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INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Andhra Pradesh

- Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu met PM Modi and ministers, seeking budget support for Amaravati, Polavaram, and ArcelorMittal projects. He highlighted the state's financial needs and presented the 'Swarna Andhra 2047' vision.
- The AP High Court's helmet mandate has caused a surge in helmet sales, with shops in cities like Vijayawada struggling to meet demand. Police enforce the rule strictly, fining violators ₹1,000.

Delhi

- Delhi CM Atishi inaugurated a new flyover between Anand Vihar and Apsara Border to ease traffic congestion. The flyover will benefit lakhs of commuters by bypassing three traffic signals, ensuring faster commutes.

Goa

- The Goa Rehabilitation Board approved transferring land ownership to rehabilitated families in Sada, Vasco, and other areas. Future projects will adopt the public-private partnership (PPP) model, with three projects to be expedited.
- Goa's Dayanand Social Security Scheme is capped at 1.4 lakh beneficiaries, with excess applicants on a waiting list. Widows now get Rs 4,000/month, but are ineligible for the Griha Aadhar Scheme.

Gujarat

- In the fifth session of the 15th Gujarat assembly, 32% of the time was spent on discussing bills, with five bills passed. The session also saw disruptions, including the suspension of Congress MLAs and the removal of Jignesh Mevani.
- The government-appointed committee for Vishwamitri River's flooding issue has finalized its recommendations, with an action plan to be submitted to the state government soon. This follows the severe floods in Vadodara in August that submerged large areas of the city.

Haryana

- The Supreme Court upheld the Allahabad High Court's decision to halt toll collection on the DND Flyway, following concerns over excessive user fees. The dispute, originating in 2016, involved an audit of NTBCL's accounts to assess its investment recovery and profit.
- Haryana has revised payment norms for EDC and IDC to help revive stalled projects. Developers can now pay the full dues or 25% upfront before final approval for migration or change of developer.

Himachal Pradesh

- Himachal Pradesh faces blocked roads and power outages amid a cold wave, with 157 roads and 25 transformer regions affected. The weather department predicts fresh rain and snowfall from Dec 27, while Tabo recorded the lowest temperature at -12°C.
- Himachal Pradesh closed all government facilities on December 27-28 to mourn former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's passing. Shimla's Winter Carnival postponed cultural activities, while stalls at the Ridge stayed open.

Karnataka

- Mysuru district administration and religious leaders announced the 12th Kumbh Mela at the confluence of Cauvery, Kapila, and Gupthagamini rivers in T Narasipura from February 10. Preparations are underway with cooperation from officials and public participation for its success.
- Karnataka issued a preliminary notification to acquire 26,811 sqm of land for Phase III of the Namma Metro project. This includes 197 private properties and government land for the elevated line between JP Nagar 4th Phase and Mysuru Road station.

Upcoming News/Events

Andhra Pradesh

- BPCL's Rs 95,000 crore refinery and petrochemical complex at Ramayapatnam port will boost Nellore's industrial growth. Chief Minister Naidu's efforts helped secure this investment, enhancing Andhra Pradesh's petrochemical potential.
- TTD restricts Vaikunta Ekadasi darshan to valid ticket holders from Jan 10-19, suspending VIP break darshan and privilege access for infants, elderly, and others. A buffer stock of 3.5 lakh extra laddus will be maintained to meet festival demand.

Delhi

- The NDMC plans a ₹556 crore project to restore outdated sewer lines in Lutyens Delhi, addressing damage to British-era infrastructure. Coordination with traffic police and trenchless technology will minimize disruptions during the work.

Goa

- The Goa Pollution Control Board has set fees for monitoring air quality along ore transportation routes. Depending on the ore quantity, transporters and mining companies will pay between Rs 3 lakh and Rs 1 crore annually.
- The SEIAA has granted environmental clearances for Vedanta, JSW Steel, and KAI International to mine iron ore in North Goa. The approved mining blocks include Cudnem, Tivim, and Pirna, with annual production capacities of 0.3 to 0.5 million tonnes.

Gujarat

- Gujarat plans an industrial park for sports goods manufacturing near Sanand, supporting the 2036 Olympics bid. The state aims to attract local and international manufacturers with potential incentives.
- GujRERA has introduced new banking rules, requiring developers to maintain three accounts for each project to enhance financial transparency. The rules, effective from January 1, 2025, also restrict banks from issuing cheque books and debit cards for the RERA collection account.

Haryana

- The Haryana government has directed the recovery of commuted pension value from employees who retired over 10 years ago, starting January 2025. This decision follows a Punjab and Haryana High Court ruling, which requires the recovery of pension amounts paid since June 2024.
- Punjab and Haryana HC has directed the Centre to clarify plans for more labs to check cooking oil adulteration. The court expressed displeasure over the nearest lab being 1,500 km away from Chandigarh.

Himachal Pradesh

- Himachal CM Sukhu plans to meet Union ministers to address issues like declining GST compensation, revenue deficit grants, and the state's reduced loan limit. He will also discuss financial challenges and the stoppage of loans against NPS.
- Himachal's Technical Education Minister Rajesh Dharmani requested the Union finance minister to fully fund the Bhanupalli-Bilaspur and Chandigarh-Baddi rail projects, exempting the state from its share. This comes after delays due to an outstanding ₹1,496.75 crore commitment from the state.

Karnataka

- Bengaluru's state government is crafting a new agriculture policy after 18 years, aimed at rejuvenating the farm sector and attracting youth to agriculture. The policy will incorporate progressive measures like Global Capability Centres and pension schemes for farmers.
- Karnataka will receive Rs 3,425 crore investment from Silectric for a semiconductor plant in Mysuru, creating 460 jobs. This project is part of a larger Rs 9,823 crore investment approved by the state.

INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Madhya Pradesh

- Bhopal ranked as the fourth most polluted city in Madhya Pradesh in November, with an average AQI of 197. Singrauli, Gwalior, and Narsinghpur had worse AQI levels, with Singrauli leading at 264.
- Madhya Pradesh's outstanding liabilities stand at Rs 4.81 lakh crore, over 5% of India's total debt. The state has been criticized for frequent loans, with Rs 10,000 crore in new borrowings this month for infrastructure development.

Mumbai

- Mumbai ranked first in Maharashtra's Good Governance Index 2024 for its performance in commerce and industry, while Mumbai suburban secured second place for public health governance. The index evaluated districts across 10 sectors with 161 indicators.
- The Bombay High Court has instructed the Thane Municipal Corporation to take immediate action against illegal hoardings, including removal and penal measures, to ensure public safety. The order follows a petition highlighting the risks posed by these unauthorized structures.

Pune

- The NGT has directed Bhor, Nasarpur local bodies, and Pune district collector to submit responses on the pollution of Shivganga River and Lendi Nullah. This follows a complaint supported by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board.
- The PMC Finance Committee approved proposals worth ₹1,200 crore for development projects, including water supply and sewage works. The approved funds will also support the Rajiv Gandhi Zoo and various municipal departments.

Punjab

- The MHA has cautioned the Chandigarh administration against transferring land to Haryana for its legislative assembly, warning it may incite unrest among Punjab's political and religious leaders.
- The Centre allocated ₹1,681.45 crore to Punjab, the highest among four states, for stubble burning management from 2018 to November 2024, focusing on subsidies for crop residue machinery and CHCs, as per the Rajya Sabha.

Rajasthan

- The Rajasthan Mining Department has set a January 27 deadline for 9,000 mine owners to upload Form-2 on the Parivesh Portal for environmental clearance. Help desks and appraisal committees are assisting in expediting the review process.

Tamil Nadu

- DGP Shailesh Kumar Yadav visited Bilichi near Karamadai for the planned construction of a new central prison, costing Rs 327.33 crore. The first phase tender is underway, and 95 acres have been handed over for the project.

Telangana

- The Telangana High Court dismissed petitions challenging the legality of GO 29 and GO 96 regarding the Group-1 mains exams and reservation categories. The court upheld the government's approach to recruitment, criticizing the delayed filing of petitions just before exams.
- Ahead of the panchayat raj elections, Telangana has amended the Panchayat Raj Act, introducing a rotating reservation system for SC, ST, and BC candidates every five years, impacting various posts. The changes, passed recently, also increase the number of MPTC members per mandal to at least five.

Uttar Pradesh

- UP Governor Anandiben Patel highlights progress in education, law and order, tourism, and agriculture over seven years. She noted seven state universities earned A++ NAAC grades, but funding gaps and teacher-student ratios still drive students to other states.
- CM Yogi Adityanath emphasized job creation in medical, education, tourism, construction, and manufacturing sectors. He instructed officials to develop action plans and consult experts to reach the state's goal of a USD 1 trillion economy.
- The government has approved over Rs 816 crore for repairing and constructing rural roads under PMGSY, with Rs 489 crore from the Centre and Rs 327 crore from the state. This move highlights the BJP's focus on rural development in UP, the top beneficiary of the scheme in recent years.

Upcoming News/Events

Madhya Pradesh

- Madhya Pradesh to translocate 15 tigers to Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha, marking the largest tiger relocation from one state. Twelve of the big cats will be tigresses, with the receiving states covering the costs.
- Madhya Pradesh's cabinet approved digital registration and e-delivery of birth and death certificates, streamlining the process. It also green-lit solar energy for 11 KV feeders to support agricultural irrigation, reducing power issues for farmers.

Mumbai

- The Railways will run 12 special suburban trains on New Year's Eve to ensure smooth travel, with eight services by Western Railway and four by Central Railway. These trains will stop at all suburban stations, operating after midnight.
- The Maharashtra transport department aims to install high-security registration plates (HSRPs) on 20 million vehicles within three months to reduce thefts. The installation process will start in January, with specific pricing for various vehicle types and the appointment-based system for fittings.

Pune

- The Maharashtra higher education department is set to launch a public engagement and awareness program on NEP 2020, featuring weekly virtual sessions with experts and Q&A sessions. The initiative aims to educate the public and provide training for professors.
- Uday Samant has directed MIDC to prioritize infrastructure projects at Hinjewadi IT Park, including road widening and flyovers. The delayed work will resume promptly following his intervention.

Punjab

- The Punjab government is launching an Aadhaar-based centralized platform to monitor patient registration at OOAT and private centers, aiming to curb Buprenorphine misuse and improve de-addiction efforts.
- Farmer forums and allied groups held a strategy meeting in Khanauri to ensure massive support for the Punjab bandh on Dec 30, demanding MSP as a legal guarantee. The bandh will disrupt road and rail traffic and close institutions from 7 am to 4 pm.

Rajasthan

- Rajasthan may cancel the SI Recruitment Exam-2021, with a final decision expected in next week's cabinet meeting. Other issues like delimitation and district reorganisation are also under review.

Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu will retain the no-detention policy up to Class 8, opposing the Centre's rule to hold back students failing exams in Classes 5 and 8. Education Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi highlighted its impact on students from underprivileged families.

Telangana

- Despite a shortfall in its targeted fine rice procurement, Telangana is blocking imports from neighboring states, including Andhra Pradesh, to its procurement centers. This is to meet the state's 36 LMT target for the kharif crop, necessary for ration distribution to 89 lakh cardholders.
- Telangana BJP has delayed the appointment of a new state chief, with the election process set to begin after Sankranti. The party aims to complete elections for mandal committees by Jan 10, followed by district president polls before Sankranti.

Uttar Pradesh

- PM Modi to launch SVAMITVA scheme, benefiting 41 lakh people across 29,000 villages in UP. The initiative, using drone mapping, will provide legal ownership cards, enhancing property rights in rural areas.
- UP Pavilion to showcase cultural and spiritual heritage at upcoming mela. Spanning five acres, it will feature a handicraft market, religious tableaux, and a 3D map of iconic sites like Ayodhya and Mathura, highlighting 12 prominent tourism circuits.
- The Gorakhpur link expressway, costing Rs 7,283 crore, is 98% complete and ready for use, awaiting formal inauguration in the New Year. This 91.35-km project connects Gorakhpur to Azamgarh, enhancing connectivity to Lucknow, Agra, and Delhi.

GLOBAL UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Africa

- Over 2,000 Mozambican families have sought refuge in Malawi due to escalating unrest following the disputed October elections in Mozambique. Violent protests, triggered by the electoral commission's announcement and court validation of the results, have led to at least 252 deaths since late October.
- At least 69 people died when a boat carrying around 80 migrants capsized off Morocco on December 19.

America

- Peru has declared an environmental emergency in the northern coastal region following a crude oil spill by state oil firm Petroperu into the Pacific Ocean. The spill occurred last weekend, prompting urgent response measures.
- Brazil's top court has suspended a law from Mato Grosso state that would end tax breaks for companies not buying soy from deforested areas of the Amazon. This follows the "Amazon soy moratorium," which has been key in limiting deforestation linked to soy production.

China

- China has sanctioned seven military companies, including Boeing's Insitu Inc. and Raytheon subsidiaries, in response to U.S. arms sales and assistance to Taiwan. This follows U.S. approval of \$571.3 million in defense support for Taiwan.
- China's coast guard conducted patrols around the Scarborough Shoal on Friday 26 December, reinforcing its territorial rights in the South China Sea. The Philippines has not yet responded to the move.

Europe

- Germany's President Steinmeier dissolved parliament for snap elections on Feb. 23 after Chancellor Scholz's coalition collapsed. He called for a fair, transparent election campaign and stressed the need for a stable, problem-solving government.
- An Azerbaijan Airlines flight crashed near Aktau, Kazakhstan, after diverting due to fog and drone alerts over southern Russia. Preliminary findings suggest Russian air defenses may have mistakenly shot it down, as shrapnel damage was found on the plane's tail.

Middle East

- Israeli jets targeted seven crossing points along the Syria-Lebanon border, aiming to disrupt Hezbollah's weapons flow. Israeli forces also seized a truck with a rocket launcher and other weapons in southern Lebanon.
- The Turkish military killed 21 Kurdish militants in northern Syria and Iraq, including 20 PKK and YPG members. Turkey considers both groups terrorist organizations.

Pakistan

- A Pakistani military court sentenced 60 civilians to 2-10 years in prison for attacking military facilities after Imran Khan's 2023 arrest. The verdicts have raised concerns about the increasing role of military courts in cases related to Khan.
- A Pakistani airstrike in Afghanistan's Paktika province killed at least 46, mostly women and children, with Afghanistan condemning the attack as an act of aggression. The Taliban vowed retaliation, and Afghanistan summoned Pakistan's diplomat for a formal protest.

United Kingdom

- The UK's FTSE 100 remained flat on Friday 26 December, with mining losses offset by gains in energy stocks, though both indexes are set for weekly gains.
- British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's younger brother, Nick, passed away on December 26th after battling cancer. Keir described him as a "wonderful man" and said he would be deeply missed.

United States

- U.S. President-elect Donald Trump appointed Miami-Dade County Commissioner Kevin Marino Cabrera as ambassador to Panama, praising his expertise in Latin American politics. Trump also threatened to reassert U.S. control over the Panama Canal, which was handed over to Panama in 1999.

Upcoming News/Events

Africa

- Libya's eastern-based government has agreed to a proposal to end fuel subsidies and will prepare a mechanism for implementation. Despite the low fuel prices in the country, the proposal's success is uncertain due to Libya's political divisions.
- Morocco is reviewing its family code, proposing over 100 amendments to grant women more rights, including vetoing polygamous marriages and improving child custody laws. The draft also allows women to oppose polygamy in marriage contracts, imposing stricter conditions on its practice.

America

- Canada's new Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc and Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly will meet U.S. President-elect Trump's aides in Florida to discuss the potential impact of new trade tariffs. The meeting will also address issues related to fentanyl trafficking and illegal migration.
- Brazilian authorities are assessing water contamination risks after trucks carrying sulfuric acid and pesticides fell into the Tocantins River following a bridge collapse. The incident resulted in four deaths and over ten people missing.

China

- China's President Xi Jinping is expected to visit Russia in 2025, according to Moscow's ambassador to Beijing. The visit comes amid ongoing close ties between the two countries, with no official confirmation from China yet.
- China urged the Philippines to return to "peaceful development" over the U.S. missile system deployment. The Philippines defended the move, calling it legitimate, and plans to acquire its own missile system.

Europe

- Estonia's navy is securing the Baltic Sea power cable after Finland seized a ship suspected of damaging it. NATO will increase its presence in the Baltic following recent cable and infrastructure sabotage concerns.
- Russian President Putin expressed openness to Slovakia's proposal to host peace talks with Ukraine, aiming to end the conflict. The offer came from Slovakian Prime Minister Fico, who opposes EU military support for Ukraine.

Middle East

- Turkey aims to provide electricity to Syria and strengthen its power infrastructure, with plans to collaborate on oil and natural gas. A delegation is set to visit Syria to discuss electricity transmission and related projects.
- Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian will visit Moscow on Jan. 17 to sign a cooperation agreement with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The deal is expected to include closer defense cooperation amid escalating ties between Russia and Iran.

Pakistan

- Bangladesh's interim government has lifted the security clearance requirement for Pakistani visa applicants, signaling improved ties. This follows the November decision to allow direct cargo movement between Karachi and Chittagong.
- The U.S. criticized Pakistan's military court sentences for civilians, citing concerns over judicial independence and due process. Similar concerns were raised by the EU and UK, with the EU warning about Pakistan's GSP+ status.

United Kingdom

- Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey will visit China with UK finance minister Rachel Reeves to revive economic talks frozen since 2019. This follows a shift in Britain's foreign policy under the Labour government to improve ties with China.

United States

- U.S. President-elect Trump plans an anti-drug campaign highlighting fentanyl's physical effects and threatens to label Mexican cartels as terrorist organizations. The initiative mirrors the 1980s "Just Say No" campaign.

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Radiant Family wishes you and your family all the health and wealth for the upcoming year 2025
Happy New Year!!