for violations contributing to such incidents. India's ambassador visited hospitals where injured workers, including over 30 Indians, were receiving treatment. Reports indicate several Indians, including those from Kerala, lost their lives in the fire.

**Pakistan**

- Pakistan's plan to increase taxes in its 2024-25 budget aims to boost state revenues and secure approval from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a loan to prevent economic instability. However, this move may trigger public discontent, according to experts and industrialists. The country has set an ambitious tax revenue target of 13 trillion rupees and aims to reduce its fiscal deficit to 5.9% of GDP. While these efforts are crucial for negotiating an IMF loan of \$6-8 billion, achieving these targets amid slow economic growth remains a challenge.

**United Kingdom**

- On Thursday 13 June, Britain imposed its initial sanctions against vessels in Russian President Vladimir Putin's "shadow fleet," allegedly utilized to evade Western sanctions on Russian oil trade. This move, part of 50 new sanctions coordinated with G7 partners, also targeted suppliers of military-related equipment and entities supporting Russia's military activities from China, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey. Additionally, Britain sanctioned Russia's Moscow Exchange, alleging support for the Kremlin by operating in a strategically significant sector.

**United States**

- The United States imposed sanctions on Guyanese mining magnate Nazar Mohamed and his son Azruddin for alleged tax fraud and bribery of public officials. The sanctions also target three companies associated with the Mohameds and a Guyanese government official, aiming to disrupt exploitation of Guyana's gold sector. This action follows criminal probes and their withdrawal from an Exxon Mobil logistics project after facing scrutiny from U.S. law enforcement agencies.
- The U.S. advanced to the T20 World Cup knockout stages by default, as their final group match against Ireland was abandoned due to heavy rain, leading to Pakistan's elimination. The U.S.'s qualification, marked by a thrilling win against Pakistan earlier, is significant for cricket in the region, especially with the sport set to return to the Olympics in Los Angeles 2028.

## Upcoming News/Events

**China**

- Chinese Premier Li Qiang arrived in Australia, marking the first visit by a Chinese premier to the country in seven years. Li expressed that relations were "back on track," highlighting Australia's role as a bridge between the West and East and an important player in economic globalization and world multipolarity. Despite recent tensions, including trade restrictions and blocked investments, Li's visit signals a potential easing of diplomatic disputes between the two nations.

**Europe**

- The G7 have issued a warning to Iran on Friday 14 June regarding its nuclear enrichment program, stating they would be prepared to implement new measures if Tehran transferred ballistic missiles to Russia. A draft communique stated, "We urge Tehran to cease and reverse nuclear escalations, and stop the continuing uranium enrichment activities that have no credible civilian justifications." This comes as a U.N. nuclear watchdog report revealed that Iran has rapidly increased its uranium-enriching centrifuges at the Fordow site and initiated the setup of additional ones.
- Germany is projected to receive a 1 billion euro boost to its economy during Euro 2024, primarily from foreign tourists attending soccer matches, according to the Ifo institute. This boost, equivalent to 0.1% of economic output in the second quarter, will benefit the hospitality and food retail sectors the most. However, the impact is temporary, with a return to normalcy expected post-tournament, as seen during the 2006 World Cup.

**Middle East**

- Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan stated in a video message that Turkey's economic program is yielding positive outcomes in production, employment, and exports, with expectations of improved inflation rates in the second half of the year, ultimately targeting single-digit inflation rates.
- Saudi Arabia's mining minister will meet with Chilean officials in July to discuss potential investments in lithium, aiming to enter the EV sector. Chile's role as a major lithium producer has attracted interest, with plans to engage state-run mining companies during the visit.

**Pakistan**

- Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb announced Pakistan's plan to raise up to \$1 billion through international bonds in the fiscal year 2025/26, with an initial target of \$300 million through Chinese markets via panda bonds. As Pakistan's investment ratings improve, they plan to explore European and other markets for additional funding.
- Days before a peace summit in Switzerland on Ukraine, Pakistan debates its attendance due to its neutrality. Analysts argue participation is crucial due to Pakistan's interests in Ukrainian arms and Russian oil, despite China's absence. The Foreign Ministry is still deliberating, while over 90 countries confirm attendance at the summit, emphasizing Pakistan's strategic stakes.

**United Kingdom**

- Prime Minister Rishi Sunak promised a tax cut of £17 billion for working individuals if he is re-elected, aiming to improve his party's prospects in Britain's upcoming July 4 election. With his Conservative Party trailing significantly in polls, Sunak targeted blue-collar workers like carpenters and electricians, offering tax incentives to win their support.
- Britain's Princess of Wales, Kate, is preparing for her first public appearance since undergoing surgery five months ago, which revealed the presence of cancer. Although she's been undergoing preventative chemotherapy, her progress has been positive, allowing her to join her children in a carriage during the "Trooping the Colour" event in London. She will also be present on the balcony of Buckingham Palace alongside other senior family members, marking a significant milestone in her recovery journey.

**United States**

- U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris pledged over \$1.5 billion in aid, including \$500 million in new funding for Ukraine's energy sector and \$324 million redirected towards emergency infrastructure repairs. This announcement came during Harris' participation in a Ukraine peace summit in Lucerne, Switzerland, where she met with President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and addressed critical issues at the plenary session.
- The U.S., co-hosts of the T20 World Cup, advanced to the knockout stage due to a rainout against Ireland, displacing Pakistan. Their victory over Pakistan in a super over earlier was pivotal. This achievement uplifts cricket in the region, especially with cricket's inclusion in the 2028 Olympics.

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