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INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Andhra Pradesh

- A low-pressure area has formed over the Bay of Bengal, triggering heavy rains across north-coastal Andhra Pradesh, including districts like Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam. Water levels in the Godavari River rose significantly, with over 9.6 lakh cusecs being released from the SAC barrage into the Bay of Bengal.

Delhi

- Over 30% of vehicles in Delhi lack a valid Pollution Under Control Certificate (PUC), with 26.2 lakh out of 82.9 lakh active vehicles not renewing their certificates. However, the 3.17 lakh electric vehicles in the city are exempt, and a portion of the non-complying vehicles are no longer in use.
- The DPCC has banned idol immersion in the Yamuna and other water bodies, with a ₹50,000 fine for violators. New eco-friendly guidelines mandate temporary immersion sites, prohibition of Plaster of Paris idols, and water quality monitoring.

Goa

- Goa's state cabinet has approved a 130% increase in the minimum land price for commercial properties in the rapidly growing Bardez and Pernem talukas, raising it from Rs 3,000 to Rs 8,000 per sqm. Residential buyers purchasing up to 500 sqm will still pay the old rate.
- Chief Minister Pramod Sawant laid the foundation stone for the 2.9 km Assonora bypass in Bicholim, a Rs 160 crore project by MVR Infrastructure, set to be completed in two years. The four-lane bypass, named after freedom fighter Bala Raya Mapari, aims to enhance connectivity and reduce traffic congestion between Bardez and Bicholim.

Gujarat

- In September 2019, Gujarat became one of the first states to adopt the Centre's amended Motor Vehicles Act, imposing higher fines for violating the mandatory helmet rule for two-wheeler riders. However, this led to widespread protests, particularly in Rajkot, the hometown of then CM Vijay Rupani, where opposition to the helmet rule was most intense.
- In August, Gujarat's new car sales grew by 9.3%, with 28,193 units sold, compared to 25,792 in August 2023, per FADA data. This contrasts with a 4.5% decline in pan-India passenger vehicle sales, reflecting positive consumer sentiment in the state.

Haryana

- In August, private agencies hired by MCG processed only 53,935 metric tonnes of legacy waste at Bandhwari, marking a 55% drop from July's 1.2 lakh MT. With daily waste processing capacity down to 2,000 MT from 4,000 MT, meeting the December deadline to clear all waste seems challenging.

Himachal Pradesh

- The Himachal Pradesh assembly passed a bill revoking pension benefits for legislators disqualified under the anti-defection law. CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu introduced the bill to discourage party-switching and uphold voters' mandate, impacting the current pension of ₹36,000 for MLAs after a five-year term.
- To address its economic crisis, Himachal Pradesh, under Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, has passed a Bill withdrawing pension benefits from disqualified MLAs due to anti-defection violations. The new law also includes measures to recover pensions already disbursed to disqualified members.

Karnataka

- Karnataka experienced excess rainfall in August, continuing the trend from June (+2%) and July (+51%), according to KSNDCM data. However, Malnad and coastal regions faced a rainfall deficit in August, with these areas only recording excess rainfall in July during the first three months.
- Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah's office spends approximately Rs 54 lakh per month on maintaining his official and personal social media accounts, as revealed by an RTI query. Activist Marlinga Gowda Mali Patil raised concerns about these "hefty" costs amid reports of stalled development work and struggles to pay contractors.

Upcoming News/Events

Andhra Pradesh

- A high-level central team, led by MHA's Sanjeev Kumar Jindal, assessed flood-affected Krishna, NTR, and Guntur districts in Andhra Pradesh to evaluate damage and review relief measures. The team inspected areas like Prakasam Barrage and Budameru breaches, assuring swift central government assistance for recovery.

Delhi

- Delhi Metro's Rithala-Narela corridor will be extended to Kundli-Nathupur in Haryana, as announced by Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot. The Delhi government has approved the proposal in principle and will forward it to the central government to initiate the tendering process.
- Onions will be sold at a subsidized rate of ₹35 per kg—about half the market price—at 20 high-footfall locations in Delhi, as announced by Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Venkatesh Joshi. This move aims to counteract rising prices due to supply disruptions from heavy rains and depleting stocks.

Goa

- Flight connectivity between Kolhapur and Goa will start on September 19, with a private airline offering a one-hour service twice a week. Tickets are priced between ₹4,000 and ₹5,000. The flight will depart from Kolhapur at 11:30 AM and return from Goa at 1:00 PM, providing a faster alternative to the five-hour land route.
- The National Board for Wildlife has approved the Goa-Tamnar Transmission Project. Despite Karnataka's earlier rejection due to environmental concerns, the state will re-evaluate the project following intervention from PM Modi, with NBWL stipulating that work cannot commence in Karnataka until further approval is granted.

Gujarat

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually launch Rs 27 crore water harvesting projects under the 'Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari initiative' in Surat on Friday. The joint initiative by the central Jal Shakti Ministry and the Gujarat government aims to improve groundwater levels and enhance rainwater harvesting in Surat, Tapi, Dang, Navsari, and Valsad districts under the National Water Mission.
- The Gujarat government is set to introduce a policy offering increased financial assistance of Rs 30 crore or more to encourage the creation of centres of excellence, fostering research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Eligible entities include universities, industry associations, and local bodies.

Haryana

- For a sweeper position in Haryana government offices offering Rs 15,000 per month, over 6,000 postgraduates, 40,000 graduates, and 1.2 lakh candidates with class 12 qualifications have applied. This highlights both the appeal of government job stability and the challenges of a shrinking job market, with applications processed through Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam Limited (HKRN).

Himachal Pradesh

- The Himachal Pradesh government will preserve the Gondhla Fort in Lahaul-Spiti using its own resources and local support, rather than handing it over to ASI. This decision was announced during the state assembly's monsoon session.
- Himachal Pradesh will cover 28% of the Rs 1,734.70 crore cost for the 13.65 km Shimla Ropeway Project, which will be executed on an EPS basis. The interest rate will be determined through a tripartite agreement with the Finance Ministry and Government of India.

Karnataka

- Karnataka's Medical Education Minister, Dr. Sharan Prakash Patil, has ordered the formation of a fee regulatory committee to monitor nursing college fees across the state. This decision follows numerous complaints about excessive fees, which have placed a significant financial burden on students.
- Under the Karnataka Epidemic Disease Act (2020), recently gazetted to address dengue as an epidemic, individuals and businesses must now pay fines for mosquito breeding spots in and around their properties. This move aims to enforce preventive measures and curb the spread of dengue-related ailments.

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

- Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) demolished dilapidated buildings, illegal constructions, and cleared obstacles on Friday 6 Sept. to expedite infrastructure projects and address safety concerns.
- Chetan Hemant Sapkal, a talented shooter from Madhya Pradesh Shooting Academy, won a bronze medal in the 25m pistol event at the Second World Deaf Shooting Championship in Hanover, Germany.

Mumbai

- Mumbai's civic body has issued a warning for the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, advising caution against stingray and jellyfish bites during idol immersions starting Saturday 7 Sept. Citizens are encouraged to use lifeguards, wear protective clothing, and adhere to safety instructions at beaches to avoid injuries.
- Mumbai's Mount Mary Fair traffic regulations include closing Mount Mary Road to all vehicles except those with authorized passes and emergency vehicles from 06:00 to 23:00 hrs. Kane Road and Pereira Road will be one-way with restricted entry, and no parking will be enforced on several roads from September 8 to 16.

Pune

- MSRTC workers' strike over salary demands has severely impacted Pune, with around 450 of 900 buses not operating and disruptions at depots like Shivajinagar and Vallabh Nagar. About 35 of 251 depots statewide are closed.
- Pune residents face worsening water issues despite a boost to 40,000 water tankers in the past four months. Areas like Kharadi and Lohegaon are severely affected, with ongoing shortages despite heavy rains and a stalled 24/7 water supply project, leaving citizens frustrated and burdened by high costs.

Punjab

- On the International Day of Clean Air For Blue Skies, the municipal corporation organized a plantation drive at Nehru Rose Garden under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign. MC commissioner Sandeep Rishi led the initiative, followed by a 'tree walk' for students from the Residential School for Meritorious Students.

Rajasthan

- Heavy rains since Friday morning have led to widespread flooding in Ajmer district and surrounding areas. Ana Sagar Lake overflowed, inundating link roads and colonies. Schools in Ajmer were closed on Sept 7 and 8.
- Nearly 6 lakh elderly individuals have benefited from the Ramashray Ward and OPD facilities established across all district hospitals in the state since their launch on March 14 this year. The state government has proposed Rs 22 crore to further enhance geriatric healthcare services in state hospitals.

Tamil Nadu

- On Friday 6 Sept., Tamil Nadu signed agreements with three US companies for a total investment of ₹850 crore to establish manufacturing and R&D centers in electronics, semiconductors, and other sectors. The agreements were finalized during Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's official visit to the USA, where he met with corporate leaders in Chicago.
- On Friday 6 Sept., the DigiYatra facility was launched at the city airport to speed up passenger ID and travel document verification for domestic flights. Union Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu Kinjarapu virtually inaugurated the facility, which is designed to make air travel more seamless and hassle-free.

Telangana

- Continuous rains in six Telangana districts have left nearly 6,000 habitations without drinking water due to damaged pipelines and submerged power stations. Restoration efforts are underway, and officials recommend using boiled bore water until normal supplies are restored.

Uttar Pradesh

- Uttar Pradesh Minister Anil Rajbhar inaugurated and laid the foundation for 29 development projects worth ₹8.30 crore in Salarpur on Thursday. The projects, managed by the District Urban Development Agency, aim for swift and high-quality completion in the Shivpur Assembly constituency.
- In a major financial fraud, ₹4.4 crore was illegally withdrawn from an NHAI bank account in Meerut, intended for land acquisition compensation in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The embezzlement was carried out using a forged cheque with fake signatures of the NHAI project director and SDM Shamli.

Upcoming News/Events**Madhya Pradesh**

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced on Thursday 5 Sept. that Google Cloud has proposed establishing a startup hub and center of excellence in the state, as part of investment discussions totaling around ₹3,200 crore. During his visit to Bengaluru, Yadav also explored opportunities with HAL for setting up a center in Madhya Pradesh.

Mumbai

- Mumbai Metro 3, the state's second underground line, is set to launch with its first phase featuring 10 stations over 12 km. The Aqua Line will connect key areas and airport terminals, handling 42,000 passengers per hour with each train accommodating 2,500 passengers.
- In Mumbai, 750 homes in Amar Nagar slum are set for demolition for the Goregaon-Mulund Link Road project, with affected residents to be relocated to 300-square-foot flats in Bhandup West. The BMC is constructing 906 new flats at Runwal Forest to accommodate them.

Pune

- The Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation has ordered a structural audit of all city statues by September 18, following the collapse of a statue in Rajkot Fort. Staff will inspect and repair statues as needed based on the audit findings.
- The Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) will introduce a road survey project in November 2024 using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to track road repairs, expenses, and accountability. This initiative aims to improve infrastructure and road safety by holding contractors accountable for repeat repairs within three years at no extra cost.

Punjab

- Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann secured investments from Nebula Group Canada to establish a food processing plant, recycle plastic waste, and clean Buddha Nullah. The company will use ozone technology to extend the shelf life of perishable and fresh items.

Rajasthan

- In Rajasthan, married couples and those in close relationships can now more easily seek state protection if facing threats or harassment. The state police introduced a new standard operating procedure (SOP) for security, following a Rajasthan High Court directive.
- The state forest department is preparing to relocate 12,127 families from tiger reserves, following a directive from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). The NTCA has instructed 19 states, including Rajasthan, to prioritize relocating villagers from core tiger zones.

Tamil Nadu

- Trilliant Networks will establish a manufacturing facility and development center in Tamil Nadu, as announced during Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's visit to the US. Stalin also discussed with Nike the expansion of non-leather footwear production and collaboration on skill development in Tamil Nadu.
- IT Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan emphasized that innovation and startups are key to Tamil Nadu's goal of becoming a trillion-dollar economy and highlighted the role of industries in advancing state innovation. At the Tamil Nadu Technology Hub (iTNT hub) conclave, he discussed the forthcoming deep-tech policy aimed at accelerating innovation development in the state.

Telangana

- India's largest AI supercomputer, featuring 25,000 GPUs, will be housed in a 50MW high-density liquid-cooled data center in Hyderabad's AI City. The Telangana government signed an MoU with Yotta Data Services for the project, with the first phase, including 4,000 GPUs and the Yotta H1 Data Centre, expected to be operational within 24 months.

Uttar Pradesh

- On Saturday 7 Sept., the NCRTE unveiled the first look of the Meerut Metro, with the entire RRTS corridor and metro expected to be operational by 2025. NCRTE MD Shalabh Goel highlighted that the Meerut Metro will transform the city's transportation, improving connectivity, productivity, and quality of life.
- The GDA board approved the unified Master Plan 2031 for Ghaziabad, Loni, and Modinagar/Muradnagar, covering 33,543.1 hectares. The plan includes significant residential and commercial zones, TOD areas along rapid rail and metro corridors, and a Special Development Area near the Duhai RRTS depot.

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

- South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, speaking at the China-Africa summit in Beijing, rejected the idea that Chinese investments in Africa are leading to a "debt trap," viewing them as mutually beneficial. He also noted that South Africa has reached an agreement with China on energy security and is interested in learning from China's energy sector reforms.
- The Democratic Republic of Congo received its first batch of mpox vaccines on Thursday 05 September, aiming to curb an outbreak declared a global health emergency by the U.N. The country, the outbreak's epicenter, has faced challenges in stopping the disease due to a vaccine shortage in Africa.

America

- Haiti has expanded its state of emergency nationwide due to escalating violence by gangs that have overtaken much of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and spread to other regions. Initially imposed in March in Ouest department and extended to other areas like Artibonite, Centre, and Nippes, the state of emergency aims to address the severe security crisis.
- The U.S. secured the release of 135 political prisoners in Nicaragua after negotiations with President Daniel Ortega's government. The prisoners, freed on humanitarian grounds, will first go to Guatemala before potentially moving to the U.S. or other countries. Ortega's government has been known for its harsh crackdown on political dissent since 2018.

China

- Taiwan's defense ministry is closely monitoring Chinese landing drills in Fujian province, across the Taiwan Strait. The exercises, involving combat aircraft, helicopters, drones, and amphibious ships, reflect increased Chinese military pressure on Taiwan, which Beijing views as its territory.

Europe

- French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron appointed Michel Barnier as prime minister, tasked with managing a deeply divided parliament and pushing through budget cuts. Barnier's appointment has eased investor concerns, though it has sparked criticism from the left, who see it as a "democratic coup."
- The death toll from a Russian missile strike on a military institute in Poltava, Ukraine, has risen to 55, with 328 wounded. The attack, using two ballistic missiles, is the deadliest single strike of the year, causing significant casualties and damage.

Middle East

- In the Gaza Strip, Palestinian children in the south are receiving polio vaccinations as part of an ongoing campaign. On Thursday 06 September, medical centers saw large crowds, and 187,000 children have been inoculated so far amid the ongoing conflict.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insists that any permanent ceasefire in Gaza must include assurances that the border area with Egypt won't be used by Hamas for smuggling. He demands a reliable mechanism to prevent future recurrence of conflict.

Pakistan

- A major petroleum and natural gas deposit has been discovered in Pakistan's territorial waters following a three-year survey conducted with international assistance. While the reserves could significantly boost the economy, exploration is still in its early stages, and extraction could take years, with additional potential for the blue water economy's mineral resources.
- Law enforcement agencies in Pakistan's Punjab province arrested 33 terrorists from banned groups, including Al-Qaeda and 133 Brigade, preventing a major terror plot. The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) conducted 475 intelligence-led operations, recovering explosives, weapons, and banned literature from the suspects.

United Kingdom

- UK house prices saw their biggest annual increase since late 2022 last month, according to Halifax. This rise follows a recent decline in interest rates, signaling renewed momentum in the property market.
- Britain suspended 30 of its 350 arms export licenses to Israel over concerns that the equipment might be used in violations of international humanitarian law. Foreign Minister David Lammy clarified that the suspension was specifically related to the Gaza conflict and did not constitute a blanket arms embargo.

United States

- Over 90 company executives, including leaders from Yelp and Chobani, endorsed U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris for the presidency, citing her economic policies and support for American businesses. Additionally, over 100 law enforcement officials backed Harris, emphasizing her experience as a prosecutor and commitment to reducing gun violence.

Africa

- Libyan oil exports remain largely halted due to a political dispute over the central bank, which controls oil revenue. Some tankers, like the Kriti Samaria and Front Jaguar, are still loading crude from storage amid the ongoing crisis.
- President Tayyip Erdogan expressed Turkey's desire to strengthen ties with Egypt in natural gas and nuclear energy after talks with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Both leaders affirmed their commitment to enhancing relations across various sectors, including trade, defense, health, and the environment, with ministers signing several agreements.

America

- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged for the renewal of a U.N. mandate for an international security mission in Haiti, which is set to expire in October. He emphasized the need for increased funding and personnel to effectively combat armed gangs and announced plans to seek more financial contributions at a U.N. General Assembly meeting.

China

- Super Typhoon Yagi, packing winds of 245 km/h, drenched southern China on Friday 06 September, shutting schools and canceling flights. The storm, the strongest in Asia this year and the second-most powerful globally in 2024 is expected to make landfall on Hainan's coast and move on to Vietnam and Laos over the weekend.
- U.S. Indo-Pacific commander Admiral Sam Paparo will soon speak with a Chinese southern theater commander to prevent military misunderstandings. This follows recent efforts to improve military communication after heightened tensions between the U.S. and China.

Europe

- The British government will provide Ukraine with 650 lightweight multi-role missiles worth £162 million to enhance air defense against Russian drones and bombings. This aid, announced during a Ukraine Defence Contact Group meeting, is expected to arrive by the end of the year.

Middle East

- Saudi Arabia views Italy as a key ally in exporting green and low-carbon energy, including hydrogen, to Europe. With Saudi Arabia investing in blue and green hydrogen, Italy is seen as an essential partner to help deliver these products to the European market.
- OPEC+ has decided to delay a planned oil output increase for October and November, maintaining its production cuts until the end of November to support falling crude prices. The decision comes amid concerns about weak global economic growth and soft data from China.

Pakistan

- Pakistan is renegotiating contracts with independent power producers to address unsustainable electricity tariffs, according to Power Minister Awais Leghari. Rising energy costs have led to social unrest and economic strain, with discussions focused on revising price structures while maintaining business sustainability.
- Pakistan aims to secure up to \$4 billion from Middle Eastern commercial banks by the next fiscal year to address its external financing gap. State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmad also revealed that the country is in the advanced stages of obtaining \$2 billion in external financing needed for IMF approval of a \$7 billion bailout program.

United Kingdom

- Britain will introduce new legislation to combat sewage leaks by imposing tougher penalties, including imprisonment for company executives, and granting expanded powers to the regulator. This move aims to address the record-high sewage spills and improve the UK's water system.
- Britain has extended tax breaks for investing in start-ups, including the Enterprise Investment Scheme and Venture Capital Trusts, for another 10 years until April 2035. The extension, announced on Wednesday 04 September, continues the support that has raised over £41 billion for companies since the schemes began.

United States

- The U.S. Federal Reserve and regulators are set to introduce changes to bank capital rules by Sept. 19, including reduced capital requirements for business lines like wealth management and credit card operations. The proposal is expected to ease market-risk requirements for major lenders, with Fed Vice Chair Michael Barr previewing it next Tuesday 10 Sept.
- The Biden administration plans to maintain its refugee target at 125,000 for the next fiscal year, aiming to admit 100,000 refugees in 2024, the highest in 30 years. Immigration remains a key issue ahead of the November election, where Kamala Harris faces Donald Trump, who previously reduced refugee admissions.

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