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INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Andhra Pradesh

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated two Ekalavya Schools in Alluri Sitarama Raju district, Jharkhand, built at a cost of Rs. 40 crore. The schools, located in Pedabayalu and Araku mandals, were officially opened by local officials in Lakeputtu village.
- The state government has instructed district collectors to monitor sand prices amid rumors of a free sand policy. Principal Secretary Mukesh Kumar Meena emphasized the need for collectors to take strict action against those spreading false information about this policy during a videoconference.

Delhi

- Trial runs for the Namoo Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) trains began in Delhi on Saturday, covering the route from Sahibabad to Anand Vihar and then to New Ashok Nagar, a month ahead of schedule, according to NCRTC officials.

Goa

- The ICAR-Central Coastal Agricultural Research Institute (CCARI) in Old Goa has introduced a livestock waste valorisation system (LWVS) that converts cattle dung and urine into clean biogas and organic fertilizer through anaerobic digestion. Director Parveen Kumar stated that the unit optimizes biogas slurry products for safe gas production and effective waste management.
- Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant inaugurated the Goa University Research Park Unit (GURU) initiative, investing Rs 12.85 crore to support young innovators in biotechnology, healthcare, IT, and electronics.

Gujarat

- To commemorate World Cotton Day on October 7, the Gujarat government announced that the state ranks second in India for cotton cultivation, covering 26.8 lakh hectares and producing 92 lakh bales with a productivity of 589 kg per hectare.
- The Gujarat Food and Drug Control Administration (FDCA) and the Special Operations Group (SOG) seized 2,600 kg of adulterated black pepper worth Rs 9 lakh from a facility in Nadiad, with adulterants including starch powder, oil, and powdered gum.

Haryana

- Nuh district reported a voter turnout of 72.2% by 8 PM on Saturday, surpassing the 71.4% recorded in the 2019 assembly elections. Despite incidents of clashes during the polls, the Nuh assembly segment led with a turnout of 73.9%, followed by Ferozpur Jhirka at 73.2% and Punhana at 69.5%.

Himachal Pradesh

- Following recent rains, 27 roads were closed for vehicular traffic in Himachal Pradesh, as of September 28, 2024. Naina Devi recorded the highest rainfall at 84.2 mm, while other areas received varying amounts, including 51.2 mm in Raipur Maidan and 28.6 mm in Olinda.
- The Himachal Pradesh government clarified that no decision has been made to require street vendors to display identity cards, despite earlier statements from a State Cabinet Minister. A spokesperson noted that the government is still considering various suggestions on the street vendors policy.

Karnataka

- Heavy rain in Mudradi and parts of Hebri, Udupi, caused significant damage inundating homes in Hosakambla, Kantarabail, and Kelakila. Floodwaters washed away two cars and several bikes, with rainfall resembling a cloudburst at Kabbinala Betta.
- Tomato prices have surged nearly 100% in the past two weeks due to a significant supply crunch, rising from a stable period to ₹40 per kg in wholesale markets. Retail prices now range from ₹70 to ₹90 per kg, with online prices between ₹80 to ₹100 per kg, varying by size and quality.

Upcoming News/Events

Andhra Pradesh

- Despite rising global demand, cotton prices in the state remain below the Minimum Support Price (MSP) due to extensive crop damage from recent rains and floods. Farmers are anxious to sell, facing challenges like discolored cotton, reduced staple length, and moisture, while private players exploit the situation by citing inferior quality.
- The Andhra Pradesh Drones Corporation will host the 'Amaravati Drone Summit 2024' on October 22-23 in Mangalagiri. The summit aims to gather thought leaders and industry experts to explore the potential of drones in sectors like agriculture, logistics, disaster management, healthcare, and environmental monitoring.

Delhi

- Traffic on Old Kakrola Road in southwest Delhi will be disrupted from October 6 to 20 due to repair work, affecting the Tura Mandi Chowk-Shyam Vihar Chowk-Najafgarh drain stretch. Commuters are advised to use alternative routes and avoid roadside parking in the affected area.

Goa

- The Mineral Foundation of Goa, in collaboration with the Goa State Biodiversity Board, the Department of Forest, and the Goa Bird Conservation Network, is undertaking a project to map the nesting sites of the white-bellied sea eagle, known as Kaakan in Konkani, in Goa.
- The Mormugao Port Authority (MPA) anticipates a further increase in cruise passengers following a 40% rise in FY 2023-24, with the new International and Domestic Cruise Terminal in Goa set to be completed by March 2025.

Gujarat

- The Gujarat government plans to implement a renewable energy land bank policy to expedite the development of renewable energy parks, following the recent RE-Invest 2024 event led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The state aims to identify and utilize government wastelands for these parks, with a detailed policy on available land expected to be announced soon.

Haryana

- Exit polls suggest that Congress is poised to regain power in Haryana after a decade, likely defeating the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and gaining a comfortable majority. In Jammu & Kashmir, predictions for the Congress-National Conference alliance indicate a slim advantage, reflecting the complexities of the region's political landscape after recent changes in its status.

Himachal Pradesh

- Industry associations in Himachal Pradesh have postponed their plans to surrender electricity loads for power-intensive units after the state government assured a review of the recent tariff hike. The electricity tariff has risen by 46% over the past two years, making operations difficult for industries, with Himachal's rates being higher than those in Punjab despite being a power-surplus state.
- The Union Ministry for Road Transport and Highways has approved ₹86.34 crore for a bridge over Gaj Khud, greatly benefiting Nagrota Surian residents in the Jawali Assembly constituency. The new bridge will shorten travel between Nagrota Surian and Jawali by 10 km and enhance tourism around the scenic Pong Dam lake, aiding over 200 panchayats currently relying on a deteriorating road.

Karnataka

- The Karnataka government plans to launch an app-based attendance system in government and aided schools from the next academic year. Following successful pilot projects in one government school per district, the education department aims to implement the system statewide to enhance attendance tracking.
- The Karnataka Transport Department has exempted tourist vehicles from other states from paying permit tax when heading to Mysuru for the Dasara festival. This exemption is effective from October 4 until October 12 and applies specifically to vehicles entering Mysuru city and nearby Srirangapatna taluk.

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

- Nine people died, and 24 were injured in a bus collision with a Hyva truck on National Highway 30 in Madhya Pradesh's Maihar district. Five deceased individuals have been identified as residents of Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, while efforts continue to identify four others using their clothing.

Mumbai

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ Mumbai Metro Line 3, the city's first fully underground metro system, during his visit to Maharashtra. The event also launched key development initiatives across various sectors, attended by state dignitaries.
- The MMRDA approved Rs 8,498 crore for slum rehabilitation in Ghatkopar East, relocating 17,000 slum dwellers to 1BHK homes. The project, aimed at improving infrastructure, will support the Eastern Freeway extension and is scheduled for completion in 48 months.

Pune

- 'Satark Park,' the country's first structure dedicated to military intelligence operatives, was inaugurated in Pune to honor unsung heroes who sacrificed their lives in Jammu and Kashmir. Developed by Roadways Solutions India Infra Ltd in collaboration with the Military Intelligence Training School, the park features 40 busts of MI personnel, each with a brief description of their heroism.
- Heavy rainfall in Pune has caused widespread waterlogging and traffic disruptions, prompting the IMD to issue a yellow alert with moderate rain expected. Temperatures are forecasted to range between 22°C and 28°C, with intensified rainfall predicted.

Punjab

- In a partial relief for the state government and farmers, arhtiyas (commission agents) agreed to purchase Basmati rice and cotton, although they will continue their boycott of paddy procurement for the Central pool. Meanwhile, mandi labor, currently on strike, will discuss their future actions at an executive meeting.

Rajasthan

- The Department of Archaeology and Museology (DAM) is developing a dedicated coin museum to showcase its extensive collection, despite facing financial constraints. The DAM holds over 2.25 lakh coins, ranging from the reign of Chandragupta I to the early British era, including pieces from the Mongol dynasty and other historical rulers.
- The draft Rajasthan Coaching Centre (Control and Regulation) Bill 2024, designed to regulate the thriving coaching industry in Kota, has faced strong opposition from stakeholders. Key provisions include banning the enrollment of students under 16 and requiring aptitude tests prior to registration.

Tamil Nadu

- Diwali shopping on Masi streets draws larger crowds each year, but shoppers face persistent issues like limited parking and restroom facilities. Traffic police have arranged crowd control and parking solutions for the upcoming festive period leading to October 31.
- Municipal administration minister K N Nehru laid the foundation stone for a new administration building for Lagudi municipality in Trichy district, funded by ₹4.2 crore from the state government to address the town's expanding civic needs. The Lagudi municipality covers 10 sq. km and has a population of approximately 36,219 and about 7,080 residential properties as of 2023.

Telangana

- To alleviate traffic around KBR Park and ensure signal-free junctions for commuters heading to Madhapur, Hi-Tec City, Gachibowli, and Kondapur, the government has sanctioned flyovers and underpasses, with GHMC to implement the ₹826 crore project in two phases under the H-CITI initiative.

Uttar Pradesh

- Uttar Pradesh's excise department reported a revenue collection of ₹22,563.15 crore by September 2024-25, up ₹2,336.60 crore from last year, despite floods impacting September's target. Minister Nitin Agarwal emphasized ongoing enforcement efforts, with 78,462 raids leading to the seizure of 2,67,894 liters of illegal liquor and 2,004 arrests.

Upcoming News/Events**Madhya Pradesh**

- The Shri Mahakaleshwar Temple Management Committee plans to establish separate wings for improved administration, including security, engineering, finance, and administration, overseen by retired officials. Additionally, a proposal was made to relocate the temple's gaushala to an 11-hectare site in Bamora village, aiming to create an ideal facility for visitors and diverse cow breeds.

Mumbai

- Mumbaikars are set for an exciting experience as the city's first underground metro, the Aqua Line, officially opens to the public after being inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 5. Spanning 33.5 km, the Aqua Line will connect the Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) to Aarey Colony, featuring 10 stations along the route.
- The Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) aimed to raise at least Rs 5,173 crore by leasing a 4.2-acre plot in Nariman Point, previously used for political party offices. The land was cleared for the Vidhan Bhavan Metro station, and MMRC opened a global bid for foreign and alternative investment funds to submit tenders for leasing it, with development potential of 16 lakh square feet.

Pune

- The Maharashtra cabinet approved a cost escalation of Rs 20,375.21 crore for the Pune ring road project, raising the total cost to Rs 42,711.03 crore. The project's length was revised from 68.19 km to 72.335 km, and construction has yet to commence, despite the initial estimate being set at Rs 10,159.82 crore in September 2021.
- The Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) approved road projects to ease congestion and improve connectivity in Punawale, Tathawade, and Wakad. The plan specifically targets traffic issues in Ward 25, focusing on Bhumkar Chowk and Bhujbal Chowk.

Punjab

- To enhance transparency and efficiency, the MC plans to go completely digital by next week with the arrival of around 250 computers. This transition will save time and energy for both applicants and officials, allowing residents to check the status of their applications online and reducing paper usage.

Rajasthan

- As the Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit approaches, Jaipur Municipal Corporation - Greater (JMC-G) is focused on removing encroachments and ensuring all streetlights function properly for a beautiful city presentation.
- The first interstate meeting to develop a designated 'cheetah corridor' between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh is scheduled for Sunday. Senior forest officials, including Rajasthan's Chief Wildlife Warden and various Divisional Forest Officers, will participate in the two-day session.

Tamil Nadu

- Kanyakumari district received ₹64 lakh for the agricultural mechanisation project for 2024-25, allowing eight cooperatives to offer machinery rental services for farmers. Additionally, ₹23.35 lakh was approved in subsidies for 18 farmers to purchase essential farming equipment like tractors and harvesters, addressing labor shortages and production needs, according to district collector R Alagumeena.

Telangana

- Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka announced a ₹5,000 crore investment by the Congress government to construct Young India Integrated Residential Schools (YIIRS) in various constituencies. The schools will offer international-standard education for students from SC, ST, BC, and minority backgrounds, with foundation stones laid on Navami before Dasara.

Uttar Pradesh

- Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath unveiled the multi-colored logo for the 2025 Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, symbolizing religious and economic prosperity. The logo features elements like the "Amrit Kalash," a temple, a seer, and Lord Hanuman, representing the unity of nature and humanity in Sanatan Dharma.
- The Uttar Pradesh government has launched the 'Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan,' providing subsidies on loans up to ₹5 lakh for microenterprises and the service sector to create self-employment for youths. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced that this scheme aims to establish 10 lakh micro units over the next decade, assisting one lakh trained youths annually.

GLOBAL UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Africa

- Congolese health officials have launched their first mpox vaccination campaign in Goma, targeting an outbreak that has spread to 14 African nations this year. The campaign faces resource limitations, with only 265,000 doses available, addressing previous inequities in vaccine access.
- Zimbabwe will pay \$20 million this month to foreign white and local Black farmers who lost land during the 2000 farm invasions under Robert Mugabe. This is part of a broader initiative aimed at reviving the country's agriculture and compensating those affected, though a larger \$3.5 billion plan for white farmers remains on hold

America

- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urged Canadians still in Lebanon to sign up for evacuation flights, as over 1,000 have already left due to worsening security conditions. Canada has 6,000 citizens registered to leave, with more flights planned, and is offering empty seats to citizens of other countries like Australia and the U.S.

China

- China and North Korea marked 75 years of diplomatic relations, with both leaders vowing to strengthen cooperation. Despite China's cautious response to North Korea's growing ties with Russia, President Xi expressed commitment to enhancing bilateral relations.
- More than 200 Chinese citizens, including Hong Kong residents and a Taiwan compatriot, have been safely evacuated from Lebanon, according to China's foreign ministry. The Chinese Embassy in Lebanon continues to assist citizens with security measures.

Europe

- Thousands of Hungarians, led by the opposition TISZA party, protested outside state TV headquarters, demanding independent public media and criticizing government propaganda. TISZA, led by Peter Magyar, is emerging as a significant challenge to Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government.

Middle East

- Israeli airstrikes hit Beirut's southern suburbs overnight in the most intense attack since escalating its campaign against Hezbollah. The bombardment, lasting nearly 30 minutes, marked the largest strike on the Lebanese capital so far, according to witnesses and military analysts.
- At least 26 people were killed and 93 wounded in Israeli airstrikes that hit a mosque and a school sheltering displaced people in Gaza, according to the Gaza government's media office.

Pakistan

- Pakistan's interior ministry banned the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), labeling it a national security threat. The decision was made under Section 11B of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997, as the PTM, led by Manzoor Pashteen, has been vocal in criticizing the armed forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

United Kingdom

- Britain secured its first America's Cup final appearance in 60 years on Friday, defeating Italy to challenge reigning champions New Zealand later this month in Barcelona. Skipper Ben Ainslie expressed gratitude to supporters, noting the team's focus on preparing for the upcoming match after claiming victory in the Louis Vuitton Cup series.
- The navies of Britain, Australia, and the U.S. successfully controlled uncrewed ships in Australia from over 10,000 miles away in Portugal, as part of military experiments under the AUKUS security pact. The Royal Navy highlighted this achievement as a significant step toward integrating crewed and uncrewed systems to enhance operational capabilities globally.

United States

- The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to pause new federal air pollution regulations aimed at reducing mercury and methane emissions from coal-fired power plants, despite challenges from several Republican-led states and industry groups. The rules, issued under the Clean Air Act, tighten mercury emissions by 67% for all coal plants and by 70% for lignite coal plants.
- Vice President Kamala Harris stated that the U.S. will keep pressuring Israel and other Middle Eastern players to secure a ceasefire in Gaza. In an interview with CBS's "60 Minutes," she emphasized that diplomatic efforts with Israel are an ongoing priority.

Upcoming News/Events

Africa

- Fighting in Sudan is escalating after nearly 18 months, with the army intensifying airstrikes against the rival RSF as seasonal rains end. This surge in conflict is worsening a humanitarian crisis, with over 10 million people displaced and widespread famine confirmed.
- Rwandan Foreign Minister Olivier Nduhungerehe stated that Congo refused to sign a deal aimed at resolving the M23 rebel conflict, which has displaced over 1.7 million people. Congo accuses Rwanda of supporting the Tutsi-led group, while Rwanda denies the claims, accusing Congo of collaborating with the FDLR

America

- Mexico is set to present laws to implement a judicial overhaul, with the constitutional reform requiring all judges to be elected by popular vote within the next three years. This was confirmed by lower house leader Ricardo Monreal, with the legislation expected to be introduced in Congress soon.

China

- China urged the European Union to delay tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles, aiming to prevent trade tensions. China's Chamber of Commerce to the EU criticized the move, calling it "trade protectionism."
- Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and his U.S. counterpart plan to discuss trade and economic issues, including electric vehicle (EV) restrictions. China expressed concerns over new U.S. tariffs on \$18 billion worth of goods, mainly affecting lithium-ion batteries and EV-related products.

Europe

- Dutch Defence Minister Ruben Brekelmans, during a visit to Kyiv, pledged €400 million for a drone development plan with Ukraine and promised additional F-16 deliveries in the coming months.
- Pope Francis announced he will appoint 21 new cardinals on Dec. 8, with 20 under the age of 80 eligible to vote in the next papal conclave. The new cardinals come from diverse countries, including Argentina, Japan, and Ukraine, with Mykola Bychok being the youngest at 44.

Middle East

- Thousands of pro-Palestinian protests were held worldwide, from Jakarta to Istanbul, marking the eve of the first anniversary of the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel. The demonstrations coincide with international condemnation of Israel's military actions in Gaza and Lebanon, with concerns over rising antisemitic and Islamophobic rhetoric in protests.
- UNICEF's executive director, Catherine Russell, warned that children in Gaza will face "post-generational challenges" due to the ongoing conflict, describing the situation as a "hellscape."

Pakistan

- Pakistan seeks an additional \$1.5 billion loan from the IMF to combat climate change impacts, as stated by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The funding will support the Climate Resilience and Sustainability Facility aimed at promoting economic stability and sustainable development.

United Kingdom

- The UK government will host its first international investment summit on Oct. 14, featuring executives from companies like Google, Wayve, and Brookfield Asset Management. The event aims to boost foreign direct investment to enhance economic growth, following criticism from Elon Musk about not receiving an invitation.
- British lawmakers will soon consider a bill that would allow terminally ill adults the option of assisted dying, reflecting a shift in public opinion since a similar proposal was rejected a decade ago. The bill, set to be introduced by Labour Party lawmaker Kim Leadbeater on Oct. 16, aims to permit mentally competent terminally ill adults with six months or less to live to choose medically assisted euthanasia.

United States

- Tropical Storm Milton has intensified and is expected to become a hurricane, affecting Florida's west coast next week, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center. As of Saturday, the storm was located about 385 miles west-northwest of Progreso, Mexico, with maximum sustained winds of 45 mph.
- The Biden administration will not renew a temporary humanitarian entry program for around 530,000 migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

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