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Contact Us : Email : [marketing@ansechr.com](mailto:marketing@ansechr.com), Phone : 8698888000, Website : <https://www.ansechr.com/>

Our Head Office : 110/1A & 110/2B, Ansec House, Tank Road, Yerwada, Pune, Maharashtra - 411006

## INDIA UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Andhra Pradesh

- Andhra Pradesh faces severe financial stress due to rising expenses, declining revenue, and the loss of its capital as a commercial hub. The AP Socio-Economic Survey 2024-25 highlights that state revenue stood at ₹94,967 crore, with ₹89,157 crore received from central transfers.
- Andhra CM N Chandrababu Naidu urged the Centre to clear the Andhra Pradesh Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Bill, citing widespread land disputes. He highlighted to Amit Shah that six out of ten legal cases in the state involve land issues.

#### Andhra Pradesh

- Telangana irrigation minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy stressed the need for a swift resolution to the Krishna river water dispute and will lead talks with the Centre. He accused Andhra Pradesh of illegally using 37 TMC of Krishna water and urged KRMB to stop further withdrawals.
- IMD predicts above-normal temperatures in Andhra Pradesh, with Kurnool reaching 39.5°C and several regions exceeding norms by 2-4°C. A hotter-than-usual March is expected, with potential heatwaves in Rayalaseema, Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Vizag.

#### Delhi

- The Delhi Cabinet is set to approve the Mahila Samridhi Yojana on Women's Day, providing ₹2,500 monthly to poor women. Eligibility criteria, including an income cap and vehicle ownership, are being finalized.
- Delhi Health Minister Pankaj Singh announced the immediate shutdown of 250 Mohalla Clinics, citing misuse of rent expenses. He called them fraudulent and part of a health system revamp.
- Over half of Delhi's 37 STPs fail to meet CPCB standards, hindering Yamuna clean-up. High faecal coliform levels and shutdowns at key plants like Ghitorni and Okhla worsen pollution.

#### Delhi

- Delhi CM Rekha Gupta announced that Jan Aushadhi Kendras will be set up within 500m of every hospital to improve access to affordable medicines. The move follows a November 2024 high court order directing their establishment inside hospitals.
- Delhi CM Rekha Gupta met business leaders ahead of the budget, promising ease of doing business and policy support. She assured action on industry concerns and BJP's poll commitments.
- SC calls Army and NHAI officials on March 20 over the Ambala ring road land dispute. Judges will discuss the issue in chambers due to national security concerns. The case challenges a 2023 HC order dismissing pleas against land acquisition.

#### Goa

- Amit Shah praises Goa Police's AI tool for detecting radical content on social media. The tool, developed with BITS Pilani, analyzes religious rhetoric and emotions in videos. Shah directed the IB chief to explore its implementation in other states.
- A second collapse at Taad Maad during the Smart City sewerage project raises safety concerns, with residents criticizing poor execution. IPSCDL denies structural failure, citing excavation challenges and live pipelines while reinforcement work is underway.

#### Goa

- The Centre approves extending the Verna flyover to the Western Bypass at Margao to ease traffic congestion. Minister Aleixo Sequeira confirms construction challenges, interim traffic signals will be installed at key intersections until completion.
- CCCF objects to GTDC's Colva Beach redevelopment, citing CRZ violations and environmental risks. They highlight past demolition orders and severe coastal erosion concerns.

#### Gujarat

- Exporters with completed customs KYC at any Indian port will no longer need to redo it in Gujarat, easing trade for jewellery exporters. The decision removes duplication and speeds up processing.

#### Gujarat

- Jabil Inc to invest Rs 1,000 crore in a new Gujarat factory, its second in India, to expand electronics manufacturing. The facility will explore silicon photonics and advanced co-packaged optics.

#### Haryana

- Haryana orders an SIT probe into illegally dumping 32,000 tonnes of waste in the Aravallis. The contractor must remove the waste at zero cost, and officials will inspect sites, scrutinize documents, and submit a report in 15 days.
- Haryana civic polls record 46.5% voter turnout, with results due on March 12. Voting was peaceful across seven municipal corporations and four councils, with low turnout in cities like Gurugram, Faridabad, and Rohtak.

#### Haryana

- The hydrogen-powered train project for the Kalka-Shimla section remains stalled as fuel station plans are under review. Indian Railways aims for zero emissions, but electrification is unfeasible due to heritage concerns.
- The Supreme Court summons senior Army and NHAI officials on March 20 over the Ambala ring road land dispute. The case involves national security concerns, with a petitioner challenging the Punjab and Haryana HC's dismissal of land acquisition pleas.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- Essential supplies were airdropped in avalanche-hit Kumar village, Pangi, as blocked roads left residents stranded. A fresh Western Disturbance may bring rain and snow to Himachal Pradesh from March 9-12.
- Himachal Pradesh pensioners protested in Shimla over delayed dues, warning of intensified agitation if demands aren't met in 15 days. They plan to form a joint action committee for further action.

#### Himachal Pradesh

- Himachal CM Sukhu directed HPRCA to start recruitment for 2,000 posts and release results for 660 vacancies. He assured transparent hiring with computer-based tests and a one-time registration module by March 20.
- HPBOSE postponed Board Exams 2025 in snow-hit Pangi (Chamba) and Lahaul-Spiti due to bad weather. Revised dates will be announced later, while exams in other areas will continue as scheduled.

#### Karnataka

- Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah announced ₹7,000 crore for Bengaluru's infrastructure, up from ₹3,000 crore annually. A Special Purpose Vehicle will oversee key projects, with ₹1,800 crore allocated for 21 schemes under 'Brand Bengaluru'.
- CM Siddaramaiah announced renaming Bangalore City University as Dr. Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University. The move aims to make it a model institution, integrating Government Arts and R.C. Colleges.

#### Karnataka

- Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara announced enhanced security at tourist spots after the Hampi rape case. Tourists will also be briefed on safety guidelines to prevent such incidents.
- CM Siddaramaiah announces initiatives to promote Kannada, including an International Basava Philosophical Centre and a memorial for Dr. NS Hardikar. ₹1 crore is allocated for digitizing ancient manuscripts and ₹3 crore for theatre development.

## INDIA UPDATE

## Highlights of this week

## Madhya Pradesh

- The final round of incineration trials for Union Carbide waste at Pithampur ended on Saturday evening (8th March). MPPCB confirmed that environmental parameters in nearby villages remained within prescribed limits.

## Mumbai

- Western Railway conducted a demolition drive in Jogeshwari to clear encroachments for a new ₹69 crore terminus. The facility, 75% complete, will handle 10-12 long-distance trains and is expected to be operational in six months.
- Deputy CM Eknath Shinde inaugurated Mumbai's first double-decker flyover in Mira Bhayander, integrating Metro-9 and road traffic. The structure bypasses three major bottlenecks, improving connectivity and reducing travel time.
- Maharashtra's economic growth is projected at 7.3% for 2024-25, higher than India's 6.5% but slowing in key sectors. The state's debt has risen to ₹7.82 lakh crore, with a nominal GSDP of ₹45.3 lakh crore.

## Pune

- A damaged cable at Bhama Askhed Dam disrupted the pumping system, causing severe water shortages in Wadgaonsheri and nearby areas. PMC halted private tanker supply as contractors refused to follow distribution instructions, worsening the crisis.
- PMC installed streetlights at 274 dark spots across Pune to improve safety, especially for women and senior citizens. The initiative, guided by Neelam Gorhe, also included repairing CCTV cameras in key areas.

## Punjab

- Punjab secured ₹8,000 crore in investments under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) for 21,740 projects. Loans worth ₹5,161 crore were sanctioned, with ₹4,580 crore disbursed, making Punjab the top-ranked state in project approvals.
- Talks between Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann and Samyukta Kisan Morcha remained inconclusive, leading farmers to proceed with their week-long sit-in protest in Chandigarh from March 5. Farmer leaders alleged that Mann did not properly address their demands.

## Rajasthan

- The Rajasthan cabinet has approved a bill to regulate coaching centers and will table it in the assembly next week. It also introduced the Rajasthan Skill Policy 2025 to upskill youth and promote employment.

## Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin launched 100 pink autos for women and announced ₹72 crore for new working women's hostels in multiple districts. He also inaugurated a ₹3,190 crore credit linkage scheme for women Self Help Groups.
- Experts report that the vulture population in South India remains stable despite threats from NSAIDs and wildfires. Around 320 vultures, mainly long-billed, were recorded in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, particularly in the Moyar Valley and Sathyamangalam.

## Telangana

- Telangana deploys robots in the SLBC tunnel rescue, where eight remain trapped since Feb 22. The operation, now on its 15th day, faces challenges from water, soil, and debris inside the tunnel.
- A massive leak in the Manjeera phase-2 pumping main has disrupted water supply in parts of Hyderabad, including Beeramguda, Miyapur, and KPHB. The issue occurred near Mughal Restaurant on Old Mumbai Highway. HMWSSB is carrying out emergency repairs to restore supply.

## Uttar Pradesh

- The Uttar Pradesh government appoints full-time CEOs for Sunni and Shia Waqf Boards Monis Ali Siddiqui for Sunni and Zeeshan Rizvi for Shia. Previously, Aziz Ahmed handled both roles since June 2024 per court orders. The move ends years of the boards operating without dedicated leadership.
- Uttar Pradesh excise department conducted an e-lottery for 501 liquor shops in Greater Noida, attracting 18,229 applicants. High-demand areas included Roza Yakubpur (289 applications) and Sakipur (210). The lottery reflects strong business potential in the region.

## Upcoming News/Events

## Madhya Pradesh

- CM Mohan Yadav assured that the Ladli Behna scheme will continue, reaffirming support for women's welfare. He highlighted increased job reservations, property benefits, and ₹22,227.89 crore disbursed under the scheme since January 2024.

## Mumbai

- Maharashtra government is unlikely to increase the Ladki Bahin Yojana payout from ₹1,500 to ₹2,100 in the 2025-26 budget due to fiscal constraints. Minister Aditi Tatkare reiterated the commitment but cited economic slowdown and rising debt as key concerns.
- TMC's ₹5,645 crore budget prioritizes road repairs and public transport, with ₹20 crore for road restoration and ₹57 crore for 160 electric buses. No tax hikes were announced, focusing on urban infrastructure and sustainability.
- Most of the 374 km Mumbai Metro network will be operational by 2027, with key sections completing this year. Metro 3 (Cuffe Parade) opens by June, while Metro 4A, 4, and 7A will be ready by year-end.

## Pune

- The health department has started surveillance and set up special emergency units in hospitals and primary health centers to manage heat-related illnesses. Medical staff have been trained, and advisories have been issued to prevent heat strokes and dehydration.
- CM Devendra Fadnavis approved the redevelopment of old wadas in Pune, which is similar to the Mumbai and Thane projects. BJP leader Ganesh Rasne proposed policy changes and a special committee for implementation.

## Punjab

- Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann warns protesting revenue officers to resume duty or face suspension, stating that corruption won't be tolerated. The government has assigned property registration tasks to kanungos and may delegate them to school principals.
- The second batch of 72 Punjab teachers will depart for Finland on March 15 for training. Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains and Finland's Ambassador will inaugurate a training session for primary teachers.

## Rajasthan

- The Rajasthan government will increase the Lado Protsahan Yojana amount to ₹1.5 lakh, as announced by CM Bhajanlal Sharma. The announcement was made during the Mahila Samman Samaroh on International Women's Day.

## Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin demanded a 30-year status quo on Lok Sabha seat delimitation using the 1971 Census as the basis. He also proposed a Joint Action Committee with southern states to raise awareness and prevent seat reductions.
- Tamil Nadu is expected to receive widespread rain from March 10 to 13 due to a cyclonic circulation. Heavy rainfall is likely in South Tamil Nadu on March 11, with temperatures rising by 2-3°C in some areas till March 10.

## Telangana

- Telangana Congress MPs plan an adjournment motion in Parliament over the Centre's "step-motherly treatment" towards the state. BJP and BRS MPs skipped the meeting, while AIMIM's Hyderabad MP attended.
- The Telangana government plans to auction 400 acres of land in Kancha Gachibowli, threatening its rich biodiversity. Nature enthusiasts, especially from the University of Hyderabad, oppose the move. TGIIC has invited bids for a master plan and land auction.

## Uttar Pradesh

- UP power employees plan fresh protests against privatisation, culminating in a statewide rally in Lucknow on April 9. Mega panchayats will be held in Meerut on March 24 and Kanpur on March 27. The Sangharsh Samiti demands the reinstatement of dismissed workers and opposes meter installation for employees.
- Uttar Pradesh has notified rules for purchasable FAR, standardizing assessment and levy procedures. Developers must pay the full FAR fee before obtaining approvals, with different fee factors set for housing (0.40), mixed-use (0.45), and commercial (0.50) projects.



## GLOBAL UPDATE

### Highlights of this week

#### Africa

- Rising violence and political tensions in South Sudan threaten the fragile 2018 peace deal, the UN warned. Security forces loyal to President Salva Kiir arrested officials allied with VP Riek Machar, raising fears of renewed conflict. Clashes in Nasir have worsened the crisis.
- Fighting between M23 rebels and pro-Congo militias continues in Nyabiondo, eastern Congo, days after a deadly attack. M23, backed by Rwanda, has taken control of the area amid heavy clashes. A pro-government militia has reportedly switched sides to join M23's alliance.

#### America

- Fritz Alphonse Jean assumes Haiti's transitional presidency amid escalating gang violence. He pledges a "corrective war budget" and plans to recruit 3,000 new police and military personnel. The government remains underfunded despite allocating 9% of its budget to security.
- At least 10 people died in severe flooding in Bahia Blanca, Argentina, after 260 mm of rain fell in hours. Roads collapsed, bridges were destroyed, and hospitals were evacuated. Authorities deployed military and emergency teams for assistance.

#### China

- China imposed tariffs on \$2.6 billion worth of Canadian food products, retaliating against Ottawa's levies on Chinese EVs and metals. Key targets include rapeseed oil, pork, and aquatic products, with duties of up to 100%.
- China filed a revised WTO dispute settlement request against new U.S. tariffs, escalating trade tensions. The U.S. also imposed 25% tariffs on Canada and Mexico, citing fentanyl concerns.

#### Europe

- France handed over two military facilities to Senegal as part of its troop withdrawal by 2025. This follows regional trends as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger ousted French forces, shifting towards Russian support.
- China has rolled over a \$2 billion loan to Pakistan, aiding its financial stability. Pakistan, needing to repay over \$22 billion in external debt in FY25, is also seeking IMF approval for a \$1 billion loan installment.

#### Middle East

- Saudi Arabia's economy grew 1.3% YoY in Q4 2024, driven by 4.3% non-oil growth, despite a 4.5% decline in oil activities. Growth remains slow amid low oil prices, with a 1.3%-1.5% forecast for 2025.
- Iran is open to talks with the U.S. on nuclear militarization concerns but rejects negotiations on dismantling its peaceful program. Trump's renewed "maximum pressure" campaign adds to tensions.

#### Pakistan

- Pakistan is now the second-most terrorism-affected country, up from fourth, per the GTI 2025 report. Terrorism deaths surged 45% in 2024, with attacks exceeding 1,000 for the first time. The rise is linked to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's growing influence.

#### United Kingdom

- Keir Starmer's approval rating rose to 30% from 23% as he engaged in Ukraine diplomacy and trade talks. An Ipsos poll shows that 44% of Britons support increased defense spending despite fiscal trade-offs.
- UK finance and defence trade bodies met to ease investment barriers for defence firms. The move follows Europe's push for military expansion amid security concerns. PM Keir Starmer plans to raise UK defence spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2027.

#### United States

- The U.S. Justice Department fired Adam Cohen, head of its Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces. His removal follows Trump's push to purge career officials. Cohen was dismissed just after helping draft a memo on illegal immigration efforts.

### Upcoming News/Events

#### Africa

- WHO is sending leprosy drugs to Nigeria after a year-long delay due to testing regulations. Nigeria, reporting over 1,000 cases yearly, faced shortages that worsened disabilities. The delay highlights global supply vulnerabilities in leprosy treatment.
- Guinea-Bissau schedules presidential and legislative elections for November 23, a week earlier than planned. The opposition protests, claiming President Embalo's mandate expired last month.
- South Africa is reviewing its troop deployment in the DRC amid criticism over military setbacks. Defence Minister Angie Motshekga says a decision will follow regional discussions.

#### America

- Panama will grant 30-day permits, extendable to 90 days, to some migrants sent from the U.S. who fear returning home. The move affects 112 of 299 migrants, including Iranians and Chinese, now in the Darien Gap under refugee assistance.
- Mexico aims to boost USMCA-compliant exports to 85-90% after the U.S. paused tariffs on eligible shipments. Officials will also discuss U.S. steel and aluminum tariffs, arguing they are unjustified.

#### China

- China plans to increase resources and funding to support employment, focusing on college graduates. The government expects job stability in 2025 but acknowledges challenges due to a complex external environment.
- China unveiled more fiscal stimulus to boost consumption and counter the U.S. trade war, aiming for 5% GDP growth. Premier Li Qiang emphasized rising global challenges and shifting policy focus from technology to consumer spending.

#### Europe

- EU health ministers warn of over 80% antibiotic dependence on China, urging a Critical Medicine Act to boost domestic production. They propose aligning pharma with defense supply chains for security.
- U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio will visit Saudi Arabia (March 10-12) for talks with Ukraine and to meet Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He will then attend the G7 foreign ministers' meeting in Canada (March 12-14).

#### Middle East

- Turkey, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq will hold high-level talks in Amman on security cooperation, terrorism, and regional developments. The meeting includes foreign and defense ministers, military chiefs, and intelligence heads.
- Israel and Hamas prepare for the next phase of ceasefire talks, with Israel sending a delegation to Doha and Hamas citing "positive indicators." Meanwhile, an Israeli airstrike kills two Palestinians in Rafah.

#### Pakistan

- Pakistan's interior ministry has instructed all "illegal foreigners" and Afghan Citizen Card holders to leave by March 31 or face deportation. Over 800,000 Afghans have been repatriated since 2023, with Pakistan hosting around 2.8 million Afghan refugees.

#### United Kingdom

- The UK government plans £6 billion in welfare cuts, tightening disability benefit rules while raising Universal Credit for job seekers. Rachel Reeves aims to balance spending as economic pressures grow ahead of the March 26 budget.

#### United States

- The U.S. will hold a hearing on Chinese-made legacy semiconductors on Tuesday, possibly leading to more tariffs. This follows a 50% U.S. tariff on Chinese chips since Jan. 1, aimed at countering China's state-driven chip expansion.
- The U.S. plans to impose docking fees on ships linked to Chinese-built or Chinese-flagged vessels, aiming to boost domestic shipbuilding. The draft executive order may also pressure allies to adopt similar measures or face retaliation.

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