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## INDIA UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Andhra Pradesh

- The Andhra Pradesh government has declared NTR district as "Flood-affected" following unprecedented heavy rainfall on August 30 and 31, 2024. Some areas remain submerged, with rainfall in some parts exceeding 30 cm in under 48 hours, surpassing annual averages.
- The government has formed a high-level committee to propose measures to prevent industrial accidents, especially in red-category industries, following a recent explosion at Escientia Advanced Sciences Pvt. Ltd. The committee, led by retired IAS officer Vasudha Mishra, includes key officials from various departments and organizations.

#### Delhi

- Delhi Metro set a new record with 77.48 lakh passenger journeys on August 20, surpassing the previous high of 71.09 lakh set in February. Over the past month, it broke its record 17 times between August 12 and September 12, according to DMRC's Anuj Dayal.
- The Delhi transport department mandates FASTag for all buses at ISBTs, implementing a uniform ₹500 parking fee from September 14-15. The move aims to reduce unauthorized parking, ease traffic congestion, and improve flow in key areas around ISBTs

#### Goa

- Goa's Chief Minister Pramod Sawant expressed concern over rising cancer cases and emphasized early diagnosis for effective treatment. Flagging off the Cancer Screening Abhiyan Van in Sankhali, he urged residents to utilize the state's screening services, highlighting lifestyle changes to prevent the disease.

#### Gujarat

- Eight youths, aged 20-25, drowned in the Meshwo River in Gujarat's Gandhinagar district while immersing in a Ganesha idol. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh for the victims' families and expressed condolences on social media.
- During Ganeshotsav festivities at Elagan Society in Jamnagar, around 100 people, including 30 children, were hospitalized due to food poisoning after consuming prasad. Prompt medical action was taken, and most victims were discharged after treatment, while local authorities and social leaders visited the affected area to offer support.

#### Haryana

- The BJP and Congress have both announced their candidates for the upcoming Haryana assembly elections. Congress has declared 86 candidates, including Aditya Surjewala, with nine seats still undecided, while BJP has released its list with key figures yet to be confirmed. The last day for filing nominations is approaching.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- Moderate rain continues in parts of Himachal Pradesh, with Katula receiving the highest rainfall of 78.5 mm since Friday (13th September) evening, as per the meteorological department. A total of 156 roads, including National Highway 5, remain closed due to landslides and flash floods. The state has reported 168 deaths due to rain-related incidents since the monsoon began on June 27, with losses amounting to ₹1,324 crore.
- On Saturday 14 September, a two-hour bandh was observed in Himachal Pradesh, led by VHP and business groups, protesting unauthorized mosque constructions and recent police actions. Protests and shop closures were reported in several towns, with minimal impact in Shimla.

#### Karnataka

- A one-kilometer-long national tricolor was displayed along B. Rachaiah Double Road in Chamarajanagar on Sunday, 15 September to celebrate International Day of Democracy. The display extended from B.R. Ambedkar Circle to Gamasamudra, coinciding with a human chain formed in the border district.
- Following reports of 4,228 acres of forest land being allocated for mining in Karnataka over 14 years, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) issued a notice on Sunday, 15 September to state and Central authorities. The NGT's principal bench, led by Justice Prakash Shrivastava, noted issues regarding environmental governance and the extension of mining leases for an additional 5,000 acres of forest land.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Andhra Pradesh

- Due to poor performance in a competency test, the government has decided that CBSE Class 10 students in 1,000 schools in Andhra Pradesh will take the State Board exams this academic year. This move follows an internal assessment highlighting low competency levels.
- On September 15, members of the Parents Association of Andhra Pradesh (PAAP) criticized the state's decision to delay the implementation of the CBSE examination system in 1,000 state-run schools. PAAP leaders argued that shifting students to the State Secondary School of Examination (SSE) Board for the 2024-25 assessments, after four months into the academic year, could negatively affect students.

#### Delhi

- The Delhi Metro has introduced the 'Multiple Journey QR Ticket' (MJQRT) feature on its app, allowing passengers to recharge up to ₹3,000 for daily travel with a single QR code. MJQRT offers eco-friendly benefits, discounts during peak and off-peak hours, and secure digital payments without requiring a security deposit.

#### Goa

- Mormugao Port Authority (MPA) sees a 40% rise in cruise passengers for FY 2023-24 and expects further growth with the completion of the International and Domestic Cruise Terminal in Goa by March 2025. This development aims to boost tourism, the local economy, and sustainable infrastructure, enhancing Goa's position in the global cruise market.
- Goa's Mines Directorate is set to e-auction 7.56 lakh metric tonnes of iron ore with prices between ₹895 and ₹1,680 per ton. Additionally, Vedanta Ltd has started operations on the Bicholim-Mulgao block, and environment clearance was granted for the Monte De Sirigao Mineral Block.

#### Gujarat

- The Gujarat Animal Welfare Board has banned using, selling, and producing glue traps for catching rats, citing cruelty under the Animal Cruelty Act. In response, Rajkot police have registered five offenses against traders selling the traps and enforced the ban to ensure compliance.

#### Haryana

- Paddy procurement in Haryana for the Kharif marketing season 2024-25 starts on September 23 and runs until November 15, with an estimated 84 lakh metric tonnes expected. A total of 241 mandis/procurement centers have been established for the process.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- India's first API fermentation unit in Nalagarh, established under the PLI scheme, has begun large-scale production. Initially supplying Gujarat and Uttarakhand, it aims to produce 400 tonnes of potassium clavulanate annually, meeting about 60% of the domestic demand of 700 tonnes per year.
- Himachal Pradesh has become the first state to allow property seizures in illegal liquor cases, with new amendments making such offenses cognizable and non-bailable. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced the creation of an excise police force to bolster enforcement.

#### Karnataka

- The permanent Circuit Bench of the Karnataka State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (KSCDRC) in Kalaburagi, approved in June 2022, will be inaugurated on Tuesday, September 17, and begin operations immediately.
- Excessive rain this monsoon has driven up vegetable prices, including onions. Additionally, milk prices in the state are expected to rise for the second time in three months, with a proposed increase of Rs 5 per litre. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is expected to approve a Rs 2-3 per litre hike.

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

- Intiyaz Ali from Bhopal discussed with Nepal's government creating self-employment opportunities through plastic waste management to address climate change in the Himalayas. The initiative includes technology transfer for road construction using plastic waste and aims to involve local communities, particularly women, in conservation efforts while managing plastic waste from the region.
- Government engineering colleges in the city have filled nearly 99% of their undergraduate seats through the centralised online counselling, which concluded on Sunday. No additional admission rounds are planned.

**Mumbai**

- The Navi Mumbai Municipal Transport Corporation (NMMT) has launched two new AC superfast bus services: one from Nerul to Mantralaya and another from Kharghar to Mantralaya via Atal Setu. Passengers are encouraged to use these services to help increase their frequency in the future.
- A gas leak at a chemical factory in Morivali MIDC, Maharashtra, has caused widespread alarm and discomfort, with fumes dispersing throughout Ambarnath. Emergency teams are on-site to assess the situation, but no injuries or fatalities have been reported.

**Pune**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Hubli to Pune Vande Bharat Express virtually from Jamshedpur on September 15. A trial run took place on September 11, but the start date for regular service had not yet been set.
- The Pune Municipal Corporation launched a targeted containment effort in response to rising vector-borne diseases, reporting 202 Dengue, 176 Chikungunya, and 101 Zika cases this year. The initiative, which expanded citywide after successful trials in Kharadi and Erandwane, aims to tackle mosquito breeding and improve public health.

**Punjab**

- Punjab has seen a rise in paddy straw pelletisation after receiving Rs 12.3 crore in central government subsidies to set up pelletisation units. This process converts agricultural residue into compact pellets for use as fuel in thermal power plants and brick kilns.

**Rajasthan**

- Rajasthan has set a new monsoon rainfall record this year with 668.5mm of rain, surpassing the previous record of 664mm set in 1975. This year's average rainfall, noted by Jaipur Met office director Radhey Shyam Sharma, marks the highest in 49 years.
- Ajmer reported three dengue cases on Wednesday, while 621 people visited JLN Hospital with seasonal infections. Flooding and waterlogging from recent rains have worsened the situation, leading to increased infections.

**Tamil Nadu**

- Southern Tamil Nadu has seen a rise in temple tourism with over 18 crore visitors from January to July, including significant numbers in Trichy, Madurai, and other districts. Industry experts urge for better facilities, cleanliness, and additional attractions at religious sites to enhance the tourism experience.

**Telangana**

- The Telangana government will provide Rs 16,500 to each flood-hit family, sanction Indiramma houses for those who lost their homes, and offer Rs 10,000 per acre for crop damages. Flood relief funds will be transferred directly to the property owners' accounts.
- The irrigation department reported that 773 water tanks and canals breached during recent floods, estimating a need for 560 crore for repairs. Of this, 75 crore is for temporary fixes, and 483 crore is for permanent repairs.

**Uttar Pradesh**

- In response to the Kolkata doctor's rape-murder, the Uttar Pradesh government issued a 21-point guideline to improve the safety of medical staff, especially during night shifts. The guidelines, issued by Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh, emphasize the right to equality and a dignified life under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.
- On Sunday 15 September, 46 Adi Kailash pilgrims, including 30 from Tamil Nadu, 10 from Punjab, and one from Delhi, were airlifted to safety after being stranded due to a landslide in Pithoragarh. Unfortunately, a 44-year-old pilgrim from Punjab died from illness, and the remaining pilgrims will be rescued by helicopter soon.

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

- The Madhya Pradesh Forest Department has ordered an inquiry into unauthorized constructions in the tiger corridor between Bandhavgarh and Sanjay reserves, following a complaint by activist Ajay Dubey. The National Wildlife Board had earlier recommended the demolition of these structures, built by the state tourism department on forest land.
- Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced that the state government will support strengthening the Dugdh Sangh, aiming to boost Ujjain Cooperative Dugdh Sangh's production capacity to 10 lakh tonnes and achieve a projected profit of Rs 100 crore. Efforts will focus on enhancing the cooperative's role at the grassroots level.

**Mumbai**

- The government holiday for Eid-e-Milad in Mumbai has been moved from September 16 to September 18 to avoid clashing with Ganapati immersion festivities. Meanwhile, over 48,000 Ganesh and Gauri idols have been immersed in the city's sea and artificial ponds, with the immersion accompanied by chants and prayers.
- The Delhi-Mumbai-Delhi route, the busiest in India, will see increased competition in November as Vistara and IndiGo expand operations. Currently served by six airlines with 55 daily flights, this route will be further impacted by the upcoming merger of Vistara with Air India and the opening of new airports in Navi Mumbai and Noida next year.

**Pune**

- India's first hydrogen valley project will be set up in Pune by Gensol Engineering in partnership with Matrix Gas and Renewables Limited. The green hydrogen plant will be constructed using the electrolysis route, with the project supported by the National Chemical Laboratories (NCL) in the Kurkumbh region.
- The Maharashtra government has approved a 53-km six-lane expressway connecting Pune to Shirur, which will link with the Samruddhi Expressway. This Rs 9,565 crore project, developed in six stages, will alleviate congestion in Wagholi, Yerawada, and Shirur, and significantly reduce travel time.

**Punjab**

- The Punjab Civil Medical Services Association (PCMSA) called off its service suspension plan after the state government agreed to their demands. The government will introduce a security framework for medical professionals at 24x7 healthcare centers within a week.

**Rajasthan**

- CM Bhajan Lal Sharma reported strong interest from South Korean and Japanese investors for the Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit 2024. He also announced plans for a South Korea Corridor in Rajasthan, similar to the existing Japanese Corridor.
- BSP state president Bhagwan Singh Baba has requested CM Bhajan Lal Sharma and Governor Haribhau Bagade to cancel an RPSC recruitment ad due to lack of reserved seats for SC/ST/OBC categories. He called for a new ad to be issued for the 733 approved posts.

**Tamil Nadu**

- The district administration plans to purify and use water from five abandoned quarries in Madukkarai for industrial purposes. They aim to consolidate and treat the water from these quarries in one location to reduce costs and have hired a consultant to assess the project's feasibility.

**Telangana**

- The Telangana government's upcoming MSME policy, set to launch on September 18, 2024, will feature a Rs 100 crore technology upgradation fund aimed at boosting MSMEs, particularly in aerospace and defense.
- The Telangana government reported flood damages of approximately Rs 10,300 crore and requested the central team to revise guidelines for increased financial aid. Initially, the state estimated damages at Rs 5,438 crore and sought relief from the Centre.

**Uttar Pradesh**

- Prayagraj airport's terminal expansion is progressing rapidly, with capacity increasing from 350 to 850 passengers starting next month. By December, the airport will feature the highest number of X-ray machines, check-in counters, and aerobridges in the state, with the terminal building expanding from 6,700 sqm to 20,830 sqm.
- The UP government is considering introducing a fleet of 500 e-autorickshaws to enhance connectivity between Metro stations and nearby areas, complementing the existing 700 electric buses. This move aims to improve last-mile connectivity across seven cities.

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

- On Sunday 15 September, Moroccan authorities stopped dozens of migrants from breaching a border fence to enter the Spanish enclave of Ceuta. This attempt followed social media calls for a mass migration effort. Spain's enclaves Ceuta and Melilla on Morocco's Mediterranean coast are the only land borders between the EU and Africa.

**America**

- A fuel truck explosion in Haiti's southern peninsula on Saturday 14 September, killed 24 people and injured 40 others, with half of the survivors suffering third-degree burns. Prime Minister Garry Conille visited the site near Miragoane and reported that the most critically injured were airlifted for specialized care, while local hospitals were overwhelmed.
- Peru's economy grew by 4.47% year-on-year in July, marking its fourth consecutive month of expansion, driven by sectors like manufacturing and mining, despite a 3.93% decline in agriculture. The growth surpassed the central bank's estimate and supports the government's annual growth target of 3.2%.

**China**

- China's military condemned the transit of two German navy ships through the Taiwan Strait, calling it "public hping" and a security risk. China claims sovereignty over the strait, while the U.S. and Taiwan consider it an international waterway. Chinese forces monitored and warned the German vessels during their passage.
- China's top legislative body approved a plan to raise the retirement age to address the economic strain of a shrinking workforce, with reforms starting in 2025. The retirement age will increase to 63 for men, 58 for women in white-collar jobs, and 55 for women in blue-collar roles, phased over 15 years.

**Europe**

- Eight people died attempting to cross the Channel from France to England, French authorities confirmed on Sunday 15 September. This tragedy follows the deaths of 12 earlier this month, increasing pressure on the British and French governments to address the dangerous boat crossings.
- A Russian-guided bomb hit a multi-storey apartment building in Kharkiv, injuring at least 41 people and triggering a fire, according to the regional governor. President Zelenskiy urged Ukraine's Western allies to provide more weapons and air defense systems, emphasizing the need to strike deeper into Russia.

**Middle East**

- Jordan's King Abdullah has appointed Jafar Hassan, a Harvard-educated technocrat, as the new prime minister following the resignation of Bisher Khasawneh. Hassan, who previously served as a key palace aide, will address economic challenges and continue democratic reforms amid recent parliamentary gains by the Islamist opposition.

**Pakistan**

- Karachi is experiencing severe power outages, with residents facing up to 12 hours of load shedding daily. Frequent outages disrupt water supply, and power cuts occur in multiple periods throughout the day and night.
- The Pakistan government has ordered all government employees to refrain from using social media without permission to prevent the disclosure of official information. This directive is in accordance with the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1964, as detailed in an office memorandum issued by the Establishment Division.

**United Kingdom**

- UK businesses are concerned that the Labour government's proposed increases in employee protections could make hiring new staff riskier, according to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI).
- Manchester and the West Midlands have unveiled plans for a new railway line between Birmingham and Manchester, aiming to deliver 85% of the benefits of the canceled HS2 project at a lower cost. The proposed line could boost the combined economies of both cities by approximately £70 billion annually, addressing the connectivity issues exacerbated by last year's HS2 cuts.

**United States**

- A North Dakota judge overturned the state's near-total abortion ban, ruling that the state constitution protects the right to abortion before fetal viability. The decision, expected to take effect in 14 days, is set to reinstate abortion access in North Dakota for the first time in over a year. The state plans to appeal the ruling.

**Africa**

- On Saturday 14 September, Tunisia's highest court directed the electoral commission to reinstate two presidential candidates for the October poll, cautioning that non-compliance could undermine the election's legitimacy. This decision comes amid rising political tension and concerns from the opposition and civil society about potential election rigging favoring President Kais Saied's re-election.

**America**

- Ecuador will enforce a nationwide blackout from 10 p.m. on Wednesday (18 September) to 6 a.m. on Thursday (19 September) for essential maintenance of its electricity system, according to a government announcement.
- Canada is in discussions to join the expanded AUKUS pact, focusing on collaboration in AI and quantum computing. Defence Minister Bill Blair expressed optimism about Canada's involvement in specific projects alongside the U.S., Britain, and Australia.

**China**

- Shanghai has halted transportation, recalled ships, and closed tourist spots, including Shanghai Disney Resort, as it braces for Typhoon Bebinca, which could be the strongest storm to hit the city since 1949. The Category 1 typhoon, with winds of 144 kph, is expected to make landfall along China's eastern coast after midnight on Monday 16 September.
- China's commerce ministry strongly opposes U.S. tariff hikes on Chinese imports, urging the U.S. to correct its actions and lift all tariffs. It also warned that China will take necessary measures to protect its companies' interests.

**Europe**

- Poland's Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski proposed halting welfare benefits for Ukrainian men of military age living in Europe, suggesting it would encourage their return to fight in Ukraine and reduce financial burdens on host countries. He argued that social payments should not incentivize draft avoidance, with over 4.1 million Ukrainians under temporary protection in the EU, 22% of them adult men.

**Middle East**

- The G7 foreign ministers condemned Iran's supply of ballistic missiles to Russia, urging Iran to stop supporting Russia's war in Ukraine. They vowed to implement new measures in response, citing the threat to global security.
- Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian will attend the BRICS summit in Russia from October 22-24, amid rising tensions over Iran's alleged supply of ballistic missiles to Russia for use in Ukraine. The U.S. and European nations imposed new sanctions on Iran, but Tehran denied delivering any missiles to Moscow.

**Pakistan**

- Pakistan is renegotiating contracts with independent power producers to address unsustainable electricity tariffs, which are contributing to social unrest and industry closures amid severe economic strain and high inflation.
- Militant attacks in Pakistan's Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces are raising security concerns ahead of the SCO meeting in Islamabad on October 15-16. The increased violence, attributed to both Baloch separatists and TTP, aims to disrupt the event amidst heightened political tensions.

**United Kingdom**

- Britain's National Grid will sell its Electricity System Operator (ESO) to the UK government for £630 million, including debt. The sale, expected to finalize by October 1, will facilitate the establishment of the National Energy System Operator (NESO), aimed at overseeing a transition to cleaner, more secure energy sources.
- The UK government has decided not to fund the redevelopment of Northern Ireland's Casement Park for Euro 2028 due to escalating costs and concerns about meeting the construction timeline. The project's budget has surged from £180 million to over £400 million, making timely completion uncertain.

**United States**

- Wildfires near Los Angeles, which have burned over 110,000 acres, slowed with cooler temperatures but continue to threaten suburbs. The largest fire, the Bridge Fire, has destroyed more than 40 homes and damaged ski area infrastructure. Firefighters are making progress due to reduced temperatures.

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