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## INDIA UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Andhra Pradesh

- The cashew industry in Kasibugga-Palasa, Andhra Pradesh, has initiated a 15-day bandh due to plummeting cashew nut prices and exports, significantly impacting the sector. This follows a decision by the local industrial committee to halt processing activities, marking another challenge for the region's cashew industry.
- The government released a white paper on the financial situation of the state on Friday, the seventh and final in the series of white papers on various issues. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu explained how AP had slipped into a precarious financial situation during the YSRCP rule, with an overall debt burden exceeding 10 lakh crore and pending bills amounting to 1.5 lakh crore.

#### Delhi

- Delhi experienced heavy rains and thunderstorms on Friday 26 July, providing relief from the humid weather but causing waterlogging and severe traffic disruptions. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecasted more rainfall in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) within the next two hours, impacting areas like Burari, Model Town, and several others.
- The Delhi Police busted an international drug racket, arresting Ivory Coast citizen Gnahore Serge Pacome and seizing 1.32 kg of cocaine worth ₹13 crore. Pacome, who entered India on a six-month visa in March 2022, was running a drug syndicate with suspected international connections.

#### Goa

- Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Friday 26 July, urged Goan youths to join the armed forces under the Agniveer scheme, announcing a 10% reservation in the state's uniformed services for those who participate. The reserved positions are in the police, fire and emergency services, and the forest department, with additional reservations provided by the Centre.

#### Gujarat

- Gujarat saw a significant increase in piped gas connections, with over 1.75 lakh new connections added between August 2023 and February 2024. According to the petroleum planning and analysis cell (PPAC), the total number of domestic PNG connections in the state was 3,078,162 as of July 31, 2023.
- Heavy inflow in the Purna and Ambica rivers has led to a flood-like situation in Navsari city, prompting the local administration to relocate 3,200 people to safety on Friday. The swollen rivers, with the Purna surpassing the danger mark of 23 ft to reach 30 ft, have affected over 40,000 people, many of whom felt they were not given advance warning.

#### Haryana

- In a significant relief for patients in Haryana, doctors withdrew their strike on Friday night (26 July). The resolution came after Haryana Civil Medical Services Association (HCMSA) delegates met with Additional Principal Secretary Dr. Amit Aggarwal in Chandigarh late at night.
- Haryana PWD Minister Dr. Banwari Lal inaugurated and laid the foundation for development projects worth approximately ₹80.92 crore in Kalka on Thursday. The projects include 30 new roads and four tube wells, with Dr. Lal inaugurating 11 roads totaling 71.24 km and costing ₹53.47 crore during an event at the block development office.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- The Himachal Pradesh cabinet decided on Thursday 25 July, to shut down 99 government schools with zero enrollment—89 primary and 10 middle. The cabinet also approved the merger of government primary schools within a 2km radius and middle schools within a 3km radius if they have five or fewer students. Additionally, the cabinet decided that teaching staff in the education department will be transferred annually at the end of the academic session, not mid-session.

#### Karnataka

- On Friday 27 July, the Cauvery water inflow at Biligundulu neared 100,000 cusecs, rising from 62,000 cusecs to 92,000 cusecs due to increased releases from Karnataka dams. The inflow at Mettur dam also increased from 68,000 cusecs to 81,552 cusecs by evening.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Andhra Pradesh

- The Directorate of Civilian Personnel at Naval Headquarters signed a landmark MoU with Gitam Deemed University in New Delhi, witnessed by Rear Admiral Aditya Hara, ACOP(AC). This MoU provides exclusive admission fee discounts and reserved seats in engineering, medicine, and other courses for Naval civilians and their families, as well as collaborative workshops, training, and research projects.
- Railway projects in Andhra Pradesh will receive top priority with a 2024-25 allocation of ₹9,151 crore, nearly 10 times the average allocation from 2009 to 2014 when AP was undivided. In response to Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed the Lok Sabha that ongoing railway projects in AP have a total cost of ₹73,743 crore, and the state's railway network is now fully electrified.

#### Delhi

- The Supreme Court directed the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) to implement the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, warning of a public health emergency due to untreated waste. Justices A S Oka and Augustine George Masih noted the lack of solid waste processing facilities until 2027 and highlighted issues between the Centre and the Delhi government.
- The Supreme Court suggested replacing Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificates with remote-sensing technology to monitor vehicular pollution in Delhi and NCR, directing the Union ministry of road transport and highways to initiate this. Remote sensing devices, first proposed by EPCA in 2019, use infrared or ultraviolet light to identify pollution sources and improve air quality.

#### Goa

- Chief Minister Pramod Sawant assured the Assembly that ST community reservations in constituencies will be implemented by the 2027 elections, with discussions scheduled with Union ministers on February 16. Despite previous unfulfilled promises, the government has initiated the process by submitting a letter to identify and reserve constituencies based on the 2011 Census.

#### Gujarat

- Following the Rajkot gaming zone inferno that killed 27 people, the Gujarat government is updating its fire safety rules to include specific measures for gaming zones. It is also adding a chapter on fire safety for gaming zones to the General Development Control Regulations (GDCR). "Schedule 3 of the Fire Safety Rules 2021 is being amended to specify measures that gaming zones must comply with," officials stated.
- The Airports Authority of India (AAI) plans to develop the old airport land in Rajkot, now idle after operations moved to Hirasar, into commercial and residential projects to recover ₹2,500 crore. This follows a 2019 agreement with the state government to monetize the land and offset the cost of the new greenfield airport at Hirasar.

#### Haryana

- Traffic in Noida and Ghaziabad will face disruptions from Saturday 27 July, due to kanwar yatra restrictions and diversions, which will be in place until the evening of August 5. In Noida, two lanes exiting Delhi at the Kalindi Kunj border, between the Okhla barrage and the bird sanctuary, have been closed to facilitate pilgrim movement.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- The Himachal Pradesh High Court has ordered measures to make the region plastic-free and suggested implementing a green tax for tourists, similar to Sikkim and Bhutan, to maintain cleanliness. Justices Tarlok Singh Chauhan and Sushil Kukreja directed the state government to ensure tourists carry plastic bags for waste collection, following previous orders for the Shimla municipal corporation to address solid waste issues.

#### Karnataka

- The state cabinet's decision to rename Ramanagara district as Bengaluru South has sparked mixed reactions. While some see it as a strategy to boost industrial and real estate growth due to its proximity to Bengaluru, others are skeptical. Proponents argue that the name change will economically integrate the district with Bengaluru, leveraging its existing industrial infrastructure and attracting investors.

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#### Madhya Pradesh

- Despite the state government's claims of improvements in literacy, Madhya Pradesh's school education faces serious issues with around 400 government schools reporting zero enrolment for the academic year. This problem spans both primary and 32 middle schools, prompting the government to transfer teachers from these schools to optimize resource allocation.
- The Heart Health India Foundation (HHIF) signed an MoU with the National Health Mission, Madhya Pradesh, to promote heart health awareness. This partnership aims to educate 50,000 patients and their families across 52 districts over two years on heart disease prevention and management.

#### Mumbai

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde attended the 9th NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting in New Delhi, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to discuss the "Viksit Bharat 2047" initiative and Maharashtra's development. The meeting aimed to promote participative governance and enhance collaboration between the central and state governments.
- The Shinde government's Mukhya Mantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, announced last month, is set to cost ₹46,000 crore annually. Despite concerns from the state finance department about the financial burden, the cabinet approved the scheme.

#### Pune

- Pune remains under a yellow alert for heavy rain on Saturday, July 27, with continued showers and few reported casualties. The IMD forecasts a generally cloudy sky, moderate rain, a maximum temperature of 27°C, and a minimum of 22°C. The city recorded 56.2 mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours, with relative humidity at 89%.

#### Punjab

- Counter Intelligence (CI) Bathinda has arrested a drug smuggler and seized 4,100 kg of poppy husk, contained in 210 bags, being transported in a truck from Madhya Pradesh. The driver, Sandeep Singh from Raipur Arian, Jalandhar, has been apprehended, according to Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav.
- Residents of Panjawa Model in Abohar, Fazilka district, staged a unique protest by planting paddy saplings in the waterlogged streets to highlight the poor road conditions and lack of drainage. Their aim was to draw the administration's attention to the need for village development.

#### Rajasthan

- The state government has addressed deficiencies in five new medical colleges by approving the recruitment of 625 doctors, as these colleges were not permitted to start the 2024-25 academic session by the National Medical Commission. Doctors joining these colleges will benefit from Rajasthan Service Rules (RSR) to attract candidates.

#### Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin virtually unveiled the foundation stone for new buildings at the Tamil Nadu House in New Delhi, costing ₹257 crore. The redevelopment includes demolishing existing structures and constructing new ones designed to withstand seismic forces, following New Delhi's reclassification as Seismic Zone-IV.

#### Telangana

- The Telangana High Court has issued notices to central and state agriculture and food safety officials, requiring them to explain measures taken to combat spurious pesticides that harm crops and pose health risks. This follows a PIL alleging insufficient action to prevent the market influx of these hazardous products.
- The Congress government aims to raise nearly Rs 60,000 crore this fiscal from excise, stamps, registration, transport, and mines sectors to fund welfare schemes and projects. Financial experts warn that meeting this target without raising taxes or increasing borrowings will be challenging, and any tax hikes will directly impact the public.

#### Uttar Pradesh

- IIT Kanpur and SAIL signed an MoU on Friday 26 July, to boost research and consultancy in steel industry technology. The agreement, signed by Prof. Tarun Gupta and Sandip Kumar Kar, aims to tackle key technological challenges in steel production.
- In Varanasi, the Akshaya Patra Foundation's mid-day meal program, initiated by PM Modi in 2022, has expanded to include government school students in Baragaon block. The meals are prepared in a centralized kitchen at LT College in Orderly Bazaar, serving students across three city zones.

#### Madhya Pradesh

- Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya (DAVV) is considering introducing a university-level Common Entrance Test (CET) next year due to delays in CUET UG results. During Friday's (27 July) executive council meeting, members proposed the CET to prevent losses in student admissions caused by these delays.

#### Mumbai

- Indian Railways plans to introduce 250 new suburban services in Mumbai over the next five years and redesign the rail network to enhance city travel, according to Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. The changes aim to improve transportation in Mumbai and its suburbs.
- Mumbai residents will see the 10% water cut lifted starting Monday, July 29, 2024, due to increased water storage in reservoirs from heavy rains. The IMD has issued a yellow alert for heavy rainfall today, with the city experiencing extreme downpour and waterlogging in several areas.

#### Pune

- Pune's city airport will soon install three travelators to improve passenger convenience by connecting the new terminal to the AeroMall, with completion expected in a year. This will replace the need to walk 400 meters from the arrival gates to the AeroMall and will necessitate demolishing a chilling unit building.

#### Punjab

- The Punjab government has committed to removing protests that lead to the closure of toll plazas within four weeks, as stated before the Punjab and Haryana High Court. The court accepted this undertaking and ordered that an affidavit be filed to confirm compliance, with the next hearing scheduled for September 13.
- Punjab will continue its power subsidies for agriculture and domestic users, unlike Himachal Pradesh, which cut its subsidies for financial aid. The state plans to solarize 80% of agricultural and 100% of domestic power feeders by 2047, and all institutional and industrial buildings by 2031.

#### Rajasthan

- Tomato prices in Jaipur, ranging from Rs 100 to Rs 120 per kg, are expected to remain high for the next month until locally harvested tomatoes become available. Wholesale traders at Muhana Mandi predict a continued rise in prices, similar to last year's peak of Rs 150 to Rs 180 per kg before dropping in early August.
- The state government will soon launch an online system for applying and obtaining land pattas, enhancing transparency and efficiency. UDH Minister Jhabar Singh Kharra announced that applicants will receive their pattas at home within 30 days of application.

#### Tamil Nadu

- The Airports Authority of India (AAI) will conduct a feasibility study for potential sites for a Hosur greenfield international airport, following a request from the Tamil Nadu government. The state has identified four possible locations, including an existing private airstrip, and is in talks with stakeholders such as Taneja Aerospace and Bengaluru International Airport Limited.
- Trichy MP Durai Vaiko criticized the budget for not allocating funds for the quick implementation of a metro rail project in Trichy, despite previous feasibility and project reports. He expressed concern over the lack of measures for advancing the project.

#### Telangana

- The government aims to make the state power-surplus by 2030, focusing on non-conventional, pollution-free sources like solar energy. A new power policy will be introduced, with ₹16,410 crore allocated for energy infrastructure and subsidies for free power to the agriculture sector.

#### Uttar Pradesh

- Traffic on key roads in Noida and Ghaziabad will be disrupted from Saturday 27 July due to Kanwar Yatra restrictions, lasting until August 5. In Noida, two lanes at the Kalindi Kunj border have been closed to ease pilgrim movement.
- The UPCA will host the second season of the UPT20 league at BRSABV Ekana Cricket Stadium, Lucknow, from August 25 to September 14. The mega auction for the league will take place on July 28 at Centrum Hotel.
- The Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board will hold a re-test for 60,244 constable positions from August 23 to 31 at 1,161 centers. The original exam in February was canceled due to paper leak allegations, resulting in 400 arrests.

## GLOBAL UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### China

- The Philippines successfully completed its first South China Sea resupply mission under a new arrangement with China, marking a significant step in easing tensions, according to its foreign ministry.
- Typhoon Gaemi, the strongest storm of the year, battered Fujian province in China with heavy rains and strong winds, affecting around 630,000 people and displacing nearly half of them. The storm, which also caused fatalities in Taiwan and intensified seasonal rains in the Philippines, continues to move inland.

#### Europe

- Polish lawmakers have approved a bill allowing security services to use weapons against migrants at the Belarus border, a move supported by the public but criticized by human rights advocates. The legislation is seen as part of Poland's response to what it calls a hybrid warfare crisis orchestrated by Belarus and Russia.
- Saboteurs attacked France's TGV high-speed train network early Friday 27 July, causing significant travel disruptions and revealing security vulnerabilities just ahead of the Paris Olympics opening ceremony. The coordinated attacks occurred as France was deploying extensive security measures to protect the capital.

#### Middle East

- The Israeli military has instructed residents to evacuate southern Khan Younis in Gaza for intensified operations, focusing on militant infrastructure and resistance. Recent clashes have resulted in at least 14 Palestinian deaths, with ongoing efforts to suppress militant activities amid continued conflict.
- U.S. President Joe Biden and Jordan's King Abdullah discussed strategies for a Gaza ceasefire, humanitarian aid, and reforms to the Palestinian Authority during a Friday (27 July) call. Abdullah emphasized the U.S.'s crucial role in achieving a two-state solution and lasting peace.
- Turkey will launch a \$5 billion package to boost annual electric vehicle production to one million cars, with additional high-tech incentive packages totaling \$30 billion. President Tayyip Erdogan announced that China's largest EV producer, BYD, will build a \$1 billion plant in Turkey, and further plans include a \$5 billion semiconductor chip factory and a \$4.5 billion package for battery production, aiming for an 80 gigawatt-hour capacity by 2030.

#### Pakistan

- Pakistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb arrived in Beijing on Thursday 25 July to discuss power sector debt relief and structural reforms with his Chinese counterpart. The talks, which include reprofiling \$15 billion in energy sector debt, come as Pakistan's bonds declined to their lowest level since April.
- The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) organized rallies across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Friday, 26 July, demanding the release of party founder Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi, and other detained activists. PTI condemned the charges against them as baseless and false, with local lawmakers and leaders actively participating in the protests.

#### United Kingdom

- Former government ministers Mel Stride and Robert Jenrick have announced their candidacy for the leadership of Britain's Conservative Party after its recent electoral defeat. They join Tom Tugendhat and James Cleverly in the race to replace Rishi Sunak, who is stepping down as party leader but will remain in an acting capacity until his successor is chosen. Nominations close on Monday.
- Eurostar announced it had canceled 25% of its services on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (26, 27 & 28 July) due to disruptions caused by vandalism on France's TGV network. Passengers were encouraged to postpone travel if possible, as the acts of sabotage ahead of the Paris Olympics had forced trains to use slower routes, causing significant delays.

#### United States

- Winds and lightning have ignited wildfires across the Pacific Northwest, with the Durkee Fire near the Oregon-Idaho border becoming the largest U.S. blaze, burning 600 square miles and threatening towns. The fire, sparked by lightning on July 17, is only 20% contained and has killed hundreds of cattle, though winds have lessened and cooler weather is expected.
- California Governor Gavin Newsom announced that the state will start clearing homeless encampments following a Supreme Court decision that upheld anti-camping laws. Newsom emphasized the need for urgent action to address public health and safety issues.
- Apple Inc. has joined 15 other firms in signing U.S. President Joe Biden's voluntary AI commitments, aimed at ensuring AI is used responsibly. This follows earlier endorsements by companies such as Google, Microsoft, and IBM.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### China

- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi warned the Philippines that U.S. intermediate-range missiles could escalate regional tensions and trigger an arms race. He urged dialogue and consultation amid strained China-Philippines relations, accusing the Philippines of breaching agreements and commitments.
- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi expressed hope for China and India to align and improve their relations, emphasizing their bilateral relationship's significant impact beyond their borders. He stressed the mutual benefits of getting China-India relations back on track during talks with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

#### Europe

- Hungary plans to allow temporary exceedance of the temperature limit for the Danube, which cools the Paks nuclear power plant, to ensure energy security. The change, due to climate impacts, would let the plant exceed the 30°C limit with the energy minister's approval if necessary to maintain domestic energy supply.
- U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen expressed optimism that the G7 could finalize a \$50 billion loan to Ukraine, backed by frozen Russian assets, by October. Talks have been productive, addressing U.S. concerns about maintaining the freeze on these assets, Yellen said.

#### Middle East

- Israel is requesting modifications to the proposed Gaza truce and hostage release plan, complicating efforts to finalize a deal to end nine months of conflict in the region.
- The World Health Organization is dispatching over one million polio vaccines to Gaza due to virus detection in sewage, aiming to protect children amid disrupted vaccination campaigns caused by ongoing conflict. Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus highlighted the urgency of vaccination to prevent an outbreak, particularly among children under five.
- CIA Director William Burns will meet with Israeli and Egyptian counterparts and Qatar's prime minister in Rome this weekend to discuss a Gaza ceasefire and the release of hostages by Hamas. This meeting comes as Israel seeks modifications to the current truce plan, complicating efforts to finalize a deal to end over nine months of conflict.

#### Pakistan

- UN experts expressed serious concern on Thursday 25 July, over rising discrimination and violence against Pakistan's Ahmadi minority, including extrajudicial killings and attacks on worship sites. They emphasized the need for urgent measures to address the increasing threats and the broader climate of hatred and discrimination.
- Imran Khan is reportedly considering applying for the position of Oxford University Chancellor, following Lord Patten's resignation. Currently imprisoned on charges related to inciting violence, Khan's aide Sayed Z Bukhari mentioned that the decision is still under consultation.

#### United Kingdom

- The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) became the first host board in the modern era to pay a touring fee in bilateral cricket, announced ECB chief Richard Gould. Gould told Sky Sports on Friday that the ECB and other financially strong boards, such as those of India and Australia, have a significant responsibility to ensure the competitiveness of test cricket.
- Macquarie Asset Management will buy the remaining 20% of Britain's National Gas from National Grid, with the deal expected to close by early next year pending regulatory approval. National Gas operates Britain's 7,660 km gas transmission system and maintains over six million gas meters.
- Britain's new state-backed power company GB Energy will partner with the Crown Estate to boost clean energy projects, aiming to develop up to 30 gigawatts of new offshore wind farms by 2030. This initiative is expected to attract £30-60 billion in private investment and power nearly 20 million homes.

#### United States

- U.S. President Joe Biden will announce plans to reform the Supreme Court on Monday 29 July, likely supporting term limits for justices and an enforceable code of ethics, Politico reported. Biden is also expected to seek a constitutional amendment to limit immunity for presidents and some officeholders.
- Video game voice actors and motion-capture performers, represented by SAG-AFTRA, have gone on strike over AI-related protections, following failed contract negotiations with major gaming companies. This strike, effective July 26, adds to the ongoing Hollywood work stoppages due to similar AI concerns.

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