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## INDIA UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Andhra Pradesh

- TTD chairman BR Naidu provided financial aid to victims of the January 8 Tirupati stampede, which killed six and injured over 50 pilgrims. Following CM Chandrababu Naidu's directions, ex-gratia cheques of ₹5 lakh each were given to two critically injured and ₹2 lakh each to five others.
- The Andhra Pradesh government approved ₹6,700 crore in payments to various sections ahead of Sankranti, with Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav calling it a bold step to overcome challenges.

#### Delhi

- Dense fog in Delhi has reduced visibility to zero, delaying multiple flights and trains. The IMD predicts light rain and thunderstorms, with temperatures ranging from 15°C to 8°C. Air quality remains "very poor" with an AQI of 397.
- Key infrastructure projects in Delhi, including the civic budget presentation, road re-carpeting, and Shivaji Bus Terminal redevelopment, are stalled due to the Model Code of Conduct triggered by assembly elections. No new approvals or announcements will be made until mid-February.

#### Goa

- Goa Health Minister Vishwajit Rane discussed doubling the bed capacity of the Paediatric Neonatal Resource Centre (PNRC) at Goa Medical College, Bambolim, from 15 to 30 beds. The facility, known for providing free services, is in high demand and aims to enhance newborn care and early intervention.

#### Gujarat

- A leopard in South Gujarat has been radio-collared for the first time under a new project to study leopard movements and reduce human-wildlife conflict. Four more leopards in Surat district, home to 104 leopards, will also be collared, with data transmitted live every 30 minutes.
- The state government sanctioned Rs 30.50 crore for road strengthening in Bhuj. Meanwhile, over 80 information department officers attended a two-day Chintan Shibir in Anand to improve communication of government schemes.

#### Haryana

- Gurgaon experienced a chilly morning with temperatures at 7.9°C, slightly above the usual 6.8°C. IMD issued an orange alert for dense fog until Jan 14 and a yellow alert for thunderstorms on Jan 15.
- Haryana's public works minister, Ranbir Gangwa, announced the creation of a road safety fund and highlighted initiatives like modern equipment for quality checks and road safety features to reduce accidents.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- The Himachal Pradesh cabinet approved a uniform 12% stamp duty rate on transfer and lease transactions under Section 118(2)(H) of the Tenancy and Land Reforms Act. It also banned tree felling except for specific species and advocated for green area status around Tara Devi Temple.

#### Karnataka

- Karnataka's Muzrai department has reclaimed over 12,000 acres of land in the name of temples, up from 3,544 acres at the start of 2023. This recovery, involving A and B-grade temples, is part of an ongoing effort to restore assets and properties originally belonging to religious institutions.
- BBMP has fined Rodic Consultants ₹5 lakh for errors in the Detailed Project Report of a ₹9.5 crore underground tunnel project in Bengaluru. The report mistakenly included traffic data from Maharashtra cities, but the core analysis was deemed accurate for Bengaluru.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Andhra Pradesh

- Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan stated that Greenko's renewable energy project in Pinnapuram, Kurnool, aims to generate 50,000 jobs, with phase 1 including 1,000 MW solar, 550 MW wind, and 1,200 MW pumped storage capacity.
- The Sankranti Brahmotsavams at Sri Bhramarambha Mallikarjuna Swamy temple, Srisailem, began on January 11 with elaborate arrangements for rituals and poojas. The main event, Brahmotsava Kalyanam, is scheduled for January 14, attracting devotees from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka.

#### Delhi

- The DDA plans to build its first international-standard ice rink at the upcoming sports complex in Dwarka Sector 23, focusing on ice hockey and skating. The 60m x 30m rink, part of a ₹39.67 crore complex, is expected to be ready by year-end and aims to attract national and international players.
- Delhi LG VK Saxena issued the official notification for assembly elections, with nominations open until January 17 and scrutiny on January 18. Polling is set for February 5, votes will be counted on February 8, and the current Assembly's tenure ends on February 23, 2025.

#### Goa

- The Goa Board will introduce an answer-wise revaluation system, requiring students to first obtain a photocopy for ₹500. Each revaluation will cost ₹100, with refunds for any incorrect one-mark evaluations.

#### Gujarat

- The Gujarat government plans to introduce guidelines limiting mobile phone and social media use for children, aiming to reduce screen time. The initiative, which will include a strict mobile phone ban in primary schools, will be promoted as a campaign after expert consultations.
- The Gujarat government has appointed six older municipal corporations to mentor nine new ones, providing guidance and training. A Rs 20-crore grant has been allocated for each new civic body to improve infrastructure and public services.

#### Haryana

- A 34km pipeline will transport 1.5 million metric tonnes of aviation fuel annually from Faridabad to Noida International Airport. The project is 90% complete, and final work is expected by the end of February.
- The Haryana school education department will resume online teacher transfers after two years, aiming to complete it by March. Officials are required to update data by January 24 for a smooth transfer process.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- Environmentalists, activists, and locals in Lahaul Spiti have threatened mass protests if the state government proceeds with hydro projects in the eco-sensitive district. They argue that such projects could devastate the region's fragile ecosystem, already under pressure from climate change and tourism.

#### Karnataka

- A bandh has been called in Srirangapatna on Jan 20 to protest the Karnataka Waqf Board's claims on lands and historical structures. Farmers are concerned about the Waqf Board's name appearing in their property documents, but the local tahsildar reassured them that these entries may date back to 2014-15 and promised assistance in resolving any issues.
- Beer prices in Karnataka are set to rise from January 20, with premium brands likely seeing hikes of ₹10 to ₹50. This follows the state's recent decision to reduce Indian Made Liquor prices, aiming to capitalize on the growing beer market despite opposition from the Brewer's Association of India.

## INDIA UPDATE

## Highlights of this week

## Madhya Pradesh

- Protests erupted in Indore over the plan to dispose of 337 tonnes of Union Carbide factory waste in Pithampur, Dhar district, citing health and environmental concerns. Protesters fear the incineration will harm the residents of Indore and surrounding areas.

## Mumbai

- Mumbai Metro lines 2A and 7 have been cleared for full-speed operations by the Chief Commissioner of Rail Safety. Serving over 250,000 daily passengers, the lines can now operate at speeds of up to 80 km/h, enhancing their service efficiency.
- Mumbai's first human metapneumovirus (HMPV) case was reported in a six-month-old baby girl diagnosed at Hiranandani Hospital. Following treatment, she recovered and was discharged, while the BMC has intensified surveillance for respiratory infections.

## Pune

- Pune International Airport has shifted all international operations to its New Integrated Terminal Building (NITB), which spans 22,000 square meters and handles 7 million passengers annually.
- The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has confirmed its readiness to manage Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) cases, with a robust healthcare plan in place. The city's hospitals are prepared, and there are over 2,600 functional beds, including oxygenated and ICU options, for emergency use.

## Punjab

- Dense fog reduced visibility in Punjab and Haryana on Friday 10th Jan, with Fazilka recording the coldest temperature at 2.4°C. Several cities, including Amritsar, Ludhiana, and Chandigarh, experienced cold weather, with temperatures as low as 3°C in Hisar and Karnal.

## Rajasthan

- Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation (RSRTC) launched bus services to Prayagraj for the Kumbh mela, with buses seeing 80% occupancy on the first day. The buses operate via Bharatpur, Agra, and Kanpur.
- The Rajasthan mining department plans to allocate 71.11 hectares of pastureland across 32 sites in four districts for mining. Rajsamand, Dungarpur, Udaipur, and Sikar will host plots for minerals like quartz, feldspar, granite, and masonry stone.

## Tamil Nadu

- The Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation has inaugurated the COSIEMA-TANCAM Centre in Coimbatore to support MSMEs with advanced design and simulation. Set up at ₹1 crore with Dassault Systèmes software, it will benefit industries like automotive, EVs, and aerospace.
- Tamil Nadu denies claims of requesting the cancellation of the Madurai-Tuticorin railway project, stating it has actively supported its implementation. Land acquisition efforts are underway.

## Telangana

- Telangana's cabinet expansion is delayed due to 32 aspirants vying for six vacant berths and two assembly positions amid caste, regional, and political equations. Promises to leaders like G Vivekanand and Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy add to the complexity, with AICC insisting on a minority candidate.

## Uttar Pradesh

- The 45-day Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj begins with the 'Shahi Snan' on Paush Purnima, drawing lakhs of devotees. Security, AI-enabled surveillance, and traffic arrangements are in place to manage the large crowd.
- An under-construction building collapsed at Kannauj railway station on January 13, trapping around 40 workers. By late night, 28 workers were rescued, with ongoing efforts involving drones and sniffer dogs, while an inquiry has been launched into the incident.
- Several parts of Uttar Pradesh, including Kanpur, Prayagraj, and Varanasi, experienced dense fog as cold wave conditions intensified. Experts predict a further drop in mercury and continued fog over the next 3-4 days due to western disturbances.

## Upcoming News/Events

## Madhya Pradesh

- The Madhya Pradesh High Court has given the state government six weeks to dispose of the Union Carbide waste from the Bhopal gas tragedy, after protests in Pithampur. The court directed the government to ensure safety measures.

## Mumbai

- Maharashtra's Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik announced the approval of a cable car project for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, aiming to ease urban transportation challenges.
- Maharashtra's Fisheries and Ports Minister, Nitesh Rane, launched an AI-powered drone initiative for enhanced marine security and curbing illegal fishing. The drones, placed at strategic coastal locations, will monitor 720 km of coastline and provide real-time surveillance data.

## Pune

- The Mumbai-Pune Expressway is set for an eight-lane expansion to ease traffic congestion, with state cabinet approval expected within two months. The project will add one lane on each side and require land acquisition for new tunnels.
- Pune will host the Army Day Parade 2025 on January 15, marking the first time the city holds this event. The parade will feature modern contingents, including a Women Agniveer group, at the BEG Centre, Kadki.

## Punjab

- The Punjab and Haryana High Court will hear a petition challenging anti-begging laws, claiming they violate freedom of speech and survival rights. The laws impose up to 10 years of imprisonment for begging, which the petitioners argue is unconstitutional.

## Rajasthan

- The state mining department will re-auction plots if mine owners fail to upload Form-2 on the Parivesh Portal by Jan 27 for environmental clearance. Help desks have been set up to assist, but non-compliance will result in cancellation and e-auction.
- A 'village shutdown movement' is planned across 45,537 villages in Rajasthan on Jan 29 by Kisan Mahapanchayat, demanding compensation laws for crop damage, MSP guarantees, and irrigation projects.

## Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu minister K N Nehru inaugurated a ₹471-crore underground drainage project in Madurai under AMRUT 2.0 and announced ₹190 crore for road repairs. He highlighted ₹3,200 crore for drinking water projects, with the Mullaperiyar scheme expected to start by March 2025.
- Tamil Nadu braces for heavy rainfall till January 15, driven by a cyclonic circulation over the Bay of Bengal. A yellow alert is issued for 12 districts, including Ramanathapuram, Thanjavur, and Chennai, with intense rain expected on January 14-15.

## Telangana

- CM A Revanth Reddy urged BJP Telangana leaders to collaborate on key state projects like Metro expansion, Musi rejuvenation, and Kazipet rail coach factory. Highlighting Tamil Nadu's unified approach to development, he emphasized collective efforts to make Hyderabad a global city and help Telangana contribute \$1 trillion to India's economy.

## Uttar Pradesh

- Uttar Pradesh has finalized developers for three solar plants in Jhansi, Lalitpur, and Chitrakoot, with a combined capacity of 2,000 MW by 2025. The ₹10,000 crore projects aim to boost clean energy and economic growth in Bundelkhand.
- Uttar Pradesh is working to make tourism a "people's industry," with CM Yogi Adityanath urging citizens to become brand ambassadors. This initiative has contributed to UP's top position for domestic tourist arrivals in India for the third year in a row.
- Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath has instructed officials to ensure robust health arrangements amid the ongoing cold wave. Special precautions are being taken for vulnerable groups and pilgrims at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj.

## GLOBAL UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Africa

- Sudan's army claimed to have entered Wad Madani, pushing out the RSF after almost two years of conflict. This recapture of the city, held by the RSF since December 2023, could signal a turning point in the war that has caused widespread displacement and hunger.
- Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud visited Ethiopia, marking a sign of improving relations after tensions over a planned Ethiopian naval base. Both countries agreed to restore full diplomatic representation and strengthen bilateral ties.

#### America

- Venezuela condemned new U.S., UK, and EU sanctions after President Maduro's swearing-in. The country rejected the measures, calling them illegal and outside international law.
- Mexico sent a team of firefighters to California to assist with devastating wildfires in Los Angeles. California officials expressed gratitude for the support as blazes have killed at least 11 people and destroyed 10,000 structures.

#### China

- The U.S. has imposed tougher sanctions to limit Russian oil exports to China and India, prompting refiners in both countries to source more oil from the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas, increasing prices and freight costs.
- People's Bank of China Governor Pan Gongsheng met Bank of England's Andrew Bailey in Beijing to discuss financial stability and cooperation. The meetings took place during British finance minister Rachel Reeves' visit to China, aimed at resuming high-level economic talks.

#### Europe

- Tens of thousands of Romanians protested in Bucharest, demanding the presidential election proceed and President Iohannis resign. The protests followed the top court's cancellation of the election due to alleged unfair campaigning.
- Gas flows from Azerbaijan to Serbia have been halted due to force majeure, with no clear timeline for resumption. Serbia will start using its gas reserves in the meantime, hoping for the flows to resume in one or two months.

#### Middle East

- U.S. and Arab mediators have made progress in peace talks between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, but a deal has not yet been reached. Israeli strikes continue, killing at least 23 more people, bringing the total to 76 in 24 hours.
- Syria's Ahmed al-Sharaa met Lebanon's caretaker PM Najib Mikati in Damascus to strengthen ties, focusing on securing their shared border. This marks the first visit by a Lebanese PM to Syria in 15 years.

#### Pakistan

- Pakistan has the highest number of hepatitis C (HCV) cases globally, with 10 million patients. The government has launched a PKR 67.77 billion program to combat HCV, aiming to treat 50% of the eligible population by 2030. The initiative includes screening, treatment, and the promotion of affordable medications and vaccination.

#### United Kingdom

- UK Finance Minister Rachel Reeves pledged to take action to meet fiscal rules amid market turmoil, despite facing criticism for her trip to China.
- Britain's Labour government has removed 16,400 illegal migrants since July, the highest rate since 2018. The government is focusing on dismantling people-smuggling gangs and implementing new sanctions on those responsible.

#### United States

- Firefighters are battling two major wildfires in Los Angeles, which have burned for six consecutive days, fueled by high winds. At least 14 deaths have been reported, with 12,000 structures destroyed and 100,000 people evacuated.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Africa

- Ghana's new government, led by President John Dramani Mahama, may seek additional funding from the IMF during its three-year program to support the economy. Finance minister designate Cassiel Ato Forson emphasized the need for additional financing, working with the IMF and other partners.
- Nigeria and China plan to deepen cooperation in clean energy, defense, and finance, with China supporting Nigeria's issuance of Panda bonds for infrastructure. The two countries also aim to address regional security challenges, strengthening their "comprehensive strategic partnership."

#### America

- Canada's Liberal Party will elect a new leader on March 9, 2025, after outgoing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his resignation. The party faces weak poll standings ahead of the 2025 elections, with Trudeau staying on as leader until a successor is chosen.

#### China

- China's foreign ministry stated it has maintained close communication with the WHO regarding rising HMPV cases, emphasizing it's not a new virus. The Chinese CDC reported high case levels, in line with other northern hemisphere regions, dismissing concerns of an unusual outbreak.
- Chinese President Xi Jinping will send a high-level envoy to U.S. President-elect Trump's inauguration instead of attending himself. Potential candidates for the envoy include Vice President Han Zheng, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, or Politburo member Cai Qi.

#### Europe

- European foreign ministers will meet on January 27 to discuss easing sanctions on Syria, depending on the new government's inclusivity and anti-radicalization efforts. This follows 13 years of civil war and a recent shift in Syria's leadership.
- Denmark's government plans to purchase Arctic inspection vessels and enhance military presence in Greenland, including upgrading an airport for F-35 jets. This follows U.S. President-elect Trump's renewed interest in Greenland for security reasons.

#### Middle East

- Israel plans to use tax revenue collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority to pay its debt of nearly 2 billion shekels to Israel Electric Co (IEC). This move follows the withholding of funds earmarked for Gaza administration since the October 2023 Hamas-led attack.
- Lebanese President Joseph Aoun will hold consultations with parliament members starting January 13 to nominate a new prime minister. Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati is a frontrunner, but opposition figure Fouad Makhzoumi may have significant support.

#### Pakistan

- Malala Yousafzai called on Muslim leaders to criminalize gender apartheid and condemn the Taliban's treatment of women and girls in Afghanistan. Speaking at a summit in Pakistan, she emphasized that Muslim voices must lead in opposing the Taliban's education bans for girls.

#### United Kingdom

- The UK government plans to tackle ticket reselling by proposing a cap on resale prices and holding resale platforms accountable. The consultation aims to curb unfair practices and protect consumers from inflated ticket prices for events like sports tournaments and concerts.
- The UK plans to introduce sanctions targeting leaders of migrant smuggling networks and the Chinese manufacturers of boats and motors used in these operations. This policy aims to disrupt the financial operations of smugglers and reduce illegal migration via small boats.

#### United States

- Bipartisan lawmakers urged the Biden administration to consider restricting U.S. biotech exports to China's military, citing security concerns. They warned of the potential misuse of U.S. biotechnology to create toxic pathogens, with China rejecting these allegations as speculative.
- U.S. President Biden spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on efforts to secure a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release before Biden's term ends on Jan. 20. They discussed humanitarian aid, regional changes, and progress in the ongoing negotiations.

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