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INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Andhra Pradesh

- Andhra Pradesh para athletes won 36 medals at the 13th National Junior and Sub-Junior Para Athletics Championship in Bangalore. Guntur district roll ball selection trials will be held on July 21, and the AP State Open Chess Tournament is on July 20 in Patamata.
- The Andhra Pradesh Innovation Society (APIS) partnered with the US agency Startup Runway to boost market links and create opportunities for AP startups in the USA. Two startups, Global Climate Risk Solutions Private Limited (GCRS) and Antar IOT, have been selected for growth facilitation.

Delhi

- Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated the second phase of the Khelo India Rising Talent (KIRTI) program, aiming to assess 20,000 MCD school students for sports talent and identify 1 lakh talents nationwide in 100 days. He highlighted India's abundant talent and the program's goal to foster sports interest, while MCD Commissioner Ashwani Kumar noted the success of a football academy in Najafgarh.

Goa

- The Panama-flagged container ship M V Maersk Frankfurt experienced explosions and a major fire off the Goa coast on Friday 19 July while en route to Colombo. No casualties have been reported, with the fire occurring 102 nautical miles southwest of Goa.
- Union Minister Nitin Gadkari announced his willingness to allocate ₹25,000-30,000 crore over the next five years to enhance Goa's road network. He also urged the Goa government to develop a master plan addressing transportation and pollution, citing traffic congestion in tourist spots like Rishikesh and Dehradun.

Gujarat

- As of 20th July, Routine life was disrupted in Dwarka and Porbandar due to severe rainfall in Saurashtra, with Dwarka submerged under waist-high water after 344mm of rain in 24 hours. The situation worsened with 230mm of rain falling in just two hours, leaving locals, like shop owner Hemal Vayeda, unable to leave their homes.

Haryana

- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached immovable properties totaling 88.29 acres and valued at ₹300.11 crore under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. These properties, belonging to M3M India Infrastructures Pvt. Ltd., consist of land parcels in Basharia village, Gurugram, Haryana.
- Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini announced a new scheme on Wednesday (July 17) to provide free cashless treatment and compensation to hit-and-run accident victims, funded by the Haryana Road Safety Fund. The scheme also sets a time limit for processing compensation applications and payments to victims.

Himachal Pradesh

- Since the onset of the monsoon on June 27, rain-related incidents in Himachal Pradesh have resulted in 40 deaths and losses amounting to ₹329 crore, according to the state emergency operation centre. Additionally, a cloudburst in Raitua village, Paonta subdivision, Sirmaur district, late Friday night (19 July) led to one person being washed away.
- Following a Board of Directors meeting of Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HRTC), Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri announced that the concessional fare for women will continue, and the minimum fare will not increase. The honorarium for daily wage workers has been raised from ₹375 to ₹400. Additionally, 357 conductors will be recruited, 297 electric vehicles will be purchased, and 24 old Volvo buses will be replaced with new ones.

Karnataka

- The North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) has introduced two ultra-luxury multi-axle AC sleeper buses, named 'Ambaari Utsav'. These buses, built on the Volvo 9600 series, have begun trial service operations between Belagavi and Nashik and are receiving positive responses.

Upcoming News/Events

Andhra Pradesh

- Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu announced ₹5 crore for constructing prayer halls at Bar Shaheed Dargah in Nellore on Friday 19 July. Naidu virtually participated in the annual 'Rottela Panduga' via video conference, greeting pilgrims and interacting with local representatives. He noted the festival's significant historical importance.
- The government plans to take loans from the World Bank to complete drinking water schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission. A World Bank delegation visited the state and agreed to consider the loans, requesting a detailed project report for submission to the World Bank board.

Delhi

- The 19th edition of the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon will take place on October 20, celebrating the vibrant spirit of Delhi and its citizens. Procam International announced that registrations for both physical and virtual races are now open. Participants can register at [the official website](#).
- The AAP government assured the Delhi High Court that it will act to rescue trafficked minors forced into bonded labor upon receiving actionable information. The court, emphasizing the urgency, directed the Delhi government to file a status report on actions taken. This was in response to a PIL seeking to rescue over 1,000 trafficked minors in Delhi.

Goa

- Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant assured the assembly that a new legislation will be introduced to cancel a vehicle's permit for one year if used for illegal garbage dumping. The government is also discussing allowing the Goa Waste Management Corporation (GWMC) to handle waste collection in all panchayats.

Gujarat

- AIIMS Rajkot will set up Gujarat's first BSL-3 laboratory by December 2025, with a ₹14 crore investment under the PM-ABHIM. The lab, approved by ICMR and established in partnership with HLL Life Care India, will diagnose highly infectious diseases such as Japanese encephalitis and CCHF.

Haryana

- Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has directed the Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission (HERC) to amend the 2014 Electricity Supply Code Regulations to alleviate the financial burden on farmers. This follows the 4th amendment by HERC, which revised the cost-sharing mechanism for distribution transformer repairs and replacements.
- The State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) has instructed the Gurgaon deputy commissioner to investigate how environmental clearance was granted for the 1,000-acre Global City project. This follows a complaint alleging that the Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC) may have misled authorities to obtain the clearance.

Himachal Pradesh

- Heavy rainfall is predicted in Himachal Pradesh on July 22 and 23, with an "orange" alert issued for heavy rains, thunderstorms, and lightning. A "yellow" alert is in place for July 20 and 21, with expected disruptions and potential damage to crops and structures. A wet spell is forecasted to continue until July 25.

Karnataka

- The Karnataka government has temporarily put the job reservation bill for Kannadigas in private sector organizations on hold due to pushback from industries. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah stated that the bill, approved by the cabinet, will be revisited, and future actions will be decided soon. The Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories and Other Establishments Bill, 2024, was passed in the Cabinet meeting on Monday 15 July.

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Madhya Pradesh

- The Madhya Pradesh government has appointed seven senior IAS officers to tackle the severe stray dog problem affecting streets, residential areas, and government premises. Over the past five years, stray dogs have caused five deaths and led to over 21,000 annual dog bite cases.

Mumbai

- A dating scam has emerged in Mumbai where women use dating apps to lure victims to expensive clubs, order costly food and drinks, and then leave before paying the bill. Victims report being taken to high-end venues, where the women make excuses to escape payment, as seen in multiple incidents shared on social media.
- The Mumbai-Pune Expressway, India's first six-lane highway, was constructed in 2002 at a cost of about Rs 1,63,000 crore. It cuts travel time between Mumbai and Pune to one hour and features tunnels and underpasses through the Sahyadri mountains. The toll rates are high, with multi-axle trucks charged up to Rs 2,165 and a rate of around Rs 3.20 per kilometer, which is Rs 1 more than other expressways.

Pune

- The new terminal at Pune International Airport began operations on Sunday, with flights to New Delhi and Bhubaneswar. Union Minister Murlidhar Mohol marked the occasion by handing over the first boarding pass. The 51,595 square meter terminal, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March, cost Rs 423 crore and features modern amenities such as 10 aerobridges and 25 self-check-in stations.

Punjab

- A PIL has been filed in the Punjab and Haryana High Court urging the Punjab government to conduct pending civic body elections. Beant Kumar of Malerkotla noted that while a notification was issued on November 1, 2023, for elections to municipal councils and committees, the polls have yet to take place.
- The school uniforms provided for free to government school students in Punjab have been reported as substandard and lacking essential accessories such as ties, belts, and ID cards. Schools in Fazilka have indicated that the funds for these uniforms have been directly deposited into the accounts of school principals.

Rajasthan

- The Rajasthan Staff Selection Board (RSMSSB) has announced the document verification (DV) schedule for candidates selected in the Forest Guard Direct Recruitment Examination-2020. DV will begin for eligible candidates from both scheduled and non-scheduled areas. On May 31, 2024, 950 candidates from non-scheduled areas were listed, with an additional 93 candidates listed on July 18, 2024.
- Energy Minister Heeralal Nagar refuted CM Ashok Gehlot's claims regarding the status of coal mine blocks allocated to Rajasthan in Chhattisgarh. Nagar clarified that clearance for 91 hectares of the PEKB coal block was granted in December 2023, with 26 hectares handed over on January 19 and another 30 hectares on March 22.

Tamil Nadu

- Chief Minister MK Stalin has expanded the free breakfast scheme to 2.23 lakh primary school children in 3,995 government-aided schools across Tamil Nadu, aiming to boost attendance and reduce dropouts. The state has a long history of pioneering school meal initiatives, starting with free meals in 1920.

Telangana

- The Medigadda barrage, under investigation due to the sinking of some piers last year, is now receiving 3.41 lakh cusecs of water from heavy rains in Telangana. Irrigation authorities are releasing this inflow downstream by lifting all 85 gates.
- The Visakhapatnam Special Economic Zone (VSEZ) reported exports of Rs 62,198 crore in Q1 of the 2024-25 fiscal year, an 18% increase from the same period in 2023-24. Of this, Rs 37,758 crore was from services and Rs 24,439 crore from merchandise, according to Srinivas Muppaala, zone development commissioner.

Uttar Pradesh

- Uttar Pradesh set a record by planting 36.51 crore saplings in a statewide drive on Saturday, led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The "Ped Lagao, Ped Bachao Jan Abhiyan-2024" drive saw Adityanath plant Harishankari saplings in Lucknow's Akbarnagar, an area recently cleared to revive the Kukrail river.

Madhya Pradesh

- The Regional Industry Conclave 2024 in Jabalpur on July 20th attracted significant interest, with investment proposals totaling Rs 17,000 crore. A notable Rs 600 crore agreement between Ashoka Leyland and AVNL will enable tank construction in the state. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav hailed the event as a record-breaking success with strong investor enthusiasm.

Mumbai

- In the Ghatkopar hoarding collapse case, Bhavesh Bhide's petition challenges his arrest, claiming the incident was due to an unprecedented wind force and accusing the FIR of being baseless and politically motivated. The Bombay High Court has scheduled further proceedings, directing the state to file a response by July 24, 2024, with the next hearing set for July 26, 2024.
- The Kalyan Ring Road Project, costing Rs 2,186 crore and spanning eight phases, aims to improve travel between Dombivli and Titwala. The completed Phase 4 to Phase 7 stretch has been opened to traffic. Kalyan MP Dr. Shrikant Shinde has urged the MMRDA to expedite the remaining work and acquire necessary land to complete the 30.3 km stretch promptly.

Pune

- The Union Railways Ministry plans to upgrade Pune Railway Station with modern amenities while preserving its heritage. Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who recently inspected the station, emphasized a phased approach to minimize disruption to operations. The renovation aims to enhance facilities and capacity without compromising the station's historical value.
- Pune reportedly has around 4.5 lakh illegal water connections, prompting the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) to reintroduce an amnesty scheme. Despite poor response to a previous scheme, the PMC's standing committee has approved the new proposal, set to begin within a week.

Punjab

- The Punjab Animal Husbandry Department will conduct its 21st livestock census starting September, including a count of pet dogs and cats by breed. For the first time, the census will separately account for cattle in gaushalas (cow shelters) and those raised by nomadic tribes.

Rajasthan

- Around 700 teachers from 17 government medical colleges in Rajasthan will take mass leave starting July 22 due to dissatisfaction with state service rules. They allege that the state government has excluded teachers appointed before August 1, 2024, from new service regulations.

Tamil Nadu

- Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that the state will release 8,000 cusecs of Cauvery river water daily to Tamil Nadu, instead of the one TMC per day directed by the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee, due to only 63% water levels in the basin dams. This decision was discussed in an all-party meeting with key figures including Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka.

Telangana

- The Telangana government has postponed the Group II exams from August 7-8 to December, following a meeting between Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu and candidates. The exact December dates will be announced later. Bhatti also highlighted that 54,000 vacant posts have been filled in the past three months, emphasizing the government's commitment to fulfilling election promises and addressing job needs.

Uttar Pradesh

- To protect wild animals, the Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) will add 116 structures along the 596-km Ganga Expressway. These include additional box culverts and underpasses to reduce the risk of injury or mortality to animals affected by the project.
- UP Metro Rail Corporation officials have been instructed to address waterlogging issues at Kanpur Metro project sites. This follows a meeting on Friday 19 July, with Kanpur Municipal Corporation, Jalkal, and UPMRC officials to resolve the problem affecting various areas in the city.

GLOBAL UPDATE**Highlights of this week****Upcoming News/Events****China**

- On July 18, 2024, Chinese leaders reiterated their broad economic policy goals, including modernizing industry, expanding domestic demand, and curbing debt and property sector risks, but did not provide specific implementation details.
- China's Communist Party removed former Foreign Minister Qin Gang and former Defense Minister Li Shangfu from its Central Committee during a meeting of its top decision-making body on July 18, 2024. While Qin Gang resigned, Li Shangfu and former PLA Rocket Force commander Li Yuchao were expelled from the Party for "serious violations of discipline and law," indicating harsher consequences for the latter two.
- On July 17, 2024, China suspended nuclear-arms-control talks with the United States in response to recent U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, which Beijing views as a disruption to the arms-control dialogue. This move could hinder global arms-control efforts, with China joining Russia in refusing to engage in discussions aimed at curbing the nuclear arms race.

Europe

- Denmark's Foreign Minister announced on July 18, 2024, that Denmark would not attend informal government meetings related to Hungary's EU presidency due to Prime Minister Viktor Orban's recent talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping. This decision reflects EU leaders' concerns over Orban's engagements with Moscow and Beijing.
- In Ukraine, startups are advancing AI systems to control a large fleet of drones, aiming to gain a technological advantage in warfare. The rollout of AI-enabled drones is intended to counter Russian signal jamming and enhance the coordination of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in larger groups.

Middle East

- As of 19 July, Dubai International Airport resumed normal operations after a global system outage affected check-ins for some airlines at Terminals 1 and 2. Flydubai and Emirates reported no immediate impact, though Emirates and Etihad Airways warned of possible delays due to the knock-on effects.
- A long-range Iranian-made drone hit central Tel Aviv early Friday 19 July, killing one man and wounding four others in an attack claimed by Yemen's Houthis militia. The explosion, which did not trigger air raid alarms, followed the Israeli military's killing of a senior Hezbollah commander in Lebanon. The drone, an upgraded Iranian-made Samad-3, is believed to have come from Yemen. The Houthis stated the attack was in solidarity with Palestinians in the Gaza war.

Pakistan

- Pakistani counter-terror officials arrested Al-Qaeda leader Amin ul Haq, a close associate of Osama Bin Laden and listed on a U.N. sanctions list. This marks Pakistan's first Al-Qaeda arrest in years. The counter-terrorism department in Punjab filed a legal case against Haq, accusing him of planning to sabotage key installations.
- Pakistan's foreign ministry summoned the Taliban's deputy head of mission on Wednesday 17 July, urging action against Afghanistan-based militant groups following an attack on a military base in Bannu, northwestern Pakistan. The attack, involving a vehicle loaded with explosives, killed eight Pakistani security force members.

United Kingdom

- Violence broke out between groups of men in east London's Whitechapel district on 18 July, Thursday night, linked to protests in Bangladesh. Police separated the fighting groups amidst a larger demonstration involving several hundred people. Whitechapel, known for Brick Lane's curry houses, has a significant Bangladeshi population.
- Record immigration caused the population of England and Wales to rise by 610,000 to 60.9 million in mid-2023, the largest annual increase in 75 years, official data showed. Natural population growth fell to 400, the lowest since 1978, while net international migration rose to 622,000.

United States

- On July 18, 2024, the United States opened an embassy in Vanuatu as part of its strategy to increase diplomatic presence in the Pacific region and counter Chinese influence. This follows the opening of embassies in the Solomon Islands and Tonga, with a planned mission in Kiribati pending parliamentary approval.
- The U.S. Energy Department is offering a conditional loan guarantee of up to \$861 million for two solar projects in Puerto Rico, aimed at enhancing energy security post-hurricanes. The projects, led by Clean Flexible Energy LLC, include solar panels and battery storage in Salinas and Guayama, expected to power around 43,000 homes.

China

- China's Ministry of Commerce announced on Friday 19 July, that it will impose anti-dumping duties on propionic acid products from the United States, effective for five years starting July 21. The duties are set at 43.5% for all U.S. companies.
- Chinese officials acknowledged on July 19, 2024, that the recent Communist Party meeting highlighted "many complex contradictions" in the country's economic goals, pointing to challenges in policy implementation. Despite ambitious pledges from the plenum, including modernizing industry and expanding domestic demand, there is concern that without significant structural changes, debt will continue to outpace growth, potentially hindering effective economic reform.

Europe

- France is actively working to counter threats from ISIS-K ahead of the Paris Olympics. The efforts are part of heightened security measures following a troubling call received by Tajik journalist Temur Varki from Paris police in late March, after ISIS militants reportedly committed a massacre in Moscow.
- Russia has not ruled out deploying nuclear missiles in response to the U.S. plan to station long-range conventional weapons in Germany. The focus includes strengthening defenses around Russia's Kaliningrad region, according to Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov.
- Ukraine's government proposed its first wartime tax hike to raise \$11.9 billion for defense spending as the war with Russia nears 29 months. The 2024 budget changes, including increased taxes and duties, require parliamentary approval and President Zelenskyy's signature.

Middle East

- The UN's highest court declared Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories illegal and called for their immediate withdrawal. This marks the court's strongest stance on the Israel-Palestinian conflict to date.
- FIFA has postponed a decision on the Palestinian bid to suspend Israel from international soccer until after the Paris Olympics, as both parties requested more time to submit their positions. The legal assessment will be shared with FIFA's council by August 31.
- U.S. President Joe Biden hopes to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu next week, depending on his recovery from COVID-19, the White House said. Netanyahu, who will address Congress on July 24, is tentatively scheduled to meet Biden on Monday. Vice President Kamala Harris will also meet Netanyahu during his visit.

Pakistan

- Pakistan's finance minister stated the country will meet its external financing needs through talks with foreign governments and lenders, aiming to attract foreign investment and secure loan rollovers. This comes as Pakistan prepares to implement its new \$7 billion IMF agreement, which includes measures like increased agricultural taxes and higher electricity prices. While Pakistan has often relied on IMF programs and aid from countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia, the government now seeks more sustainable financing methods such as direct investment and climate financing.

United Kingdom

- Britain's new Labour government announced on Friday July 19 it will resume funding to the U.N. Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA, reversing the previous halt in funding due to accusations involving Hamas. Foreign Minister David Lammy stated that the agency has taken steps to ensure neutrality and will receive £21 million (\$27 million) in new funding to support its aid operations in Gaza.
- French President Emmanuel Macron expressed hope for progress on migration issues in upcoming talks with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Macron believes Starmer's arrival could bring "new momentum" to tackle sensitive policies. Relations between France and Britain have been strained, with both countries blaming each other for migrant crossings over the Channel.

United States

- A U.S. appeals court allowed a regulation for deep cuts in power plants' carbon emissions to proceed while it's challenged by Republican-led states. The rule, part of President Biden's climate agenda, targets a 90% reduction in emissions by 2032. Compliance deadlines begin in 2030.
- The head of the Federal Railroad Administration, the chair of the National Transportation Safety Board, and a senior pipeline safety official will testify at a U.S. House subcommittee hearing on rail safety on July 23. This follows the Senate Commerce Committee's May 2023 passage of rail safety reform legislation after the February 2023 Norfolk Southern train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio. Bipartisan legislation similar to the Senate bill was introduced in the House last week, but its future remains uncertain.

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