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## INDIA UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Andhra Pradesh

- The Andhra Pradesh government formed an SIT led by CID IGP Vineet Brijlal to investigate illegal PDS rice exports in Kakinada, focusing on key perpetrators. The team will report fortnightly, addressing a growing network involving millers, exporters, and political links.
- The Andhra Pradesh government reconstitutes the State Waqf Board under the Waqf Act, 1995, appointing elected and nominated members, including Ruhullah (MLC) and Shaik Khaja. The Chairperson will be elected by the members in a dedicated meeting.

#### Delhi

- The Delhi High Court issued contempt notices to Delhi government officials for failing to remove garbage and obstructions from the Maharani Bagh drain. The court cited photos as evidence and directed the special secretaries of IDMC and the Irrigation Department to explain their inaction.
- The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that it has cleaned a 4.38 km stretch of the Yamuna floodplains along the Yamuna Pushta road in Wazirabad and Jagatpur. This was in response to a plea alleging that tonnes of municipal waste were lying along the river.

#### Goa

- The state government has revised service charges for veterinary hospitals, setting Rs 1000 for major surgeries requiring general anaesthesia, excluding sterilisation. Post-operative care is charged at Rs 200, but sterilisation-related care is free for up to five days.
- Law Minister Aleixo Sequeira announced action against notaries involved in land grabbing, following the Justice V K Jadhav inquiry report. He emphasized stricter scrutiny of document certification to eliminate corruption in property transactions.

#### Gujarat

- Gujarat has seen the closure of 5,974 MSMEs since July 2020, ranking third after Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. The pandemic aftermath, inflation, and weak demand have particularly impacted sectors like textiles and chemicals.
- The Rs 13-crore pipeline from the Narmada canal to the Kotambi cricket ground is nearly dry, affecting preparations for its first international match. Due to inadequate supply for two months, the Baroda Cricket Association is spending an extra Rs 2 lakh monthly on local water sources.

#### Haryana

- Illegal mining in Nuh, Haryana, has reportedly led to the loss of over Rs 2,000 crore worth of mining materials from eco-fragile Aravallis. The issue was exposed following a report by the Haryana mining and zoology department, revealing extensive exploitation in the area.
- The Haryana govt has approved a Rs 616.01 crore project for the four-laning of Hodal-Nuh-Pataudi-Patauda road, enhancing connectivity with major highways. Additionally, Rs 274 crore was approved to waive power charges for households with low consumption.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- The Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (HBCH&RC), Punjab, has signed an MoU with ESIC Himachal Pradesh to provide cashless cancer treatment to ESIC cardholders and their families at its Mohali facility. This initiative aims to make cancer care accessible and affordable for beneficiaries, ensuring quality treatment without financial strain.

#### Karnataka

- Union Minister Pralhad Joshi criticized the state government, calling it bankrupt financially and intellectually, alleging it buys substandard medicines due to lack of funds. Joshi blamed the state for maternal deaths in Ballari, accusing it of neglect, poor inspections, and deflecting responsibility onto the Union government.
- The government has approved Rs 200 crore for a 600m bridge over the Nethravati River, connecting Kotepura and Bolar in Mangaluru. The project, championed by Speaker UT Khader, aims to ease traffic on NH-66 between Thokkottu and Mangaluru.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Andhra Pradesh

- CM Chandrababu Naidu unveils 'Swarnandhra Vision-2047,' focusing on AI, Deep Tech, and clean energy to make Andhra Pradesh a knowledge hub. He emphasizes the P4 model and targeted skill development for innovation and growth.
- The Central government approves eight new Kendriya Vidyalayas in Andhra Pradesh, benefiting 7,680 students, as part of a nationwide expansion plan. The project involves Rs 5,872.08 crore for 85 KVs, with Andhra's schools located across eight districts.

#### Delhi

- The Union Cabinet approved the 26.46-km Rithala-Narela-Kundli Metro corridor under Phase 4, extending the Red Line with 21 stations, 19 in Delhi and 2 in Haryana. The ₹6,231 crore project is set to be completed in four years, enhancing connectivity, especially towards the city's northwestern border.
- The MCD has begun revamping the Lodhi Road Crematorium Complex with a ₹2-crore project that includes a themed entry gate, increased parking, a new electric furnace, improved lighting, and new office and toilet facilities. The upgrade also includes replacing the dysfunctional electric furnace.

#### Goa

- The bill for ST seat reservations in the Goa legislative assembly is expected to be discussed in the ongoing Parliament session, with strong support from Goa's MPs. The bill aims for unanimous approval, ensuring ST representation by the 2027 state elections.
- Goa will implement the National Education Policy (NEP) for special schools starting from the 2025-26 academic year, focusing on quality, affordability, and equity. The state plans to complete NEP implementation for all education levels by 2027-28.

#### Gujarat

- The Gujarat government plans to introduce legislation to decriminalize minor offences committed by industries, inspired by the Union government's Jan Vishwas Act. The bill, expected in February, aims to improve administrative efficiency and ease of doing business.
- The Gujarat government is set to elevate nine municipalities to municipal corporations, bringing the total number to 17. The municipalities include Gandhidham, Surendranagar, Porbandar, Vapi, Navsari, Mehsana, Morbi, Nadiad, and Anand.

#### Haryana

- Haryana government will release the municipal election schedule before January 4, 2025, with polls to be completed by February 4, 2025. The high court allowed the state's undertaking, ensuring elections for new municipalities are concluded within a month of the announcement.
- Haryana is addressing declining groundwater levels in 2,000 villages through the Atal Bhujal Yojana, with Yamunanagar topping the list. The state also ranks third in food adulteration complaints, with 57 cases pending.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- Himachal Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania proposes a special assembly session on development, ethical governance, and global collaboration, avoiding political debates. He emphasizes tourism's potential for Himachal Pradesh, inspired by insights from his CPA tour.

#### Karnataka

- By January, 90% of the land required for the Dharwad-Belagavi railway line is expected to be handed over to the railway department. Union Minister V Somanna stated that Belagavi and Dharwad districts will transfer 550 and 272 acres, respectively, to expedite the project.
- Union Minister V Somanna pledged efforts to rename Belagavi railway station after Shivabasav Swamiji of Naganur Rudrakshi Mutt. At Shivabasav Swamiji's 135th birth anniversary celebration, he praised the Lingayat mutts for their contributions to education, food, and shelter for underprivileged students.

## INDIA UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Madhya Pradesh

- Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) removed 250 tin sheds, 200 awnings, and 35 structures in Banganga to improve traffic and pedestrian access. The drive, led by Commissioner Shivam Verma, aligns with efforts to enhance city infrastructure and ease congestion.
- Ratlam railway division conducted a mock drill on Saturday 7 December, to assess emergency preparedness for train accidents. The drill simulated a collision between a passenger and goods train, with NDRF teams showcasing their rescue skills and emergency services mobilized.

#### Mumbai

- Devendra Fadnavis was sworn in as Maharashtra's Chief Minister for the third time, with NCP's Ajit Pawar and Shiv Sena's Eknath Shinde as Deputy Chief Ministers. The BJP-led Mahayuti coalition, securing 230 seats, aims to provide a stable government with a focus on change, not revenge.

#### Pune

- Pune's health department launched a 100-day TB campaign targeting over 34 million people in high-risk areas, focusing on detection, treatment, and prevention. The initiative, part of the national TB eradication program, aims to reduce disease spread and mortality rates.
- The Forest Department is integrating the Animal Intrusion Detection and Repellent System (Anider) with a solar fencing project to enhance safety for villagers and wildlife. The system, which detects wild animals near human habitats, successfully prevented a leopard attack in Manchar village by triggering a siren and light, scaring the animal away.

#### Punjab

- Haryana police are using tear gas and pepper spray to disperse farmers protesting at the Shambhu border. Farmers are countering by covering their faces and using wet jute bags to neutralize the tear gas.
- A new space science lab named after Kalpana Chawla has been inaugurated at Government Girls' Senior Secondary School in Mansa. The lab offers interactive learning with models of rockets, space vehicles, and a telescope.

#### Rajasthan

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved 85 new Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) across India, including nine in Rajasthan. These schools, located in cities like Jodhpur, Sriganganagar, and Rajsamand, will enhance access to quality education for 960 students per school.

#### Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin affirmed that the Vishwakarma scheme will not be implemented in the state, criticizing attempts to withdraw children from schools. He praised Christian institutions for promoting education during oppressive times.
- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has approved ₹944.8 crore from the State Disaster Response Fund for Tamil Nadu's cyclone Fengal relief. CM Stalin requested ₹6,675 crore for temporary and permanent relief during a meeting with the central team.

#### Telangana

- Telangana's "Project Sanmati," in collaboration with start-up Karya and supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, empowers rural women with digital livelihood opportunities. The project will engage 2,450 Telugu-speaking individuals, including 2,400 women from SHGs, to complete AI tasks for up to ₹2,000.

#### Uttar Pradesh

- Uttar Pradesh's tourism department held a Heritage Conclave to promote heritage tourism and boost infrastructure development through public-private partnerships. The event emphasized preserving historical sites and improving amenities like roads, airports, and helicopter services.
- Uttar Pradesh's Heritage Policy 2024 encourages adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, offering subsidies for those who enroll. FICCI U.P. Chairman Prateek Hira highlighted Rajasthan's success in transforming heritage sites into self-sustaining tourism hubs as a model for U.P.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Madhya Pradesh

- Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav announced ₹60,000 crore in investment proposals from the UK across sectors like education, agriculture, and medicine. His visit aimed to foster international collaboration and highlight Madhya Pradesh's potential in innovation and technology.
- Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav announced the removal of the BRTS corridor in Indore to ease traffic congestion and improve commuting. He emphasized the need for a flyover to address traffic issues at intersections and stated that the decision was influenced by public complaints.

#### Mumbai

- The Maharashtra Assembly will elect a new Speaker on Monday 9 November, with the BJP likely to nominate Rahul Narwekar for a second term due to his impactful rulings, including landmark verdicts favoring Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar. Narwekar previously served as Speaker during the Mahayuti government.
- India is expanding its high-speed rail network, with the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project already underway. The 508 km corridor, connecting key cities like Mumbai and Ahmedabad, is set to revolutionize travel and boost connectivity, with plans to extend it to Delhi and Amritsar.

#### Pune

- The NGT has directed the MPCB to review the ₹38.40 crore Environmental Damages Compensation (EDC) to be levied on Kolhapur Municipal Corporation for Panchganga River pollution. KMC objected, arguing that the amount overlaps with a previous penalty imposed in 2018.

#### Punjab

- Punjab Minister Aman Arora launched a project to allow sarpanches, nambardars, and municipal councillors to verify applications for certificates online, reducing the need for multiple visits. Citizens can now apply through Sewa Kendras or the helpline, and certificates will be delivered via SMS or WhatsApp.
- Punjab will install 2,356 solar pumps for agriculture, with a 60% subsidy for general category farmers and 80% for SC farmers. The installation, expected to complete in four months, was awarded through a transparent bidding process.

#### Rajasthan

- The Rajasthan Cabinet approved the "Rajasthan Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2024," targeting conversions through deceit. The law will impose punishments and allow courts to annul marriages with conversion intent.

#### Tamil Nadu

- Chief Minister M.K. Stalin will visit Vaikom on December 12 to inaugurate the renovated memorial of social reformer E.V. R. Periyar, with Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan presiding. The event aligns with the centenary celebrations of Periyar's victory in the Vaikom Satyagraha.
- A life convict at Coimbatore Central Prison designed and manufactured a solar-powered auto rickshaw, which will soon be introduced in all Tamil Nadu central prisons. The vehicle will assist visitors meeting remand and convict prisoners.

#### Telangana

- The Telangana Congress government, led by CM Revanth Reddy, is likely to amend the Panchayat Raj Act, removing district collectors' power to suspend sarpanches and lifting the two-child norm for rural elections. This move comes under pressure from party leaders and former sarpanches.

#### Uttar Pradesh

- The Uttar Pradesh government plans to reduce carbon emissions by 13 lakh tons annually by integrating the Jal Jeevan Mission with solar power. The initiative, which includes over 33,000 solar energy-based groundwater schemes, aims to cut electricity bills and earn carbon credits.
- The chief minister inaugurated a digital lost and found center at the Maha Kumbh, which will feature 328 AI-powered cameras for crowd surveillance. Additionally, 10 digital camps will use AI and social media to help reunite lost people with their families during the 45-day event starting Jan 13.

## GLOBAL UPDATE

## Highlights of this week

## Africa

- Ghana's former president, John Mahama, won the 2024 general election, with Vice President Bawumia conceding early to ease tensions. Mahama, who served from 2012 to 2016, criticized Bawumia's policies, which contributed to the country's economic crisis, including high inflation and a \$3 billion IMF bailout.
- Burkina Faso's military government appointed Rimalba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo as prime minister, replacing Apollinaire Joachim Kyelem de Tambela. No reasons were provided for Tambela's dismissal.

## America

- Argentina's central bank reduced its benchmark interest rate from 35% to 32%, continuing efforts to curb inflation. This marks the eighth rate cut since President Milei took office, following a high of 133% in October 2023.
- Mexican authorities detained over 5,200 migrants in a large-scale operation, responding to pressure from the incoming U.S. government. Since October 1, nearly 350,000 migrants have been apprehended, with actions supported by the Army, National Guard, and state police.

## China

- The Philippines filed a diplomatic protest against China over a December 4 maritime incident at Scarborough Shoal, where Chinese vessels used water cannons and conducted dangerous maneuvers against Filipino boats. This is part of the ongoing tension between the two nations in the South China Sea.
- China has banned exports of gallium, germanium, and antimony to the U.S. due to national security concerns, escalating trade tensions. These minerals are crucial in military and tech sectors, including semiconductors and weaponry.

## Europe

- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy announced the arrival of a second batch of F-16 fighter jets from Denmark, praising Denmark's leadership in supporting Ukraine's defense.
- Russian strikes on Zaporizhzhia and Kryvyi Rih in southeastern Ukraine killed at least 12 and injured over 40 on Friday Dec 6, officials report. A car repair shop in Zaporizhzhia became a fireball, killing 10, while a missile strike in Kryvyi Rih killed two and injured 19.

## Middle East

- Rebels seize Damascus, prompting President Bashar al-Assad to flee to Russia, effectively ending Syria's 13-year civil war and over 50 years of Assad family rule. Syrians face a hopeful yet uncertain future.

## Pakistan

- Six Pakistani soldiers and 22 militants were killed in clashes near the Afghan border in Waziristan, where the Pakistan Taliban (TTP) launched an attack on a security checkpoint. The TTP has intensified its assault on security forces in recent months.
- Saudi Arabia has extended the term of a \$3 billion deposit with Pakistan for another year, continuing financial support for Pakistan's economy. The deposit, originally signed in 2021, has been rolled over in 2022 and 2023.

## United Kingdom

- UK construction activity rose in November, driven by commercial and civil engineering, but residential house-building contracted due to high interest rates. The Bank of England is expected to maintain rates this month, with future cuts likely gradual.
- Demand for workers in the UK dropped sharply in November following the new Labour government's budget, with permanent staff placements falling at the fastest rate since August 2023. The index of staff demand hit its lowest level since August 2020, reflecting the impact of tax increases on employers.

## United States

- U.S. job growth surged in November, but the unemployment rate rose to 4.2%, indicating a cooling labor market. Solid wage growth persists, supporting strong consumer spending and revised job gains from previous months.
- The U.S. Justice Department has received over 250 whistleblower tips in the first months of a pilot program, aiding in uncovering new criminal conduct. The program, launched in August, supports corporate misconduct investigations and aligns with other federal whistleblowing initiatives.

## Upcoming News/Events

## Africa

- Morocco's state-owned rail operator, ONCF, is seeking \$8.8 billion for its expansion, with investors offering over \$13 billion. The plan includes extending the high-speed train network to Marrakech by 2030 and reaching 43 cities by 2040.
- Nigeria's Senate has passed a bill making it illegal to export large quantities of unprocessed corn, aiming to address hunger amid the country's severe cost-of-living crisis. Economic hardship has worsened due to austerity reforms under President Bola Tinubu.

## America

- Mexico is taking aggressive actions to protect its trade agreement with the US and Canada, targeting contraband goods from Asia, seizing record amounts of fentanyl, and detaining thousands of migrants.
- Canada plans to enhance cooperation with the U.S. in the Arctic to address rising tensions from Russia and China's ambitions. The strategy includes appointing an Arctic ambassador and opening new consulates in Anchorage and Nuuk.

## China

- China is seeking public feedback on guidelines for reporting steel industry emissions, and preparing mills for the carbon market. The guidelines aim to standardize emissions measurement for the expanded carbon market and international requirements.
- The NBA has signed a multiyear deal to host pre-season games in Macau from 2025, marking its return to China after a 2019 controversy. The first games will feature the Brooklyn Nets and Phoenix Suns in October 2025.

## Europe

- The Kremlin expresses openness to Ukraine talks if based on 2022 Istanbul agreements and battlefield realities. It blames Ukraine for refusing negotiations and demands lifting a decree banning contact with Russian leadership.
- The U.S. State Department approves the \$807 million sale of medium-range air-to-air missiles to the Netherlands. RTX Corp is designated as the principal contractor.

## Middle East

- Iran is accelerating uranium enrichment to 60% purity, nearing weapons-grade levels, according to IAEA chief Rafael Grossi. Western nations express alarm, asserting no civilian justification exists for such high enrichment, while Iran denies seeking nuclear weapons.
- President Joe Biden declares U.S. support to seize opportunities after Syrian rebels overthrow Bashar al-Assad, marking the regime's fall. The White House assesses implications for a reshaped Middle East.

## Pakistan

- Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) will resume flights to Europe in January, starting with Paris, after the EU lifted its ban on the carrier. The ban was imposed in 2020 due to concerns over pilot licensing and aviation safety standards.
- Jailed former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has called for a rally on December 13 in Peshawar and threatened a civil disobedience movement from December 14. He demands a judicial inquiry into the deadly protests on November 25 and May 9, and the release of arrested political workers.

## United Kingdom

- UK Finance Minister Rachel Reeves will advocate for reducing trade barriers with the EU at her first meeting with eurozone counterparts, aiming to boost mutual economic growth.
- British PM Keir Starmer will visit Cyprus on Tuesday, Dec 10, marking the first official visit by a UK prime minister since 1971, to discuss strategic partnerships, Cyprus's division, UK-EU relations, and regional issues.

## United States

- The U.S. House of Representatives will vote on a defense bill next week, allocating over \$3 billion for U.S. telecom companies to remove Huawei and ZTE equipment. This funding addresses security risks and supports the "rip and replace" program, which faces a \$3.08 billion shortfall.
- The U.S. has announced a \$988 million arms package for Ukraine, including HIMARS ammunition and drones, funded by the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative. This nearly halves the remaining \$2.21 billion in the fund, focusing on purchasing new weapons from industry rather than U.S. stockpiles.

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