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INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Upcoming News/Events

Andhra Pradesh

- Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu revoked land allotments for Mumtaz Hotels, Emaar Constructions, and Devlok Group near Tirumala Hills. He reaffirmed his commitment to preserving the sanctity of the area by canceling all related tenders.
- The Andhra Pradesh Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution on SC sub-categorization. The proposal, dividing 59 SC sub-castes into three categories, will be sent to the National Commission for SCs for ratification.

Delhi

- The Delhi government informed the Supreme Court that 1.2 million of 2.5 million vehicles have affixed colour-coded stickers (CCS) to indicate fuel type. The rollout is ongoing, with full implementation expected soon.
- Delhi PWD has introduced new helpline numbers: 1908 for PWD and 1916 for DJB, replacing the old 10-digit number. Minister Parvesh Verma stated the change ensures easier complaint registration, especially for waterlogging issues.

Goa

- The Goa government has completed a structural audit of nearly 2,000 bridges and culverts and prepared a road safety audit plan. The NH-66 elevated corridor project, worth ₹641.46 crore, is progressing as planned and is expected to be completed by April 2026.
- Goa's pilot project in Nuvem upgrades water infrastructure with smart metering, GIS mapping, and geo-tagging of 10,000 connections. The government is also enhancing water treatment plants statewide for better supply.

Gujarat

- GIC warned Gujarat officials against misinterpreting its rulings to reject RTI requests, clarifying no "25 applications cap" exists. It stressed that past rulings applied only to specific cases and warned of action against misuse.
- The Union road transport ministry has approved ₹125 crore to widen four NH-48 bridges between Vadodara and Surat. Work on Por, Jambuva, Bamangam, and Vishwamitri river bridges has begun, with a two-year completion target.

Haryana

- The Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain-2025 was launched in Panchkula by Union Minister CR Patil and Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini. Key initiatives include groundwater recharge structures and canal-based drinking water projects.

Himachal Pradesh

- Himachal farmers and apple growers protested in Shimla, demanding land regularization and a halt to evictions. They urged the government to address land ownership issues and provide compensation for acquired land.
- The Himachal Budget 2025-26 prioritizes Kangra tourism, proposing ₹3,000 crore for Gaggal airport expansion. The state will also promote tea tourism by amending laws to develop tea plantations as eco-tourism destinations.

Karnataka

- A 150-foot chariot collapsed during Bengaluru's Madduramma temple festival, killing one person and injuring four. Strong winds and heavy rain caused the structure to topple, triggering panic among devotees. This marks the second consecutive year of a similar chariot collapse at the festival.
- Bengaluru witnessed heavy rains, thunderstorms, and hailstorms after a spell of scorching heat. IMD had forecast light rain for March 24-25, with Hosakote reporting hailstorms. Northern and western parts of the city saw intense rainfall with strong winds.

Andhra Pradesh

- Andhra Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan launched a state-wide farm pond initiative in Kurnool, covering 1.56 lakh locations. He criticized the previous YSRCP government for misallocating funds and pledged timely completion of farm ponds before the monsoon.
- NTPC-Simhadri has installed Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) in two units, with two more in progress, targeting completion by Sep 2025. The plant, with 2,000 MW capacity, also meets 85% of its water needs through desalination and fully utilizes fly ash.

Delhi

- Delhi Assembly has signed an MoU to implement the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA), making it the 28th legislature to adopt digital governance. The initiative aims for a paperless legislative system, enhancing efficiency and transparency.
- The Delhi Budget Session will be held from March 24 to 28, with the budget expected to be presented on March 25. CM Rekha Gupta stated that over 10,000 public suggestions were considered, and key focus areas include water, electricity, pollution, education, and infrastructure.

Goa

- The three-day Goa Assembly Budget Session begins on March 24, with CM Pramod Sawant presenting the 2025-26 Budget on March 26. Opposition criticizes the short session, alleging the BJP is evading discussions on corruption and governance failures.
- Goa's draft report identifies 30 noise pollution hotspots, with Calangute-Baga exceeding 100 dB at night. Proposed measures include noise barriers at key beaches, while GSPCB seeks feedback for finalization.

Gujarat

- FOKIA urged the Gujarat government to resolve land revenue issues and amend GDCR-2017 to increase industrial FSI from 1.2 to 2.25. They also sought faster land approvals, tax exemptions on salt lands, and policy clarity.
- AMC sold 6 of 22 auctioned plots in 2024 for ₹937 crore and now plans to auction five school-reserved plots after a decade. Ahmedabad has over 100 such reserved plots in TP schemes. The last school plot auction was held in 2015.

Haryana

- The Punjab and Haryana High Court has sought data on youth employed through Haryana's employment exchanges. The chief secretary must also provide details on manpower and funds spent on these exchanges.

Himachal Pradesh

- Himachal Deputy CM Mukesh Agnihotri reaffirmed the Congress government's commitment to implementing OPS, benefiting 1.36 lakh employees. He stated that 1,17,521 employees have adopted OPS, while 1,356 remain in NPS.
- Deputy CM Mukesh Agnihotri stated that HRTC buses will not be parked in Punjab at night until safety is assured. This follows vandalism incidents, including pro-Khalistan slogans on buses in Amritsar.

Karnataka

- Karnataka BJP chief B Y Vijayendra urges Speaker U T Khader to revoke the suspension of 18 BJP MLAs, calling it "illegal and arbitrary." The legislators were suspended for protesting against the four percent Muslim reservation bill.
- An AAI team will visit Karnataka from April 7-9 to assess sites for Bengaluru's second airport. Three locations—two on Kanakapura Road and one on Nelamangala-Kunigal Road—have been shortlisted. Karnataka has paid ₹1.21 crore for the feasibility study.

INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Madhya Pradesh

- Industries in Indore's Palda, Nemawar Road, and Khandwa Road demand a fire sub-station due to rising fire incidents. Over 700 MSME units, including 500 in Palda, face fire risks, with 15 incidents reported last year.

Mumbai

- Mumbai University passed a ₹968.17 crore budget for 2025-26, a 9.52% increase from last year, amid protests by Yuva Sena (UBT) and BUCTU. Protesters alleged procedural violations, leading to disruptions, a walkout, and a temporary adjournment.
- Substandard concrete for roadwork in Chembur was rejected during a BMC inspection, raising concerns about the quality of Mumbai's ₹6,080 crore road concretization project. Residents worry about the durability of already paved roads.
- Maharashtra's bank guarantees for government agencies have surpassed ₹1 lakh crore, with ₹60,000 crore to MMRDA and ₹33,640 crore to MSRDC. Officials warn of rising liabilities amid the state's ₹9.32 lakh crore debt.

Pune

- Pune district collector mandates police permission for commercial drone use due to security concerns. Nighttime drone activity in Daund, Baramati, and Shirur raised complaints. Operators must apply at least seven days in advance for approval.
- Private hospitals in Pune face financial strain as PMC delays clearing ₹25-30 crore in dues under UPHS and CHS. The AOH, representing major hospitals, has raised concerns over the six-month delay. Despite repeated requests, PMC has not resolved the issue.
- Maharashtra detected 40,471 new TB cases in 100 days, screening over 1.37 crore people. The data is uploaded to the Centre's Nikshay Portal for tracking. Over 35,000 Cy-TB tests were conducted for early detection.

Punjab

- Punjab cabinet approves expanding school management committees from 12 to 16 members, boosting parental and expert participation. This aims to improve education quality. It also amends laws for transferring undertrial prisoners between states.

Rajasthan

- Rajasthan government announces procurement of 13.89 lakh MT mustard and 6.3 lakh MT gram at MSP from April 10 after criticism by ex-CM Ashok Gehlot. The state expects 62 lakh MT mustard and 23 lakh MT gram production this year. Farmer registration begins on April 1 via the e-Mitra platform.

Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin calls the CMs' meet on delimitation "historic," emphasizing unity for fair representation. BJP dismisses it as a "delusional drama." Stalin warns that population-based delimitation could weaken southern states' political strength.
- On Saturday, 22 March The Karnataka bandh over the Belagavi bus conductor attack and Mekedatu dam issue had minimal impact on Tamil Nadu-bound transport. Bus services between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu remained unaffected under police security. Over 20 protesters were detained at Athipalli during demonstrations.

Telangana

- Telangana's 3,000-year-old Mudumal Megalithic Menhirs are included in UNESCO's tentative World Heritage Sites list. The site features 80 menhirs and 3,000 alignment stones related to ancient funerary rites.
- Telangana's NCD clinics have detected over 28,000 new cases of diabetes and hypertension since their launch. These dedicated clinics aim to provide early diagnosis and specialized care for non-communicable diseases.

Uttar Pradesh

- UPEIDA has revised speed limits on expressways: cars can now run at 120 km/h, larger passenger vehicles at 100 km/h, and goods vehicles at 80 km/h. The decision aligns with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways' 2018 notification.
- The UP government has upgraded Prayagraj's medical infrastructure with a 160-bed Super Specialty Block, a 250-bed children's hospital, and a new OPD at Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital. A ₹36 crore L1 Trauma Center and a ₹7 crore Green Corridor were also added.

Upcoming News/Events

Madhya Pradesh

- Indore district will construct 19 new ponds under the Amrit Sarovar 2.0 scheme, costing ₹4.18 crore. The campaign, starting March 30, will also rejuvenate existing water bodies, remove encroachments, and enhance pond capacity using MGNREGA funds.

Mumbai

- Mumbai's BEST bus network will integrate with Google Maps within a month, allowing commuters to plan routes across 402 bus services. The system will provide real-time updates, reducing bus intervals and improving travel efficiency.
- The Bombay High Court directs BMC to verify hawkers' licenses in Colaba, warning that unlicensed vendors will be evicted permanently. The court emphasizes residents' rights over unregulated street vending.
- Maharashtra expects to recover ₹2,500-₹3,000 crore from an amnesty scheme for disputed tax cases, out of ₹94,527 crore pending. The scheme allows 30%-50% payment, but non-disputed tax dues of ₹48,534 crore must be fully recovered.

Pune

- Pune police deploy five advanced drones and AI-enabled CCTVs under a ₹466 crore surveillance project. A new command center will enhance crime monitoring and suspect tracking. The first phase includes installing 1,500 AI-powered cameras citywide.
- PMC will test water quality at 25 locations under the JICA-backed Mula-Mutha Rejuvenation Project. Five key STPs in Kharadi, Warje, Vadgaon, Mundhwa, and Matsabij Kendra aim to reduce river pollution.
- Maharashtra CM announced a new policy for group farming with financial assistance and scheme convergence. Actor Aamir Khan confirmed the statewide expansion of Paani Foundation's Farmer Cup from next year.

Punjab

- Punjab-born German politician Parmod Kumar aims to boost Indo-German ties in agriculture, solar energy, and IT. He plans to introduce precision farming in Punjab and explore business collaborations like coffee trade and football training.

Rajasthan

- Rajasthan government launches "Mission Hariyalo Rajasthan" to plant 10 crore trees in 2025-26, aligning with budget plans on water conservation. CM Bhajan Lal Sharma emphasizes biodiversity preservation on International Day of Forests. The initiative aims to make Rajasthan greener for future generations.

Tamil Nadu

- Amid the language row, Home Minister Amit Shah announces his ministry will communicate with states in their languages from December. He criticizes those using language issues for political gains, emphasizing national unity.
- The Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT) invites applications for six special sports hostels offering training, accommodation, and nutrition. College athletes excelling in state or national-level competitions can apply online by April 6, with selection trials on April 8 in Chennai.

Telangana

- Telangana CM Revanth Reddy reveals OBC population at 56.36% and announces 42% reservation in jobs and education. Congress government introduces bills to implement the quota. He calls it a long-pending demand of backward classes.
- Telangana CM Revanth Reddy demands an increase in South India's Lok Sabha representation from 24% (130 seats) to 33%. Speaking at the JAC meeting in Chennai, he urged collective efforts from Southern states to prevent political marginalization.

Uttar Pradesh

- U.P. CM Yogi Adityanath pledged a "fierce onslaught" on corruption, calling it a termite weakening the system. He also distributed ₹55 crore in loans to 1,423 entrepreneurs under the M-YUVA scheme in Gonda, urging youth to drive the U.P.'s economic growth.
- U.P. CM Yogi Adityanath warned officials that negligence in public welfare work will not be tolerated. During an inspection, he emphasized strict monitoring, timely project completion, and monthly departmental reviews to ensure quality and transparency in governance.

GLOBAL UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Africa

- Rwanda-backed M23 rebels in eastern Congo announced their withdrawal from the seized town of Walikale to support peace efforts. They had previously planned to leave troops there while advancing toward the capital.
- Gabon's Constitutional Court has approved eight presidential candidates for next month's election, including military leader Brice Oligui Nguema, who seized power in 2023. Nguema's main rival is former Prime Minister Alain Claude Billie By Nze.

America

- Venezuela has agreed with the U.S. to resume repatriation flights for migrants, starting Sunday. President Maduro blamed El Salvador's President Bukele for detaining deported migrants, while the U.S. claims some are gang members.
- The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) lends El Salvador \$500 million to support its budget amid structural reforms under an IMF deal. The loan helps improve tax revenue, reduce public debt, rebuild reserves, and enhance financial governance.

China

- Diplomats from Japan, China, and South Korea meet in Tokyo to discuss East Asian security and economic issues. They agree to prepare for a trilateral summit in Japan, focusing on declining birthrates, aging populations, and denuclearizing North Korea.
- China's police chief, Wang Xiaohong, meets with Russia's FSB Director, Alexander Bortnikov, in Beijing. They discuss supporting multi-level meetings between their countries' law enforcement and security departments.

Europe

- Ukrainian and U.S. delegations discuss protecting energy and critical infrastructure in Saudi Arabia. U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff expresses optimism about a Black Sea ceasefire and broader peace efforts. Talks between U.S. and Russian delegations are set for Monday, 24 March.
- Parisians vote to pedestrianize 500 more streets, with 65.96% in favor and 34.04% against. The measure aims to curb car use, improve air quality, and eliminate 10,000 more parking spots. Only 4.06% of voters participated in the referendum.

Middle East

- Israel approves independence for 13 Jewish settlements in the West Bank, citing sovereignty efforts, while Palestinians condemn the move as a violation of international resolutions. The decision follows large-scale settlement expansion amid heightened tensions.

Pakistan

- Pakistan and Afghanistan reopened the Torkham border crossing for trade after nearly a month of closure due to clashes. Pedestrian movement will resume from Friday, easing disruptions in vital trade and supplies.

United Kingdom

- London's Heathrow Airport resumes full operations after a power outage disrupted flights for nearly a day. Authorities launch investigations into infrastructure resilience, while British Airways warns of lingering delays despite restoring most flights.
- UK Finance Minister Rachel Reeves reaffirms commitment to fiscal rules despite economic challenges, with potential public sector job cuts in the upcoming budget. She warns of global risks, including Trump's trade policies, but insists public spending will still grow in real terms.

United States

- U.S. Education Secretary Linda McMahon says Columbia University's reforms, prompted by the Trump administration, are key to restoring \$400 million in frozen federal funds. Changes include stricter disciplinary policies, more security officers, and oversight of Middle East studies programs.
- U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announces a plan to modernize air traffic control, seeking billions for new radar systems, terminals, and staffing. President Trump supports the initiative, as the FAA faces a 3,500-controller shortage and outdated infrastructure.

Upcoming News/Events

Africa

- South Africa's government and Transnet seek private investment to address freight rail network challenges, including equipment shortages and theft. An August request for proposals will focus on key mineral export corridors.
- Uganda's parliament has approved a \$190 million loan from Stanbic Bank to compensate Umeme Limited for unrecovered investments as its concession expires. Umeme has a monopoly on electricity distribution in Uganda since 2005.

America

- Argentina's largest union, CGT, announces a 24-hour strike on April 10 against President Milei's austerity measures and reforms. The strike, focusing on rising unemployment and layoffs, marks the third protest against Milei's government.
- Prime Minister Mark Carney plans to remove internal trade barriers by July 1, aiming to reduce trade costs and boost the economy. This initiative involves harmonizing regulations and creating common standards across provinces to counter U.S. tariffs.

China

- China actively seeks old and new foreign capital to support its changing economy. The commerce ministry encourages Brazilian firms, including Vale, to expand economic partnerships with China. This move reflects China's push for increased international business cooperation.
- Chinese Premier Li Qiang urges countries to open markets to combat rising instability at the China Development Forum. He emphasizes China's commitment to attracting foreign investment amidst U.S. tariff challenges. Li also calls for resistance against unilateralism and protectionism.

Europe

- Europe's top military powers plan to take more responsibility for continental defense, aiming for a phased U.S. transition over 5-10 years. The UK, France, Germany, and Nordic nations are in structured talks.
- Ukraine and Russia engage in U.S.-led talks on a Black Sea ceasefire, with discussions covering maritime security, territorial control, and the return of Ukrainian children. Ukraine seeks protection for critical infrastructure, while Russia negotiates verification measures.

Middle East

- Iraq plans to increase oil production capacity to over 6 million bpd by 2029 through exploration and drilling, including a BP-led redevelopment in Kirkuk. Currently producing 4 million bpd, Iraq remains committed to OPEC+ output agreements.

Pakistan

- Residents of Pakistan's Indus Delta fear that six new canals over the Indus River will worsen land degradation, making coastal Sindh more barren. The delta, already threatened by seawater intrusion, has forced many to abandon farming for fishing.

United Kingdom

- Britain's energy regulator, Ofgem, will fast-track £4 billion (\$5.19 billion) to accelerate electricity grid development and meet clean energy goals. The funding aims to ease supply chain issues and enable early procurement of critical materials.
- Britain plans to accelerate discussions on a potential peacekeeping force in Ukraine next week, focusing on its structure and operations. Military planners will meet at Northwood base to refine details, with further planning underway.

United States

- The Trump administration will revoke the temporary legal status of 530,000 Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans, effective April 24. This move, part of a broader immigration crackdown, will make it easier for the migrants to face expedited deportation.
- U.S. trade chief Jamieson Greer plans talks with China next week amid escalating tariffs, ahead of new U.S. duties on April 2. Trump aims to address illegal fentanyl shipments and narrow the trade deficit. China has retaliated with limited tariffs and rejected U.S. measures.

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