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Contact Us : Email : [marketing@ansechr.com](mailto:marketing@ansechr.com), Phone : 8698888000, Website : <https://www.ansechr.com/>

Our Head Office : 110/1A & 110/2B, Ansec House, Tank Road, Yerwada, Pune, Maharashtra - 411006

## INDIA UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Andhra Pradesh

- As of 25 August, an explosion at Escientia Pharma's plant in Andhra Pradesh killed 17 and injured 41, likely due to an electricity-related fire. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has ordered an inquiry and is overseeing the response efforts.
- A below-average monsoon has caused a water crisis in Tirumala, with only 5,800 lakh gallons remaining. The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) plans strict water regulation measures, as daily demand of 43 lakh gallons far exceeds the available supply, which is expected to last until December.
- India's first Monkeypox RT-PCR kit, the ErbaMDx MonkeyPox RT-PCR Kit, was launched by AMTZ and Transasia Diagnostics. Validated by ICMR and CDSCO, the kit features lyophilized components for ambient storage and a 12-month shelf life, marking a significant advancement in the country's diagnostic technology.

#### Delhi

- Hundreds of resident doctors in New Delhi resumed work after an 11-day strike over the alleged rape and murder of a junior doctor in Kolkata. The strike ended following a Supreme Court appeal, emphasizing that essential services like healthcare and judiciary cannot be disrupted.
- Delhi faced major disruptions on Thursday 22 August, due to a two-day strike by 14 autorickshaw and taxi unions protesting against app-based cab services. Commuters experienced significant delays, and union members gathered at Jantar Mantar to highlight the negative impact of app-hailed cabs on their businesses.

#### Goa

- Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant announced that Goa will be the permanent venue for the annual India Energy Week (IEW), as decided by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC). He highlighted the state's commitment to advancing the green and blue economies, and emphasized the economic benefits of hosting such international events.

#### Gujarat

- The Gujarat Assembly passed a bill on Friday 23 August, to establish special courts targeting disproportionate assets of government employees, bootleggers, GST scamsters, land and drug mafias, and elected representatives. These courts will handle cases involving prison terms of over three years and assets exceeding Rs 1 crore.
- The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) raised concerns about the contamination of rivers and water bodies in the state, urging the government to establish a permanent framework for monitoring and mitigating water pollution. Chaired by BJP MLA Jitu Vaghani, the PAC highlighted the alarming pollution levels in its report to the state assembly on Friday.

#### Haryana

- Poor maintenance of 11 kVA electricity feeders has caused significant damage to transformers at 66 kVA substations in Gurgaon and Faridabad, resulting in unscheduled power cuts. Haryana Vidyut Prasaran Nigam Limited (HVPNL) reported that two major transformers, valued at Rs 5 crore, were damaged last month alone.
- Haryana has released 11 Chandigarh Transport Undertaking (CTU) buses that were held in Panchkula. Despite a high-level meeting between UT and Haryana officials on Tuesday, a final resolution regarding the operation of CTU and Haryana Roadways buses within Chandigarh remains pending.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- Dharamsala's underground dustbin scheme, launched in 2017 under the Smart City project, has been scrapped after Rs 40 crore was spent, with 121 dustbins already removed due to failed technology delivery. This has left many areas without proper waste disposal, raising concerns among locals and tourists.

#### Karnataka

- The Karnataka government has informed the Union Ministry of Environment that there are no legal barriers to proceeding with the Mekedatu reservoir project and urged for the approval of terms of reference for an environmental impact assessment. The Supreme Court has not issued a stay on the project.
- Mysuru district recorded the second highest number of cybercrime cases in Karnataka from January 1 to July 10 this year, with 216 cases registered, 181 of which were within city police limits.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Andhra Pradesh

- Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad aims to make Andhra Pradesh a \$2 trillion economy by 2047, targeting a 15% annual GSDP growth. The state's "Viksit Andhra Pradesh@2047" vision document is set for release on October 2, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiling it.
- Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan announced the launch of 87 development projects worth ₹4,500 crore under MGNREGS in 13,326 gram panchayats. The projects will be finalized during 'grama sabhas' on August 23, with local involvement and oversight from PR&RD officials and sarpanches.

#### Delhi

- A delegation from the Joint Consultative Machinery (JCM) will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to push for the reinstatement of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). Meanwhile, Delhi Metro services on Phase-III corridors will start to aid commuters, particularly exam candidates.

#### Goa

- GFP President Vijai Sardesai has objected to amendments in the Goa Excise Duty Rules permitting outside entities to run retail liquor stores at Manohar International Airport. He has written to the chief secretary, demanding that liquor licenses be granted exclusively to Goans.
- Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant announced that all police stations in the state will be equipped to register and act on cybercrime complaints. He made this statement during the conclusion of a cybercrime investigation training session for Goa police personnel.

#### Gujarat

- Manufacturers of line pipes in Kutch, a key hub with an annual capacity of 3.6 million tonnes, have raised concerns about industry growth challenges. The reliance on imported American Petroleum Institute (API) grade steel, due to its limited availability in India, is a major issue affecting production.
- Surat's textile industry is urging the Gujarat government to introduce a textile policy, especially after Bihar recently announced its own. Industry leaders stress that without clear guidelines, potential investors are hesitant, hindering further growth in Surat, a major textile hub.
- The Gujarat assembly has passed the "Gujarat Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Bill, 2024," targeting fraudsters who exploit claims of supernatural powers.

#### Haryana

- The Punjab and Haryana High Court has postponed the next hearing on the stilt-plus-four floors policy to September 3, after being informed that the policy is on hold. The policy, approved by Haryana on July 2, raised concerns over the city's infrastructure.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- The Prashar Lake area in Mandi district is facing increasing landslides, raising concerns among locals and environmentalists. Terrain shifts, ground cracks, and soil instability, especially after heavy rains, are threatening four downstream villages and local infrastructure, prompting calls for urgent assessment to prevent a potential disaster.
- The local Met office has issued a yellow alert for heavy rain, thunderstorms, and lightning in isolated areas of Himachal Pradesh on August 27 and 28, with a low flash flood risk in parts of Shimla and Sirmaur districts until Saturday. A wet spell is expected across the state until August 29, with light rains recorded in several areas since Thursday evening.

#### Karnataka

- State-owned Mysuru Paints and Varnish Limited (MPVL), originally established by the Maharaja of Mysuru, will now supply paints and emulsions for government buildings in Mysuru. This move is intended to boost MPVL's annual turnover to Rs 500 crore for the 2024-25 financial year, up from Rs 352 crore, and position the company to better compete with private players.
- The Karnataka government has begun releasing water from the Tubachi Bableshtar lift irrigation scheme to border villages in Jat tehsil. The scheme lifts water from the Krishna river to fill reservoirs in Vijayapura, Bagalkot, and Belgavi districts.

**INDIA UPDATE****Highlights of this week****Madhya Pradesh**

- A delegation from Coimbatore's textile sector met with Indore industrialists and officials to explore investment opportunities and collaboration. The discussions, organized by the Association of Industries Madhya Pradesh (AIMP), focused on expanding spinning units in the Indore region.
- Over 40 people were detained in Chhatarpur, Madhya Pradesh, following a stone-pelting incident at the Kotwali police station. FIRs were filed against 46 identified and 150 unidentified individuals involved in the clash.

**Mumbai**

- The Ghatkopar-Andheri-Versova metro corridor in Mumbai, which began operations in June 2014, has surpassed 100 crore commuters. The corridor handles 500,000 passengers daily with frequent services, significantly enhancing commuter experience.
- Mumbai set a new record for its hottest August day, reaching 33.7°C on August 22. The IMD has issued a yellow alert for heavy rain in Mumbai and Thane starting August 23 due to a low-pressure area over the Arabian Sea.

**Pune**

- Pune Metro Airport Shuttle Bus Service No. 19 has moved its starting point from Ramwadi Metro Station to Yerwada Metro Station to enhance accessibility. The updated route now includes stops such as Neeta Park, Netaji High School, and Lohgaon Airport. Passengers should board the shuttle at Yerwada Metro Station and can check schedules on the official website.

**Punjab**

- Punjab's social justice department has allocated Rs 47.26 crore under the Ashirwad scheme to 9,268 beneficiaries across various districts. Financial aid for the years 2023-24 and 2024-25 has been distributed in districts including Amritsar, Ludhiana, and Patiala.
- Chandigarh's UT administration has relieved MC commissioner Anindita Mitra after her inter-cadre deputation ended, leaving only one Punjab cadre IAS officer in the administration. Key senior posts in the UT are typically held by Punjab cadre IAS officers.

**Rajasthan**

- The Jodhpur High Court ordered the retention of doctors appointed on an Urgent Temporary Basis (UTB) in the state's medical and health department, preventing their replacement under similar conditions. The ruling came after 42 doctors challenged their termination.
- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman began a two-day visit to Udaipur with a review meeting focused on addressing challenges in regional rural banks in the western and central regions. She stressed the need for expanding banking access to support India's development and urged collaboration among bank officials to effectively implement government schemes.

**Tamil Nadu**

- Tamil Nadu-based startup Space Zone India launched India's first reusable hybrid rocket, Mission RHUMI-2024, from Chennai, marking a milestone the day after the first National Space Day. The RHUMI-1 rocket carried three Cube satellites and 50 PICO satellites to gather data on global warming and climate change.
- The Trichy municipal administration has approved the city's first riverfront project along the southern bank of the Cauvery River. The ₹14 crore project aims to provide recreational space and help reduce river pollution.

**Telangana**

- Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy launched the 'SPEED' initiative, aiming to accelerate Telangana's development. The program focuses on completing 19 key projects, including riverfront development, new airports, and metro rail expansion.

**Uttar Pradesh**

- Uttar Pradesh has begun generating 528 MW from its solar power plant, a key milestone in its renewable energy efforts. The state is setting up nine solar parks with a total capacity of 3,840 MW, mainly in Bundelkhand, drawing significant investment to the sector.
- Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the campaign for the Meerapur by-poll in Muzaffarnagar, addressing concerns about safety and investment in the region. He highlighted improvements since his administration and emphasized the significance of the upcoming election, with the date yet to be announced.

**Upcoming News/Events****Madhya Pradesh**

- Doctors in Bhopal are calling for stricter measures to prevent violence and intimidation in healthcare settings. The Govt Autonomous Doctors' Federation, led by Dr. Rakesh Malviya, is advocating for a central medical protection Act to unify and strengthen protections for healthcare professionals across states.
- CM Mohan Yadav directed CRISP (Centre for Research and Industrial Staff Performance) to develop and implement training programs tailored to new industrial units in the state, emphasizing that these should enhance employment opportunities and benefit engineering and ITI students.

**Mumbai**

- Mumbai's Atal Setu will soon implement fines for traffic violations as the Intelligent Traffic Management System is set to launch. The system, expected to go live in two weeks, will enforce penalties for issues like speeding and lane-cutting.

**Pune**

- The Union Cabinet has approved the extension of Pune Metro Phase-I with the Swargate to Katraj Underground Line (Line-1B), spanning 5.46 kilometers and featuring three underground stations. Scheduled for completion by February 2029, the Rs 2,954.53 crore project aims to enhance connectivity across Pune and integrate with key transport hubs and recreational areas.

**Punjab**

- The MC slaughter house on Hambran Road, costing Rs 19.50 crore, remains underutilized and fails to curb illegal slaughter activities. Despite multiple efforts, officials have not succeeded in fully operationalizing the facility or addressing ongoing illegal practices.
- Mohali's deputy mayor Kuljit Singh Bedi has issued a legal notice to the Punjab transport department and GMADA to revive the Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Inter State Bus Terminus. In response, the transport department has directed general managers to ensure buses use the Mohali bus stand for entry and exit.

**Rajasthan**

- Rajasthan University will enforce mandatory internships for undergraduates, appointing counsellors to oversee them. The M.A. Dramatics course will be renamed to Master of Performing Arts, and a six-year completion limit is set for older courses.
- Rajasthan's Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) is investigating whether the recently busted al-Qaida-inspired module in Bhiwadi had any support in the Mewat region. An ATS team will coordinate with Delhi Police and may participate in interrogating the six terror suspects linked to al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS).

**Tamil Nadu**

- Coimbatore Medical College Hospital (CMCH) has implemented an attender pass system to restrict unauthorized access, allowing only one attender per patient. Visiting hours are now limited to 4pm to 6pm to further control visitor flow.
- The Madurai railway division is preparing Rameswaram station for operations as Rail Vikas Nigam Limited advances in completing the new rail bridge across the Pamban channel. Rameswaram station had been closed since December 2022

**Telangana**

- The Telangana government plans to issue an ordinance to expand the jurisdiction of HYDRA, following internal dissent over its current scope. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's earlier attempt to extend GHMC's reach beyond the Outer Ring Road faced resistance.
- The Telangana Public Service Commission (TSPSC) has announced that the Group 2 services exam will be held on December 15 and 16, 2024, with two shifts each day. Candidates can check the detailed schedule on the TSPSC official website.

**Uttar Pradesh**

- For the Maha Kumbh 2025, 30 pontoon bridges will be monitored 24/7 by AI-enabled CCTV cameras to ensure safety and prevent overloading. The system will alert the Integrated Command and Control Centre in case of emergencies or excessive traffic, with each bridge designed to handle up to 5 tonnes.
- In Kanpur, Divisional Commissioner Amit Gupta chaired a meeting with high-ranking officials from various departments and entrepreneurs to address and resolve issues faced by businesses. The discussion aimed to streamline solutions across departments including KDA, KMC, PWD, Kesco, and UP Jal Nigam.



## GLOBAL UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Africa

- The UN has expressed concern over the latest tensions in Libya, where rival armed factions have mobilized in response to political efforts to oust Central Bank of Libya head Sadiq al-Kabir.
- Mali has declared a national disaster due to floods that have killed 30 people and impacted over 47,000 since the start of the rainy season. The UN's OCHA reports that flooding has affected over 716,000 people across West and Central Africa this season, with above-average rainfall expected.
- Uganda has confirmed two additional mpox infections, bringing the total to four cases. The new cases involve the clade 1b strain, which has raised global concern due to its increased transmissibility. The outbreak was first reported on July 24, and the latest cases include a truck driver.

#### America

- Wildfires in São Paulo state are affecting up to 30 cities, with two deaths reported from an industrial plant. Dry weather and strong winds are exacerbating the situation, and smoke has obscured parts of São Paulo city.
- Cuba experienced power outages of 14 hours or more per day, leaving residents vulnerable to intense summer heat and humidity. The state-run power company reported that breakdowns had taken six plants offline on the outdated grid, with only minor relief expected over the weekend despite high humidity and temperatures up to 35°C (95°F).

#### China

- China's Politburo meeting stressed the importance of fostering national unity and stability in Western China while focusing on rural revitalization and clean energy development. The government denied Western human rights accusations regarding Xinjiang and Tibet, calling them fabricated.
- Taiwan President Lai Ching-te affirmed Taiwan's commitment to its democratic way of life and rejection of Chinese Communist rule during a visit to a frontline island. His remarks came as China conducted military maneuvers around Taiwan, highlighting ongoing regional tensions.

#### Europe

- Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has signed a law banning religious organizations linked to Moscow, following parliament's approval earlier this month. The law targets a Russia-linked Orthodox church branch, marking a significant break with an institution accused of supporting Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.
- Russia has declared a state of emergency in part of the Voronezh region after an overnight drone attack. The attack, which involved five intercepted drones and resulting fires, caused explosions but did not damage civilian buildings; authorities have evacuated 200 people from affected areas.

#### Middle East

- Israeli attacks early Saturday (24 August) killed at least 12 Palestinians, including two children and a woman, and injured 15 others in Gaza's Khan Younis and Al-Nuseirat camp areas, according to the Palestinian news agency Wafa.
- Singapore Airlines, British Airways, and Lufthansa have resumed flights over Afghanistan, deeming it safer than the increasingly risky Middle Eastern airspace. This shift follows the Taliban's takeover and the closure of Russian airspace, driven by current geopolitical tensions.

#### Pakistan

- At least 11 police officers were killed and seven injured in Pakistan's Punjab province when bandits attacked their convoy with guns and rocket-propelled grenades on Thursday 22 August. The ambush occurred in Rahim Yar Khan district when one vehicle in the convoy malfunctioned.
- A bomb blast in Pishin, southwestern Pakistan, on Saturday 24 August killed two children and injured 16 people, including seven policemen. The remote-controlled bomb was planted on a motorcycle parked near the police headquarters, according to officials.

#### United Kingdom

- The number of British visas for foreign health and care workers and family members of international students has dropped significantly due to recent immigration restrictions. Health and care worker visas fell 26% year-on-year to 89,095, with a dramatic 81% decrease in the April-June period.
- Britain's government has approved a plan to expand London City Airport's capacity by 2.5 million passengers, increasing it to 9 million by 2031, while keeping the Saturday afternoon flight curfew. This decision marks one of the first major infrastructure approvals by the new Labour government.

#### United States

- The U.S. has targeted 105 Russian and Chinese firms for aiding the Russian military, as part of ongoing efforts by the Biden administration to maintain pressure on companies supporting Moscow's war in Ukraine, despite existing Western sanctions.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Africa

- The U.S. military will send 24 additional armored vehicles to Kenyan police deployed in Haiti as part of a security operation against armed gangs. The delivery, which includes mine-resistant ambush protected (MRAP) vehicles and Overhead Gunner Protection Kits, aims to support the Kenyan contingent.
- For the second year in a row, Sudan is experiencing a cholera outbreak, with at least 28 deaths reported in the past month amid ongoing conflict and heavy rains. Since July 22, 658 cholera cases have been recorded across five states, according to WHO country director Shible Sahbani.

#### America

- Canada's rail shutdown may still delay the loading of bulk grain ships at west-coast ports, despite government efforts to end stoppages at major railroads. Over 20 bulk cargo ships are at risk, and while workers at Canadian National Railway have returned, they plan to strike again on Monday, and Canadian Pacific Kansas City has yet to lift its lockout.
- Starting next week, Brazil will enforce stricter entry rules, requiring foreign travelers without a visa to either continue to their destination or return home. This move aims to address a rise in migrants using Brazil as a stopover to apply for refuge, particularly from Asia.

#### China

- The Philippines has urged China to stop "provocative and dangerous actions" after accusing Beijing of deploying flares from Subi Reef and harassing a Filipino aircraft near Scarborough Shoal. The incidents, occurring alongside mutual accusations of dangerous maneuvers in the South China Sea, have heightened tensions between the two nations.
- China and Belarus will bolster cooperation in trade, security, energy, and finance, and improve industrial supply chains following a meeting between their leaders. Belarus also plans to strengthen ties with China's Greater Bay Area.

#### Europe

- A volcano in southwestern Iceland continued to erupt for a second day, spewing lava and smoke and prompting the evacuation of a nearby luxury spa resort. Initially, lava flowed at a rate of up to 2,000 cubic meters per second, but it has since slowed, with current activity resembling the last eruption in May.

#### Middle East

- Negotiators in Cairo are working on new proposals to bridge gaps between Israel and Hamas amid worsening humanitarian conditions in Gaza, including soaring malnutrition and the discovery of polio. Israeli airstrikes have killed 50 people in Gaza, with victims still lying on roads or trapped under rubble.
- Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani will visit Iran to discuss bilateral and regional issues, including the Gaza ceasefire efforts. The visit comes after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's recent trip to the Middle East and amid tensions related to Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh's killing.

#### Pakistan

- Pakistan's Telecommunication Authority plans to regulate VPN usage by whitelisting certain proxy networks and blocking others, according to PTA Chairman Hafeezur Rehman. This move comes amid increased VPN use to access X (formerly Twitter), which has been banned in Pakistan since February 19, particularly by political parties like Pakistan-Tehreek-e-Insaf.
- Pakistan is advancing towards securing a new \$7 billion loan programme from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with hopes for board approval in September, according to Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb. The agreement, reached in July, is pending final approval and requires confirmation of financing from partners like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and China.

#### United Kingdom

- British energy regulator Ofgem will increase the price cap on household energy bills by 10% to £1,717 annually starting October 1. The rise, driven by volatile global gas markets and geopolitical conflicts, particularly the war in Ukraine, will impact many households.

#### United States

- White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan will visit China from August 27-29 to discuss key issues with top Chinese diplomat Wang Yi, including Taiwan, the U.S. fentanyl crisis, and tensions in various global regions. This trip aims to manage U.S.-China relations ahead of the November presidential election, marking the first visit by a U.S. national security adviser to China since 2016.
- India and the US signed two key defense agreements—the Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) and a Memorandum of Agreement on Liaison Officers—during Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh's visit to Washington. The SOSA aims to ensure reciprocal priority support for critical defense resources and enhance cooperation under the US-India Defense Technology and Trade Initiative.

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