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INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Andhra Pradesh

- Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) launched a biogas plant at Tirumala to generate sustainable energy and manage waste efficiently. The biogas will supplement LPG for cooking and steam production at TTD's Annadanam Complex.
- The poultry industry in Andhra Pradesh is facing challenges despite high chicken prices, as rising production costs and weather factors strain farmers. With feed costs up and heavy mortality rates, farmers struggle to earn profits, even as retail prices reach 230-250 per kg.

Delhi

- The Union government has increased fines for stubble burning, with penalties now ranging from ₹5,000 to ₹30,000 based on plot size. The new rules, effective from Thursday 7 November, aim to curb pollution in Delhi, with farmers facing steeper fines for larger plots.

Goa

- The Goa Bachao Abhiyan (GBA) has raised concerns over the Bhutani project at Sancoale, citing environmental and public interest violations. The organization has urged the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) to deregister the project for rule violations and failure to obtain necessary environmental clearance before proceeding.
- The Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) has urged the electricity department to expedite the formation of district electricity committees, vital for addressing electrification, power quality, and consumer satisfaction. Despite the 2021 Union directive, the proposal remains stalled with the law department.

Gujarat

- The Gujarat government has revised allowances for employees, effective from January 1, 2016, under the Gujarat Civil Service (Revision of Pay) Rules. Additionally, a notification provides old pension scheme benefits to employees who joined before April 1, 2005, on fixed pay.
- CCTV cameras along the Sabarmati Riverfront monitor traffic violations, issuing e-memos for offenses like not wearing helmets. These cameras are part of the Nirbhaya Project and the Smart City initiative, covering 16 junctions. However, only 45% of the city's planned CCTV installation has been completed.

Haryana

- Despite claims of control, stubble burning incidents in Haryana rose to 29 on Friday 8 November, with Jind reporting the highest at 10 active fire locations. Bahadurgarh led in poor air quality, recording an AQI of 402, as Haryana's overall stubble burning count reached 935 incidents.
- The Haryana government, under CM Nayab Singh Saini, granted ownership rights of 1,700 acres of Dhauli land to Brahmins, fulfilling a demand raised by Venod Sharma and MP Kartikeya Sharma. This finalizes an announcement made by former CM Khattar in 2022.

Himachal Pradesh

- After the recent cloudbursts in Mandi, Kullu, and Shimla, the chief minister directed senior officers to enhance emergency response, unifying the SDRF under the additional director general of home guards and civil defence and assigning home guards to SDRF for two years to boost resilience.

Karnataka

- The Karnataka government has banned smoking and tobacco consumption in government offices, with disciplinary action for violations. The directive aims to protect public health and staff wellbeing by prohibiting tobacco products like gutka and paan masala on office premises.
- KEA will file a police complaint over suspected seat blocking, as 2,300 students didn't report to their allotted colleges after the final round of counselling. Around 400 unfilled seats, especially in computer science, will be returned to colleges to fill at higher fees. Notices were issued to students for using fake phone numbers and similar IP addresses for registration.

Upcoming News/Events

Andhra Pradesh

- The Alluri Sitarama Raju (ASR) airport is set to begin operations by March 2026, ahead of its initial December 2026 target, due to fast-paced construction. Authorities are also working on road widening and infrastructure projects to support the airport's launch.
- The Andhra Pradesh government is preparing for a seaplane trial run in Vijayawada at Punnami Ghat. The 10-seater seaplane will operate between Vijayawada and Srisailam, with officials coordinating logistics, amenities, and a major event for the launch.

Delhi

- The Supreme Court has criticized the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) for cutting down 1,670 trees in the Ridge area, ordering safeguards to prevent future breaches. The court was addressing a contempt petition over the unauthorized tree felling for a road widening project after a Forest Survey of India report revealed the actual number of trees cut.

Goa

- The carriageway leading into Panaji will be closed for repairs on the Patto Bridge from 10pm to 6am until November 12. Traffic marshals will regulate movement to prevent disruptions, and the PWD is responsible for ensuring safety during the closure.
- Union Minister Piyush Goyal announced plans to establish a mini global capability center in Goa, positioning it as an innovation hub for multinational companies. He highlighted Goa's potential to become a manufacturing hub for semiconductor chips, electronics, and tech-driven businesses, with a focus on high-quality infrastructure and data storage.

Gujarat

- Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel outlined Gujarat's roadmap to becoming a \$3.5 trillion economy by 2047, aligning with PM Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047.' He emphasized Gujarat's role in driving India's growth, citing investments in sectors like semiconductors, green hydrogen, and renewable energy, making the state a leading FDI destination.
- NHSRCL has successfully completed 12 of the 20 planned river bridges for Gujarat's bullet train project. The Kharera river bridge in Navsari, the final bridge in the Vapi-Surat section, was finished recently. Construction is still ongoing for the Sabarmati river bridge.

Haryana

- Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini introduced 'Vivadon ka Samadhan,' amnesty schemes to resolve property allotment disputes, benefiting over 7,000 Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran allottees. Launching on Nov 15 for six months, this initiative aims to address issues like enhancement payments and arrears, following past relief efforts totaling Rs 1,560 crore.
- Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini announced that 100-yard plots will be allotted to 2 lakh eligible applicants under the CM Rural Housing Scheme, with around 5 lakh total applicants to be covered in phases. Additionally, Rs 2,100 will soon be distributed to women as part of the government's election promises.

Himachal Pradesh

- Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar stated that the Centre will remain neutral in the Punjab-Himachal dispute over the Shanan power project, following Himachal CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu's request for assistance to reclaim the 110 MW project from Punjab as the 100-year lease has expired.

Karnataka

- The Karnataka Wine Merchants Association has demanded the removal of excise minister RB Timmapur by November 20, accusing him of bribery for official transfers and liquor license renewals. BJP leader R Ashoka has called for a CBI probe into alleged corruption, claiming Timmapur amassed Rs 900 crore annually.
- Karnataka Deputy CM DK Shivakumar announced that Bengaluru's metro network will expand by 175 km by 2026, with 30 km set to be operational by 2025. The third phase has been approved, and Rs 1,130 crore has been allocated for new train sets.

INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Madhya Pradesh

- Property registration income in Indore rose 13% in October, generating Rs 214 crore amid festive bookings. The Indore-Ujjain division saw a 15% revenue increase, totaling Rs 376 crore compared to the previous year.
- Chief Minister Mohan Yadav transferred Rs 1,574 crore to 1.29 crore Ladli Behnas, provided Rs 333 crore for social pensions, and Rs 55 crore for gas refills under the Ladli Behna Yojana. At the event, he launched a portal for differently-abled employment and witnessed a mass women's sword-fighting demonstration, pledging Rs 5 lakh in support.

Mumbai

- Mumbai Metro 3's Aqua Line has served over 6.3 lakh passengers in its first month, averaging 145,756 weekly riders since its October 7 launch. Officials highlight its role in reducing road traffic and providing an affordable, faster commute.
- Mumbai businesses and workplaces have been ordered to grant leave to employees on November 20 for the Maharashtra assembly polls. Non-compliance with this directive will lead to action under Election Commission guidelines, aiming to increase voter turnout.

Pune

- Ten railway stations in Pune division, including Pune, Kolhapur, and Shivajinagar, have received the 'Eat Right Station' certification from FSSAI. This certification ensures safe and hygienic food through training and third-party audits for food vendors.
- Pune district's voter count has risen by over 11 lakh in five years, reaching 88 lakh from 77 lakh in 2019. The increase is attributed to the influx of citizens for education, employment, and business opportunities.

Punjab

- Punjab saw a significant rise in farm fire incidents, with 730 cases reported on a single day, bringing the total to 6,029. This increase follows the Union government's decision to double fines for stubble burning.

Rajasthan

- The Rajasthan government signed 143 MoUs worth Rs 10,340 crore at the Rising Rajasthan summit in Bhilwara, potentially creating 23,000 jobs. The majority of investments are in textiles (Rs 4,621 crore) and iron & steel (Rs 2,661 crore), alongside smaller investments across various sectors.
- Rajasthan has installed only 15,854 rooftop solar plants out of 190,908 applications, with an 8% installation rate, below the national average of 19%. The state lacks additional subsidies beyond central assistance, hindering growth in rooftop solar.

Tamil Nadu

- During his Virudhunagar visit, CM M K Stalin emphasized enhancing safety measures in fireworks units and promoting a green environment. He also discussed worker welfare, including improved compensation and government support for the families of those who die in fire accidents.
- Archana Patnaik has been appointed as the Chief Electoral Officer of Tamil Nadu, succeeding Satyabrata Sahoo. Patnaik, an IAS officer of the 2002 batch, previously served as the MSME secretary. The Election Commission of India announced her appointment on Friday.

Telangana

- Tension erupted at Nagarjuna Sagar dam between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh officials over water drawal from the Sagar right canal. The issue was resolved after KRMB intervened, clarifying no objections should be raised to water readings.
- GHMC demolished around 180 illegal sheds on footpaths in Rajendranagar, addressing traffic and pedestrian issues. HYDRAA also cleared encroachments in Film Nagar after local complaints, expediting road works.

Uttar Pradesh

- The Uttar Pradesh government reports major achievements under the MGNREGS, connecting 60.17 lakh rural families to employment. Basti district ranks first in the state with 79.4 lakh man-days created, followed by Azamgarh and Jaunpur.

Upcoming News/Events

Madhya Pradesh

- The Madhya Pradesh forest department has requested NTCA's approval to shift an additional tiger pair into Madhav National Park following the successful breeding of reintroduced tigers. The park welcomed tiger cubs in September 2024, marking a milestone in its restoration efforts.
- The Gandhi Sagar Dam in Madhya Pradesh is facing challenges with three out of five turbine units non-operational, reducing its power generation capacity. Originally capable of 115 MW, the dam is currently producing just 29.5 MW, with repairs to the remaining units delayed beyond the planned completion date of October 25, 2024.

Mumbai

- Mumbai voters can enjoy up to 20% discounts at shops, restaurants, and cinemas on November 20 by showing their inked fingers. The initiative, part of the 'Utsav Nivadnukicha' campaign, aims to boost voter turnout.
- The Delhi stretch of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway will open on November 12, reducing travel time significantly. With Rs 5,500 crore invested, the six-lane highway and two bridges will ease traffic on Mathura Road and improve connectivity to Faridabad, Palwal, and Sohna.

Pune

- Maharashtra Metro and PMPML have launched feeder buses from key Metro stations to areas like Bavdhan, Warje, Indiranagar, and Dhankawdi. With nine stations offering feeder services and 17 more routes planned, the initiative aims to enhance last-mile connectivity.
- The MSRDC has installed 106 AI-enabled CCTV cameras on the 94-kilometre Mumbai-Pune route as part of the ITMS. These cameras detect up to 17 types of violations and aid in imposing fines between ₹500 to ₹2000.

Punjab

- Residents of 32 villages near the Buddha Dariya river in Punjab are protesting the government's plan to use treated wastewater from the dyeing industry for irrigation. They cite chronic health issues and shorter lifespans due to industrial pollution and demand that the scheme be halted.

Rajasthan

- The Rajasthan High Court has expressed dissatisfaction with the state government's delay in responding to a PIL filed by Sambhali Trust, which seeks separate facilities for the transgender community in government hospitals. The matter will be heard for final disposal on November 14, 2024.
- The Rajasthan government will begin merging municipal corporations in Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Kota, fulfilling a BJP poll promise. The merger process is expected to be completed by mid-2025, ahead of civic polls in the winter of 2025-26.

Tamil Nadu

- Dindigul district has introduced a green tax of ₹20 for tourists carrying plastic bottles under five litres to Kodaikanal, with checks during e-pass verification. The tax aims to reduce plastic waste, following a ban on such bottles in the hill town.
- The Higher Education Department has instructed state universities and colleges to set up help desks and online grievance forums for timely resolution of student and public issues. AI chatbots will be used for quick responses to academic and welfare-related concerns.

Telangana

- T-Hub has partnered with Denso to support Indian automotive startups through mentorship and innovation challenges. The collaboration focuses on next-gen automotive tech solutions, with Denso sharing global insights and sponsoring hackathons on AI, electrification, and ADAS.
- Telangana's MSME policy and Young India Skills University will be showcased at the PM's chief secretaries' conference. The MSME policy addresses key challenges while integrating global best practices, and YISU ensures private sector job placements.

Uttar Pradesh

- The UPSIDA board has approved measures to cancel residential land allotments if lease deeds aren't executed within two years and to impose additional charges for delayed construction. Allottees in Tronica City may face 1% yearly extension fees on plot costs, escalating to 4% after five years.

GLOBAL UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Africa

- Clashes between police and protesters in Mozambique over a disputed election resulted in at least three deaths and 66 injuries. The fatalities bring the total to at least 18 since the October 9 poll, with some reports citing up to 34 deaths.
- At least 73 people have died from mysterious causes in al-Hilaliya, Sudan, amid attacks by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), with many falling ill from diarrhoea. This comes as part of a broader conflict in eastern El Gezira state, displacing over 135,000 people.

America

- Ecuador's government has suspended Vice President Veronica Abad from office ahead of the 2025 elections. She is accused of a disciplinary offense for failing to leave Israel by September 1, despite security concerns amid the Gaza conflict.
- Cuba had restored power to nearly 20% of Havana after Hurricane Rafael devastated the island, knocking out the electrical grid. Despite progress, the western provinces of Pinar del Rio and Artemisa remained without power due to the storm's destruction.

China

- China and Indonesia signed multiple cooperation deals on Saturday 9 November, aiming to strengthen partnerships in key areas, according to Chinese state TV. The agreements were made during a meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto.

Europe

- Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law ratifying a mutual defense treaty with North Korea, which includes a provision for military assistance in case of an armed attack. This treaty, enhancing ties between Moscow and Pyongyang, was finalized after a summit in June and has been linked to North Korea's alleged weapons supplies to Russia during the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.
- Russian drones attacked Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odesa overnight, killing one and injuring 13, including two children. The attack damaged residential, commercial buildings, and vehicles, with 32 drones shot down by Ukrainian forces.

Middle East

- Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon have killed at least 40 people, including children, with heavy bombardment hitting Beirut's southern suburbs and Tyre. The strikes also targeted nearby towns and Baalbek, killing several medics and civilians.
- Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu appointed Yechiel Leiter, former finance ministry chief of staff, as the next Israeli ambassador to the U.S. His appointment was supported by the Yesha Council, representing Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Pakistan

- At least 24 people were killed and over 40 injured in a bomb blast at a railway station in Quetta, Pakistan, on Saturday, 9 November. The attack highlights growing security concerns in Balochistan, which has seen increased separatist militant activity.
- Lahore, Pakistan's second-largest city, faced unprecedented air pollution levels, reaching a record high of 1900, prompting emergency measures like work-from-home mandates and primary school closures. The city topped the global pollution list on Saturday 9 November, as reported by the provincial government and IQAir.

United Kingdom

- Princess Kate attended the Festival of Remembrance in London after undergoing cancer treatment, wearing a black dress with a red poppy. She was accompanied by her husband, Prince William, and other royals, with King Charles attending shortly after.
- Britain appointed Jonathan Powell as national security adviser, tasked with addressing global threats and strengthening ties with the U.S. Powell, instrumental in the Good Friday Agreement, was praised for his experience in conflict resolution.

United States

- Mexico and the U.S. have reached an agreement to ensure more regular water delivery, following tensions over the 1944 U.S.-Mexico water treaty. The new measure by the International Boundary and Water Commission will allow Mexico more flexibility to deliver water earlier in the five-year cycle.

Upcoming News/Events

Africa

- Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu will call for an immediate ceasefire and advocate for the two-state solution to resolve the Israel-Palestinian conflict at the upcoming Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh. Tinubu will be accompanied by a delegation of key ministers and security officials.
- Nigeria's military has warned of a new insurgent group, Lakurawas, infiltrating the northwest region from Niger and Mali, particularly affecting Sokoto and Kebbi states. The group's ideology remains unknown, and their incursion is linked to the July 2023 coup in Niger.

America

- Brazil announced a new climate change pledge, targeting a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. The pledge will be presented at the COP29 climate summit in Azerbaijan.
- Mexico will continue its efforts to reduce migrant crossings to the U.S. border, with Foreign Minister Juan Ramon de la Fuente citing a 76% decrease in migrant apprehensions since December. President Claudia Sheinbaum confirmed discussing the border issue with Donald Trump in a cordial phone call.

China

- Peru and China will sign an updated free-trade agreement during President Xi Jinping's upcoming visit, aiming to boost bilateral commerce by at least 50%. The new deal, alongside 30 other agreements, seeks to strengthen cooperation, particularly in infrastructure and technology, with a 400-member Chinese business delegation also visiting.

Europe

- Factory closures in France, especially in the chemical, automotive, and metallurgy sectors, are expected to lead to significant job losses, Industry Minister Marc Ferracci warned. The decline in manufacturing, coupled with rising international competition, particularly from China and the U.S., is exacerbating the economic challenges in the country.
- President Putin is open to discussing Ukraine with Donald Trump but maintains Russia's demands, including Ukraine's rejection of NATO ambitions and withdrawal from Russian-claimed territories. Putin's spokesperson emphasized the goals of Russia's military operation remain unchanged.

Middle East

- The Israeli military plans to reopen the Kissufim crossing to boost aid to southern Gaza amid growing international pressure. This follows recent engineering work to enhance inspection and transport infrastructure.
- Greece and Turkey disagree on maritime boundary issues but agreed to continue talks. The foreign ministers of both nations met to discuss this "tough and crucial issue" with future discussions planned.

Pakistan

- Pakistan will reduce electricity tariffs during winter (December 2024 to February 2025) to boost consumption and reduce reliance on natural gas for heating. This move aims to provide relief to businesses and citizens while addressing a 8-10% decrease in power consumption over the past year.
- Pakistan's parliament passed an amendment to extend the term of military heads, including Army Chief General Asim Munir, from three to five years. The move, supported by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government, further isolates jailed ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan, whose party opposes the change.

United Kingdom

- Britain's finance minister Rachel Reeves will use a major speech to advocate for "free and open trade between nations" amid concerns over potential tariffs under Donald Trump's presidency.
- Britain's energy regulator, Ofgem, proposed new rules to reduce the backlog of renewables projects awaiting grid connections, prioritizing those that can be operational within five years and align with future energy needs. The current queue exceeds 730 gigawatts, far surpassing the 220-225 GW target for 2030.

United States

- U.S. President Joe Biden and President-elect Donald Trump are set to meet at the White House on Wednesday 13 November, as confirmed by Biden's spokesperson. The meeting follows Trump's victory in the Nov. 5 presidential election.

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