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## INDIA UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Andhra Pradesh

- NITI Aayog Advisor Pravakar Sahoo praised Andhra Pradesh's 'Swarnandhra' policy, aligning it with India's 'Viksit Bharat 2047' vision. He spoke at an international conference on innovation and sustainable business at VIT-AP University.
- Chandrababu Naidu ordered the release of pending dues for BC students, including diet charges and hostel maintenance. He also reiterated his promise of 34% BC reservation in local bodies and GST removal on handloom products.

#### Delhi

- Delhi PWD mandates a road history register and chainage marking every 50m for better tracking of repairs. All zones must report roads needing strengthening and re-carpeting, ensuring transparency in expenditure.
- Delhi MCD allocates ₹4,907.1 crore (28.9%) for sanitation in its ₹17,002.6-crore budget. It plans micro-forests, mechanized cleaning, and Aadhaar-linked birth registration. New drainage projects and e-bike systems are also proposed.

#### Goa

- Panjim's Electricity Department fines Jio Digital Fibre ₹3.45 crore and BLITS ₹1.80 crore for unauthorized cable use on poles. Operators have 15 days to register or remove cables, or they will be cut.
- Five key roads in Panaji's business district are closed for sewerage revamp until Feb 28. IPSCDL urges residents to follow diversions. Affected roads include General Bernardo Guedes, M G, and Costa Alvares.

#### Gujarat

- Gujarat unveiled a Global Capability Centre (GCC) policy to attract ₹10,000 crore investment and create 50,000 jobs. The policy offers incentives, including ₹200 crore capex aid and salary support for local hires.
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#### Haryana

- Intach challenges Haryana's claim that Najafgarh Jheel was nonexistent before 2010, citing historical records proving its presence. It argues that Haryana's data contradicts this, showing monsoon expansion up to 3,800 acres. NGT is reviewing the petition.
- Over 7,000 appeals are pending at Haryana State Information Commission, with ₹2.84 crore in unrecovered penalties. Since 2005, ₹5.86 crore penalties were imposed in 3,611 cases for delayed information. RTI activist warns backlog may take 7-8 years to clear.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- Himachal records a 64% rainfall deficit in February, with all districts experiencing below-normal precipitation. Sirmour saw the highest shortfall at 97%, while Kullu had the lowest at 32%. IMD forecasts mainly dry weather until February 18.

#### Karnataka

- Karnataka secures ₹10.27 lakh crore investments at Invest Karnataka 2025, creating 6 lakh jobs. Nearly 75% of projects are outside Bengaluru, with 45% in North Karnataka. Key sectors include manufacturing, EVs, aerospace, and infrastructure.
- Karnataka transfers the Covid scam probe from SIT to CID, led by SP Raghavendra Hegde. The Congress government uses it to counter BJP-linked corruption allegations. Former CM Yediyurappa and ex-ministers may face scrutiny.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Andhra Pradesh

- Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu urged banks to provide liberal credit for horticulture and solar panel installations, aiming for 15% growth in two decades. He emphasized quick loan approvals for farmers and support for allied sectors like dairy and cold storage.
- Chandrababu Naidu urged citizens to actively participate in the Swachh Andhra Mission. He emphasized that cleanliness should be a collective responsibility, not limited to individuals or institutions.

#### Delhi

- The BJP govt. plans to rename and revamp Delhi's Mohalla Clinics as "Ayushman Arogya Mandirs," citing mismanagement under AAP. The clinics will be expanded in JJ clusters and unauthorized colonies to improve healthcare access.
- Delhi MCD presents ₹17,006-cr budget for 2025-26, keeping property tax rates unchanged despite a ₹14,000-cr financial crisis. Sanitation gets 28.9% allocation, with revenue hikes and spending cuts proposed to stabilize finances.

#### Goa

- Panaji's IPSCDL will shut more roads to meet the March 31 deadline, with 3.5km of repairs pending. The 535m General Bernardo Guedes Road and two key roads near Panaji market will close for 20 days.
- Goa CM Pramod Sawant revises 2019's 24x7 water supply promise to 4 hours daily by 2026. Environmentalists blame deforestation and silted rivers, while locals say they still rely on borewells and streams.

#### Gujarat

- PM Modi will launch Gujarat's School of Ultimate Leadership (SOUL) on Feb 21. The ₹150-crore campus near GIFT City will train 100,000 youth for public service, with courses from 1 week to 12 months.

#### Haryana

- BJP has announced 36 candidates for Haryana municipal polls, sparking discontent among some senior leaders. The elections will be held on March 2, with results on March 12. Congress is set to release its candidate list soon.
- Haryana will set up Integrated Manufacturing Townships in 10 districts to boost industry and attract investment. CM Saini says regulations will be simplified. The state budget will focus on agriculture, industry, and infrastructure.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- Himachal plans to boost tea tourism by studying West Bengal's model and formulating a policy. CM Sukhu emphasizes its potential to revitalize the Kangra tea industry. Stakeholders highlight the need for structured regulations to unlock economic benefits.
- Himachal Congress chief Pratibha Singh to meet the party high command in Delhi regarding HPCC reconstitution. The committee has been dissolved since November 6, 2024, with delays attributed to elections.

#### Karnataka

- Rapido will introduce its women-only 'Pink Rapido' bike taxi fleet in Karnataka by the end of this year. The service, driven by Women for Women, aims to create 25,000 job opportunities. The initiative focuses on safe mobility and economic empowerment for women.

## INDIA UPDATE

## Highlights of this week

## Madhya Pradesh

- Madhya Pradesh has started unloading 337 metric tonnes of Union Carbide waste at Pithampur's disposal facility. The process follows protests over its transportation in January. Authorities ensure safety protocols during the disposal.
- The Madhya Pradesh cabinet approved over 10 policies for industries like pharma, textiles, defense, and EVs to boost economic growth. CM Mohan Yadav will host a curtain-raiser in Delhi ahead of the Global Investor Summit on February 24-25. PM Modi will inaugurate the event.

## Mumbai

- Bombay HC gives VVCMC three weeks to clarify its stand on rehabilitating residents of 41 illegal buildings in Nalasopara East. The PIL argues demolitions without rehab violate Supreme Court rulings.
- BMC suspends concretization of Pali Hill's Auxilium Convent Road after residents opposed it, citing good condition. Commissioner Bhushan Gagrani directed an inspection before a final decision, stating similar cases will be reviewed individually.

## Pune

- PMRDA approves ₹2,626.37 crore for 50 new roads to boost connectivity to industrial hubs, tourist spots, and Purandar airport. ₹203 crore was allocated for 10 industrial roads; work on old roads will also be undertaken.
- PMC demolished over 100 shanties obstructing the new ₹83 crore Sadhu Vaswani Bridge at Koregaon Park. The 640m bridge, pending one pillar, will connect Ahmednagar Road, Kalyani Nagar, and Pune Camp. Slum dwellers were relocated to an SRA building in Hadapsar.

## Punjab

- Punjab refuses to implement the RTE Act's 25% seat reservation in private schools, prioritizing government school upgrades over private reimbursements. Despite appeals from NGOs and the Centre, the policy remains unchanged.
- Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann distributed 115 AI-powered laptops to 14 government schools in Ludhiana to enhance digital learning. This pilot project aims to assess the impact of cost-effective technology in education.

## Rajasthan

- India and Egypt's joint military exercise 'Cyclone' began at Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan, on February 10. The two-week drill focuses on special warfare tactics and counter-terrorism operations, concluding on February 23.

## Tamil Nadu

- PM Modi stated that Kashi Tamil Sangamam 3.0 holds greater significance as it coincides with the Mahakumbh. He emphasized the deep historical ties between Tamil Nadu and Kashi, highlighting Sage Agasthyar's contributions to Tamil literature and traditional medicine.
- Tamil Nadu opposes Kerala's Silandhi check dam, warning it will reduce Amaravathy Dam's inflow, affecting irrigation for 55,000 acres in Tiruppur and Karur. Despite objections, NBWL has approved the project, raising concerns over water security.

## Telangana

- Telangana is conducting a second round of its caste survey from February 16 to 28 to cover the remaining 3.1% population and allow updates from previous respondents. The move follows opposition criticism and concerns over discrepancies in the first survey.

## Uttar Pradesh

- The SC Road Safety Committee expressed dissatisfaction over the slow implementation of electronic traffic monitoring in UP and other states. The final status report will be submitted to the Supreme Court in March.
- Alliance Air has launched direct flights between Hyderabad and Prayagraj for Maha Kumbh Mela, operating thrice a week from Feb 11-25. Flights depart on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays, catering to high pilgrim demand.

## Upcoming News/Events

## Madhya Pradesh

- Jabalpur's Gol Bazar will host a 10-day book fair from March 20 at Shaheed Smarak. The fair will offer books, stationery, and school uniforms at affordable prices, with business expected to reach ₹300 crore.
- Vikramotsav 2025 in Ujjain will begin on Mahashivratri (Feb 26) and continue till June 30. The 125-day festival will feature religious, cultural, and intellectual events, with performances by Sukhwinder Singh and Mohit Chauhan.

## Mumbai

- The Panvel exit on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway will be closed for six months from Feb 11 due to flyover and underpass construction at Kalamboli Circle. Vehicles will be diverted via Kon Phata and Palaspe Circle, while MTHL-bound traffic remains unaffected.
- BMC extended the bid deadline for Mumbai Coastal Road open space development to March 7. The project's key stretches are operational, with a promenade and underpasses opening by February-end.

## Pune

- PMRDA proposes ₹67 crore for tourism projects, enhancing roads, parking, and security at nine tourist spots in Maval, Haveli, and Mulshi. ₹11 crore was set aside for additional connectivity improvements.
- PMC will audit 672 bridges, including 434 on nullahs, before the monsoon, following state PWD orders. A consultant firm with structural engineers will conduct the assessment, with ₹10 crore allocated this year and ₹15 crore next year.

## Punjab

- Farmers in Punjab seek government and Punjab Agricultural University guidance on suitable paddy varieties to avoid price cuts. They allege unfair reductions by procurement agencies despite following official recommendations.
- Centre-farmer talks remained cordial but ended without a decision, with the next round set for Feb 22. Farmers demand a legal guarantee on MSP, while Punjab seeks ₹6,857 crore in pending RDF funds. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was absent but will join the next meeting.

## Rajasthan

- Redevelopment of Bijainagar railway station under the Amrit Station Scheme is progressing swiftly, with completion targeted by May 2025. Upgraded platforms, a new station building with modern amenities, and improved parking aim to enhance passenger convenience and boost tourism.

## Tamil Nadu

- The Tamil Nadu budget will prioritize road upgrades, drinking water projects, and infrastructure development across southern districts. Minister K.N. Nehru stated that ₹24,000 crore is allocated annually for urban projects, with major funds directed to water and drainage works in key districts.
- Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin announces master plans for Coimbatore and Madurai in March, aiming to boost urban infrastructure, housing, and sustainability. The government is also planning 10 regional development projects and new townships to decongest Chennai.

## Telangana

- Hyderabad is evolving from a back-office hub to a key center for deep-tech, innovation, and intellectual property creation, says Telangana IT minister Sridhar Babu. The city aims to transition from Global Capability Centres (GCCs) to Global Value Centres (GVCs), driving global technology transformation.

## Uttar Pradesh

- Uttar Pradesh aims to become a global hub for green hydrogen production with Japan's Yamanashi Prefecture's support. UP targets 1 million metric tons annually with subsidies and investment opportunities.
- 250 Japanese CEOs will visit Uttar Pradesh to explore investments in green hydrogen and tourism. Deputy Governor Ko Osada met CM Yogi Adityanath, discussing economic ties and a proposed green hydrogen center.

## GLOBAL UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Africa

- M23 rebels reached Bukavu's outskirts in eastern Congo, escalating tensions after seizing Goma last month. Congo's PM demanded Rwanda's troop withdrawal, while Uganda's army chief threatened to attack Bunia, raising fears of a wider regional conflict.
- Djibouti's Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf was elected as the new African Union Commission chair at a summit focused on the Congo crisis. Youssouf, in office since 2005, has also served as Djibouti's ambassador to Egypt.

#### America

- The U.S. deported 119 people of various nationalities to Panama under an agreement, with two more flights expected, totaling 360 deportees. They will be housed near the Darién before being sent to their home countries.
- Ecuador's President Noboa appointed Luis Alberto Jaramillo as the new finance minister and confirmed Ines Manzano as interim energy minister. These changes follow a tight presidential race and IMF's approval of a \$500 million disbursement to Ecuador.

#### China

- China criticized U.S.-Philippine military exercises, calling them a violation of commitments, and opposed the deployment of U.S. missiles in the Philippines, labeling them as offensive. China argues these actions destabilize the region and escalate tensions.
- China accused Australia of provoking it with a maritime patrol in the South China Sea, calling Australia's claims "false narratives." Australia defended its actions as legal, citing a dangerous encounter with a Chinese jet.

#### Europe

- Europe will not be part of the Ukraine peace talks, as confirmed by Trump's envoy. The U.S. intends to mediate, focusing on Ukraine and Russia, with Europe's concerns addressed indirectly. European leaders oppose being excluded from discussions on Ukraine's future and regional security.
- Czech President Petr Pavel confirmed that a Czech-led initiative has delivered 1.6 million large-caliber shells to Ukraine and will continue with funding secured until April. The effort, backed by NATO allies, will persist until Ukraine can stand independently or a peace agreement is reached.

#### Middle East

- Three Israeli hostages were released in Gaza, with Israel freeing 369 Palestinians in exchange. Some of the Palestinians had been serving long sentences for involvement in suicide bombings and attacks during the second Palestinian uprising in 2000.
- Saudi Arabia commended the phone call between Trump and Putin and welcomed the prospect of them meeting in Riyadh. Kremlin spokesperson Peskov mentioned it could take months to arrange, after the leaders' call on Wednesday 12 Feb, marking continued cooperation between the two nations.

#### Pakistan

- HBL and S&P Global have launched Pakistan's first Manufacturing PMI to track business conditions and economic trends. The index will provide monthly insights, aiding investors and policymakers amid Pakistan's economic recovery challenges.

#### United Kingdom

- Britain published its steel industry consultation earlier than planned due to Trump's announcement of 25% tariffs on all U.S. steel imports. The UK aims to invest £2.5 billion in steel and negotiate tariff exemptions, citing its role in U.S. defense and supply chains.
- Britain imposed sanctions on Russian officials, including Deputy Defence Minister Pavel Fradkov and Rosatom-linked entities, citing ties to Putin's inner circle. Foreign Minister David Lammy said the move aims to maintain pressure on Russia amid the Ukraine war.

#### United States

- The U.S. and Canada strengthen collaboration to combat the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua (TdA). A memorandum of cooperation was signed to take "concrete actions" against the dangerous transnational criminal organization.
- U.S. President Donald Trump said he spoke with UK PM Keir Starmer and agreed to meet in the coming weeks. No specific date or location has been confirmed yet.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Africa

- Uganda's army chief, Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, warned of attacking Bunia over alleged attacks on the Bahima ethnic group, escalating tensions. His remarks, backed by President Museveni, raise fears of a wider regional conflict amid M23 rebels' advance in eastern Congo.
- South Africa's National Treasury is expected to widen its budget deficit forecast to 4.55% of GDP for 2025/26, up from 4.30% in October. Rising debt-service costs, social spending, and Eskom's financial crisis are key contributors.

#### America

- Brazil's central bank will roll over \$15.6 billion in currency swaps expiring on April 1 through daily auctions starting Monday. These swaps help manage exchange rate risks by linking returns to the Selic rate.
- Colombia imposes a 1% tax on fossil fuel production and a 19% tax on online gambling until the end of 2025, aiming to raise \$721 million. The government may propose making these taxes permanent in a future tax reform.

#### China

- China aims for stronger cooperation with Germany and the EU, viewing them as strategic partners and seeking collaboration in free trade and multilateralism, as stated by the Chinese foreign minister.
- China will continue to engage with the U.S. despite trade tensions, responding resolutely to what it calls "bullying" practices. Foreign Minister Wang Yi emphasized cooperation but warned against unilateral actions.

#### Europe

- Russia will meet U.S. officials in Saudi Arabia to discuss ending the Ukraine war, with plans for a potential summit between Putin, Trump, and Zelenskyy. Moscow confirms Europe won't be involved in the peace talks.
- France, along with its allies, is planning an informal summit on Ukraine for Monday, as confirmed by European diplomats. The summit will focus on Europe's role in providing security guarantees for Ukraine, with discussions including non-EU member Britain.

#### Middle East

- U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in Israel after Trump's controversial Gaza resettlement proposal, rejected by Egypt and Jordan. The plan sparked accusations of ethnic cleansing amid Israel's ongoing assault on Gaza, which has killed over 47,000 Palestinians.
- Arab countries are working on a plan to rebuild Gaza without displacing its people, rejecting Trump's resettlement proposal. Jordan, already hosting 35% refugees, opposed the plan, asserting that regional stability and long-term peace require all neighbors, including Israel, to ensure security.

#### Pakistan

- The IFC plans to invest up to \$2 billion annually in Pakistan, focusing on infrastructure, agriculture, digital, and financial sectors. IFC chief Makhtar Diop emphasized equity-based investments and large-scale projects like airports, energy, and ports.
- Pakistan is set to host the ICC Champions Trophy, its first major multi-country cricket event in nearly 30 years, aiming to boost its global image. The tournament comes amid security and political challenges, with authorities viewing it as a key opportunity to restore investor and tourism confidence.

#### United Kingdom

- UK PM Keir Starmer emphasized unity between the U.S. and Europe, warning against internal divisions amid the Russian threat. He is expected to attend an informal European summit on Ukraine in Paris as peace talks begin in Saudi Arabia.

#### United States

- Trump plans tariffs on Canada and France over digital taxes on U.S. tech firms, calling them unfair. His team will impose reciprocal tariffs on all countries taxing U.S. imports, aiming to recover \$2 billion annually.
- Trump seeks talks with Putin and Xi on limiting nuclear weapons, aiming for denuclearization in his second term. He advocates reducing military spending and possibly holding trilateral discussions to address nuclear arsenals.

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