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INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Upcoming News/Events

Andhra Pradesh

- Nara Lokesh said LG Electronics's ₹5,000-crore plant at Sri City, developed in just seven months, showcases Andhra Pradesh's "Speed of Doing Business," with production slated by end-2026 and major job creation through phased expansion till 2029.
- N Chandrababu Naidu backed the VB G RAM G rural jobs scheme, saying it will expand employment for the poor with 25 extra workdays while creating durable village assets without disrupting farm activity, aligning with Andhra Pradesh's Swarnandhra-2047 vision.

Delhi

- The New Delhi Municipal Council has begun Phase-II of the ₹1.21-crore upgrade at Khan Market, adding granite flooring, new drainage, water lines and integrated utility ducts, with completion targeted by April 2026.
- The govt has proposed procuring 3,330 additional electric buses under Phase-II of the PM E-DRIVE, including 7m, 9m and 12m variants, with a proposal submitted to Convergence Energy Services Limited to boost last-mile connectivity and expand the city's e-bus fleet.
- The World Book Fair 2026 began at Bharat Mandapam with the theme "Indian Military History: Valour & Wisdom @75", drawing large crowds, especially defence enthusiasts, as Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan highlighted reading as key to nation-building.

Goa

- Goa's Directorate of Settlement and Land Records has launched the NAKSHA digital land survey in Panaji, Margao and Cuncolim to modernise 50-year-old records, though legal experts flag concerns over its applicability in ongoing property disputes.
- Health Minister Vishwajeet Rane said housing projects with 100+ flats will not get occupancy certificates without on-site medical facilities and trained paramedics, warning of strict enforcement under amended TCP and health laws to strengthen emergency care.

Gujarat

- Out of ₹688 crore worth of roadworks planned by AMC across 37 roads, only 10 have been completed in two years, with delays, poor supervision and ongoing works at 27 sites causing severe inconvenience and traffic stress for residents and commuters.

Haryana

- MP Naveen Jindal has launched a fitness-driven anti-drug initiative in Radaur, with modern gyms set up at five community locations in Yamunanagar to promote healthy lifestyles and steer youth away from substance abuse.
- A CSR-funded sewing and skill training centre was inaugurated in Yamunanagar's Lajpat Nagar by Ghanshyam Dass Arora, with support from Jamna Auto Industries, to promote women's self-reliance and livelihood opportunities, civic officials said.

Himachal Pradesh

- Data from the Central Ground Water Board shows overall groundwater recovery across HP, but persistent stress remains in parts of Una, Kangra and Solan due to high extraction, uneven recharge and local geology, highlighting uneven water security despite broad gains.
- Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Limited posted a ₹300-crore profit till December 2025 due to higher power sales, smart metering and lower losses, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said.

Karnataka

- Even 13 years after launch, over 1,000 families in Kanakapura are still waiting for PMAY homes, with most of the 1,336 houses lying incomplete since 2013, a lapse flagged by Justice K N Phaneendra after finding severe delays, poor living conditions and civic failures.
- The Karnataka government has amended fire safety norms for hospitals, mandating NOCs and basic equipment like ABC and CO₂ extinguishers for buildings under 21 metres, while imposing stricter systems such as alarms, sprinklers and water storage for larger or inpatient facilities.

Andhra Pradesh

- CM Chandrababu Naidu is set to launch multiple infrastructure and welfare projects during his Sankranti visit to Swarna Naravaripalli, with officials citing major gains in roads, solar power, sanitation and full welfare coverage under the model village initiative.
- AP is gearing up for the Maha Shivaratri Brahmotsavams at Srisailam Temple from Feb 8 to Mar 18, with enhanced crowd, security and health arrangements as authorities expect a 20% rise in pilgrims, including deployment of 3,000 police personnel.

Delhi

- Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood announced an ₹800-crore funding boost for Narela Education City, raising the project outlay to ₹1,300 crore to develop a shared, world-class campus, with land allotments expedited through Delhi Development Authority.
- Naini Lake in Model Town will undergo a ₹14.75-lakh facelift by Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation, adding better lighting, seating and walkways, with works to be completed within two months to address ageing infrastructure complaints.
- The NDMC has presented a ₹143.05 crore surplus budget for 2026–27, focusing on AI training, clean energy (hydrogen and solar), a Net-Zero roadmap with TERI, and civic upgrades like CCTV expansion, mechanised sweeping and market redevelopment.

Goa

- Goa Forward chief Vijai Sardesai said Goa Assembly elections could be advanced to December 2026 from 2027, citing the ongoing two-phase all-India census as a factor that may prompt election authorities to alter the schedule.

Gujarat

- The International Kite Festival 2026 will be inaugurated on Jan 12 at the Sabarmati Riverfront by Narendra Modi, alongside Friedrich Merz, featuring 1,071 kite flyers from India and 50 countries, with the main celebrations running in Ahmedabad from Jan 12–14.
- AMC plans a ₹300-crore overhaul of ageing water and drainage lines after a surge in waterborne diseases, declaring 26 epidemic hotspots, while surveys begin amid concerns over house demolitions, compensation, and a looming public health risk.

Haryana

- Geeta University has signed an MoU with Swarna Jayanti Haryana Institute for Fiscal Management to support capacity building, research and policy initiatives aligned with Haryana Vision 2047 and the state's one-trillion-dollar economy goal.
- CM Nayab Singh Saini sought central financial assistance at a pre-Budget meeting chaired by Nirmala Sitharaman, citing salinity and waterlogging affecting nearly six lakh acres, along with support for medical colleges, logistics hubs, MSMEs and start-ups.

Himachal Pradesh

- CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu directed Municipal Corporation Shimla to ensure tourist safety, fair pricing, food hygiene and cleanliness so visitors have a positive experience while balancing residents' needs.
- National Highways Authority of India will acquire and compensate residential buildings in Shimla's Chalaunthi area that became unsafe due to tunnel blasting, with families evacuated, rent arranged, and stricter monitoring ordered to prevent further damage.

Karnataka

- Karnataka Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda urged Nirmala Sitharaman to restore fiscal balance by increasing central grants, compensating GST losses, and revisiting the allocation-based VB-G RAM G scheme that has raised the state's financial burden.
- CM Siddaramaiah is likely to visit New Delhi after January 22 amid indications that the Congress high command is considering a performance-based cabinet reshuffle, with 8–10 ministers under review as part of efforts to streamline the government ahead of the final phase of its term.

INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Madhya Pradesh

- CM Mohan Yadav announced the creation of research centres for chickpeas, millets and mustard, tasking 16 departments to cut farming costs, raise farmer incomes and boost agri-based jobs as part of a Farmer Welfare Year initiative.

Mumbai

- The Maharashtra government has capped coaching at five hours daily, made counsellors mandatory for large institutes, and ordered mental-health support systems, including emergency tie-ups and helpline displays, to reduce student stress.
- Mumbai recorded a cooler morning with minimum temperatures dipping to 16.9°C, while air quality remained "moderate" (AQI 126), as the MPCB shut 10 RMC plants to curb construction-related pollution, the India Meteorological Department said.

Pune

- The Maharashtra State Public Health Department has deployed flying squads to conduct surprise inspections of government healthcare facilities across Pune, Satara and Solapur to check service delivery, infrastructure, staffing, medicines and scheme implementation.
- Yard remodelling at Pune Railway Station has entered the execution phase with electric interlocking work beginning on site, a long-pending upgrade aimed at improving safety, capacity and operational flexibility while minimising passenger disruption.
- PMPL has banned unauthorised photography, videography and reel-making on its buses and premises, warning staff and creators of disciplinary action and police complaints for misuse of logos, ID cards or official assets.

Punjab

- Punjab conducted its first mining auction in three years, earning ₹11.61 crore from 29 sites via transparent online bidding, with the government planning to auction nearly 100 more sites to boost legal supply, curb illegal mining and raise revenues.
- CM Bhagwant Mann inaugurated the ₹38-crore Multania ROB in Bathinda and announced approval for a ₹50.86-crore Janta Nagar ROB, saying the projects will ease traffic, with the upgraded bridge also housing sports facilities underneath.

Rajasthan

- Weak western disturbances kept winter mild in the state, minimum temperatures staying above 4.4°C (around 12°C on some days), unlike past years when lows dipped below 4°C, even as cold days and dense fog persisted.

Tamil Nadu

- Sugarcane farmers in Tamil Nadu's Namakkal district protested at the Mohanur Cooperative Sugar Mill, demanding a state incentive to raise the minimum cane price to ₹4,000 per tonne, above the Centre-fixed FRP of ₹3,290.50, after the crushing season ended.
- Tamil Nadu has set up a working group under the State Planning Commission to frame a quantum technology strategy focused on building a wider ecosystem in education, research and early-stage capabilities.

Telangana

- Hyderabad police have launched Cyber Mitra, an AI-enabled virtual helpdesk that allows cybercrime victims to register FIRs without visiting a police station, requiring only a signed draft FIR to be submitted by post or at the helpdesk.
- Union MoS Jitendra Singh laid the foundation for the SAMARTH centre in Hyderabad to bridge skill gaps in forensic DNA profiling and molecular diagnostics, alongside launching an incubator to boost indigenous life-sciences innovation and personalised healthcare.

Uttar Pradesh

- Rajnath Singh said the inauguration of Ashok Leyland's EV plant in Lucknow reflects improved law and order and infrastructure under Yogi Adityanath, adding that rising investments show Uttar Pradesh's rapid industrial growth.
- UP RERA data shows UP's real estate grew strongly in 2025, with project registrations up 19% and capital investment jumping 53.5%, while infrastructure push also boosted activity in cities like Ghaziabad, Lucknow and religious hubs such as Ayodhya and Varanasi.
- At a pre-budget meeting with Nirmala Sitharaman, Uttar Pradesh sought Central support for metro expansion, an AIIMS in western UP, an IIT in Bundelkhand, higher tax devolution and release of pending funds, Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said.

Upcoming News/Events

Madhya Pradesh

- Construction of new tehsil buildings in Jabalpur for Poda and Katangi has begun after clearing encroachments. Once completed, the two tehsils will benefit residents of around 200 villages, taking the district's total tehsils to 12.

Mumbai

- CM Devendra Fadnavis said Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of the Dharavi redevelopment after January 15 polls, promising 350-sq-ft homes for eligible residents, in-situ rehabilitation of local industries, and improved amenities under the Adani-led project.
- The Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation shut 19 construction sites and issued notices to 42 others after AQI crossed 200 in several areas, enforcing Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP-4) and stricter dust-control norms.

Pune

- The PMC will deploy a mobile animal rabies elimination care unit to strengthen stray dog birth control and anti-rabies efforts across 34 newly merged villages lacking permanent facilities, extending sterilisation and vaccination coverage to peripheral areas.
- Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Limited will induct 50 new e-buses by January-end, with 25 arriving this week and the rest later in January, all to operate from the Nigdi depot with added fast-charging infrastructure.
- Pune's suburban rail network will expand with 60 new trains and six additional platforms, raising daily services from about 110 to nearly 180 and boosting Pune-Daund services to around 125, easing overcrowding and benefiting nearly three lakh daily commuters.

Punjab

- Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema urged Nirmala Sitharaman for a special fiscal package, citing border tensions, flood losses of ₹12,905 crore, GST revenue stress and the need for extra borrowing, security grants and release of pending central funds.
- Punjab has assured farmers that lift pumps on the Sirhind Feeder will continue, aiming to ease opposition and fast-track the ₹2,300-crore Malwa Canal project expected to irrigate nearly 2 lakh acres.

Rajasthan

- Rajasthan's Water Supply Department has proposed using AI to monitor drinking water works—from pipeline laying to connections—with online MBs and milestone-linked payments aimed at curbing corruption and ensuring accountability.

Tamil Nadu

- Greater Chennai Corporation is installing new streetlights in 123 TNUHDB tenement areas at a cost of ₹10.85 crore, with 2,782 LED lights and related infrastructure to be fully completed by January 31.
- Tamil Nadu has launched the 'Namma Arasu' WhatsApp chatbot in partnership with Meta, enabling citizens to access 51 services across 16 departments in Tamil and English to make public service delivery faster and more inclusive.

Telangana

- Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka announced a forthcoming ₹1.02 crore accident insurance scheme for all state government employees, covering about 5.14 lakh staff, with banker consultations completed to operationalise the benefit.
- DY CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka urged the Centre to relax FRBM limits, boost grants and convert interest-free loans to support higher capital spending in education and health, flagging fiscal stress and rising cesses ahead of the Union Budget.

Uttar Pradesh

- Winter is set to intensify again as a weakening western disturbance allows northwesterly winds to lower temperatures by 2–3°C from January 12, with India Meteorological Department warning of dense fog and cold wave conditions, especially in western districts.
- Uttar Pradesh Food Safety and Drug Administration has ordered statewide physical verification of wholesale drug licences from February 2026 to weed out bogus firms, checking approved premises, storage facilities and authorised staff.
- Uttar Pradesh has asked the National Green Tribunal for time till December 31, 2028 to tap drains flowing into rivers, after missing the Supreme Court's February 2020 deadline, with the matter set for hearing on March 12.

GLOBAL UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Africa

- Somalia said it has annulled all port, defence and security agreements with the United Arab Emirates, accusing Abu Dhabi of actions undermining its sovereignty, including UAE-linked port projects and security ties.
- China, Russia and Iran have launched week-long BRICS Plus naval drills in South African waters to boost maritime safety and interoperability, with Pretoria insisting the exercises are apolitical despite U.S. criticism and domestic opposition concerns.

America

- Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said there are no ongoing talks with the United States government beyond technical migration contacts, rejecting recent comments by Donald Trump about negotiations and calling for relations to be based on international law rather than threats.
- Venezuela has freed Italian nationals Alberto Trentini and Mario Burlo, prompting Italy to announce plans to upgrade diplomatic relations with Caracas. The release follows earlier prisoner frees and comes amid broader gestures by Venezuela after recent international pressure.

Asia Pacific

- South Korea has launched a probe into North Korea's claim that drones violated its airspace, focusing on whether civilians were involved, which President Lee Jae Myung called a serious crime. Seoul denies any military role and says it is open to a joint investigation amid heightened tensions.
- Japan has launched a month-long seabed mission near Minamitorii Island using the vessel Chikyu to extract rare-earth-rich mud from 6 km deep, marking a world-first effort to reduce reliance on China for critical minerals amid tightening supply.

China

- President Xi Jinping said the anti-corruption campaign is a battle China "must not lose," noting a record 65 senior officials were probed in 2025 as Beijing maintains a high-pressure crackdown across the party, military, state firms and grassroots levels.

Europe

- Greenland said its defence must be handled strictly through NATO and firmly rejected any U.S. takeover, responding to Donald Trump's renewed claims by stressing sovereignty, international law, and its status as part of the Danish-NATO framework.
- France has launched recruitment for a new 10-month voluntary military service for citizens aged 18–25, starting September, aiming to induct 3,000 youths initially and scale up to 10,000 annually by 2030 amid growing European security concerns.

Middle East

- Egypt signed \$1.8 billion renewable energy deals, including a 1.7-GW solar-plus-storage project by Scatec in Minya and a battery manufacturing plant by Sungrow in the Suez Canal zone, supporting its 42% clean power target by 2030.
- More than 500 people have died in ongoing protests in Iran, according to a rights group, as President Donald Trump again threatens U.S. intervention. Tehran warns of retaliation against U.S. bases, while Israel is on high alert amid rising regional tensions.

Pakistan

- Seven Pakistani police officers were killed when a remote-controlled bomb hit their armoured vehicle in Tank, northwestern Pakistan, an attack claimed by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan amid a renewed surge in militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

United Kingdom

- British lawmakers say the Bank of England may need new powers to collect data on private credit markets if its ongoing stress test fails to clarify risks from the fast-growing, opaque sector. A House of Lords report warns limited data hampers assessment of potential systemic threats to financial stability.

United States

- US invests \$115M in counter-drone tech to protect FIFA World Cup venues and 250th anniversary events, amid rising threats from Ukraine war and airport incidents. This follows \$250M FEMA grants to host states for lasers, microwaves, and more.
- US CFPB and DOJ withdrew Biden's 2023 guidance barring lenders from discriminating against immigrants/non-citizens in loans, deeming it ideological and realigning with federal law. Critics view it as anti-immigrant, aiding Trump's crackdown and deregulation.

Africa

- Morocco aims to add \$10 billion to GDP from AI by 2030 through sovereign data centres, cloud infrastructure and large-scale skilling, targeting 50,000 AI jobs and partnerships such as with Mistral AI.
- Ethiopian Airlines has begun a \$12.5-billion project to build Africa's largest airport at Bishoftu by 2030, featuring four runways, parking for 270 aircraft and annual capacity of 110 million passengers, with 30% airline funding and the rest via global lenders.

America

- Brazil will hand back responsibility for Argentina's diplomatic representation and embassy custody in Venezuela, a role it assumed in 2024 after Caracas expelled Argentine diplomats. Both governments have been formally notified, though no further details were disclosed.
- The Mercosur will sign its long-delayed free trade agreement with the European Union on January 17 in Paraguay, marking a major breakthrough after over 30 years of negotiations, Argentina's foreign ministry said.

Asia Pacific

- Australia will recall parliament early to pass tougher hate-speech laws and approve a gun buyback after the deadly Bondi Beach shooting, with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese saying penalties will be tightened while protecting legitimate free expression.
- South Korean President Lee Jae Myung will meet Japanese PM Sanae Takaichi in Nara a week after talks with Xi Jinping, as Seoul pursues balanced diplomacy with China and Japan amid regional tensions.

China

- The European Commission said Chinese EV makers can avoid EU tariffs by committing to minimum prices that fully offset subsidy effects, are equivalent to duties and practical to enforce, while the bloc also considers Chinese EV investments amid ongoing trade talks with Beijing.

Europe

- Friedrich Merz said the European Union and India could finalise a long-pending free trade agreement by end-January, with top EU leaders set to visit India after talks he discussed with Narendra Modi in Ahmedabad, as both sides seek stronger trade ties amid rising global protectionism.
- Sweden will spend 15 billion crowns (\$1.6 billion) on short-range air defence systems to safeguard civilians and critical infrastructure, citing vulnerabilities highlighted by the Ukraine war. The investment is part of broader defence upgrades amid heightened regional security concerns.

Middle East

- Qatar and the UAE will join the U.S.-led Pax Silica initiative to secure AI and semiconductor supply chains, expanding a technology-focused coalition that includes Israel and key allies. The move signals a strategic shift by Gulf states toward a diversified, tech-driven economic and security framework.
- The European Union will provide Syria about €620 million (\$722 million) over this year and next for post-war recovery, humanitarian aid and bilateral support, Ursula von der Leyen said. The funding aims to support stabilisation and relief efforts as Syria recovers from years of conflict.

Pakistan

- Indonesia and Pakistan are in advanced talks over a defence deal involving the sale of JF-17 combat jets and drones, including Shahpar UAVs, following high-level meetings in Islamabad. Both sides confirmed discussions on defence cooperation, though no final agreement have been announced.

United Kingdom

- Britain will enact a law this week criminalising the creation and supply of tools for non-consensual intimate images, Technology Minister Liz Kendall told parliament. She said X's move to restrict such features to paid users was insufficient amid Ofcom's probe into the platform.
- Britain is set to ease the impact of a planned business rates hike on pubs by announcing support measures, following warnings that the tax could force closures. Industry groups say up to 5,000 small pubs and 15,000 jobs could be at risk without relief.

United States

- The National Transportation Safety Board will hold a January 27 hearing into the January 2025 mid-air crash near Washington Airport that killed 67 people, after the Justice Department said the federal government was liable and the Federal Aviation Administration restricted military helicopter flights.

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