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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

- CM N. Chandrababu Naidu criticised the Forest Department for allegedly obstructing development works in tribal Agency areas by citing rules. He directed officials to adopt a more people-friendly approach and support infrastructure projects in these regions.
- The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) is conducting an e-lottery to allot 339 returnable residential and commercial plots to 174 farmers who participated in the Land Pooling Scheme in the capital city area.

Andhra Pradesh

- Narasapuram in West Godavari will undergo major infrastructure upgrades, including new ghats, roads and tourist facilities, ahead of the Godavari Pushkaralu 2027 to accommodate a large influx of pilgrims.
- Andhra Pradesh aims to become a major defence manufacturing hub, with Minister Nara Lokesh laying the foundation stone for a Sagar Defence Engineering unit in Nellore to develop advanced maritime defence technologies.

Delhi

- Chief Minister Rekha Gupta launched four amphibious excavator machines to clean the Najafgarh drain, aiming to remove massive silt buildup and improve drainage as part of efforts to reduce pollution in the Yamuna River.
- The Delhi government and IIT Madras have signed an MoU to study “smog-eating” surfaces using photocatalytic materials like titanium dioxide to reduce pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and volatile organic compounds in the city.
- Delhi Police has warned residents about cyber fraud linked to rumours of LPG shortages, advising people not to click on suspicious links or trust calls from unknown numbers posing as gas agency officials.

Delhi

- Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced plans to rename the Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation and restructure it to accelerate redevelopment projects in Old Delhi, including the Chandni Chowk area.
- The Delhi Assembly budget session is likely to begin on March 23, with the Economic Survey to be tabled on the first day and the 2026–27 budget focusing on infrastructure, green initiatives and education.
- CM Rekha Gupta has directed authorities to maximize water output from treatment plants under the Summer Action Plan 2026, alongside deploying additional tankers and monitoring supply through a GPS-based mobile tracking system.

Goa

- The Goa Civil Supplies Department has deployed officials at LPG agencies and invoked the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to prevent hoarding, black marketing and ensure smooth supply of LPG cylinders across the state.
- The Goa government has opened a final registration window for children of freedom fighters who missed earlier enrolment under the 2013 government job scheme, giving eligible applicants one last opportunity to apply.

Goa

- CM Pramod Sawant will receive an honorary Vidyanidhi degree from Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth during its 44th convocation ceremony in Pune on March 14, recognising his contributions to governance, education and social development.
- Goa will notify its AI and Deep-Tech Policy within 100 days, aiming to boost innovation and develop a Konkani Large Language Model in partnership with Bhashini to improve AI access to government services.

Gujarat

- AMC received ₹6 crore out of the ₹12 crore cleanliness grant sanctioned by the Gujarat government under the Swachh Shaher Sundar Shaher Yojana to support sanitation and beautification work in the city.
- The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has allotted two Thaltej plots worth ₹225 crore to private nurseries rent-free for 10 years under a PPP model, a move that has drawn public scrutiny over potential revenue loss.

Gujarat

- The Gujarat High Court has directed the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation to reinstate 586 certified street vendors at Bhadra Complex by March 21, ruling their 2025 eviction illegal under the Street Vendors Act, 2014.
- The Gujarat government has ordered 34 new metro train sets—10 for Ahmedabad Metro Phase-2 and 24 for the upcoming Surat Metro—to increase service frequency and strengthen urban rail infrastructure in the state.

Haryana

- The Haryana government has decided to withdraw the provision allowing employees to take one month’s salary in lieu of Leave Travel Concession (LTC), with the change set to take effect from January 1, 2028.
- The World Bank, Government of India and Haryana government have signed an agreement to support a multi-sector plan to improve air quality in the state while also creating employment opportunities for youth and women.

Haryana

- Gurugram will get a ₹166.96 crore sewage treatment plant at Dhanwapur with a 100 MLD capacity and a Bio-CNG facility, aimed at improving wastewater management and reducing pollution in the Yamuna.

Himachal Pradesh

- Parts of the Kullu–Manali NH-03 are under scrutiny after protection walls along the Beas river collapsed before the flood season, with locals alleging contractors used temporary mud walls and crates instead of durable structures.

Himachal Pradesh

- The Parwanoo–Shimla NH-5 four-laning project has seen costs surge due to expensive land acquisition, with the final 27-km Kaithlighat–Dhalli stretch costing ₹101.58 crore per km. The 88.9-km project is expected to reduce travel time by over an hour once completed.
- The Centre has approved ₹288.39 crore in flood relief for Himachal Pradesh as part of a ₹1,912.99 crore assistance package for states affected by disasters such as floods, landslides and cyclones in 2025.

Karnataka

- Karnataka Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy flagged off 45 Sarige and 70 Pallakki buses for KSRTC and announced that 805 new buses will be added to the state transport fleet in the next three months.
- The Karnataka government has formed a Committee on Responsible Artificial Intelligence to develop a policy ensuring ethical AI use, transparency and data security, with recommendations expected within 90 days.

Karnataka

- The government will assist foreign tourists stranded due to the West Asia conflict, providing essential facilities and help with visas and communication with their families. The tourism department will coordinate with district officials to support the affected visitors.
- Delegation have urged CM Siddaramaiah to intervene over concerns regarding the implementation of internal reservation within the Scheduled Castes quota, alleging that the current roster system in recruitment is causing representation imbalances.

INDIA UPDATE

Highlights of this week

Madhya Pradesh

- Due to a western disturbance, cloudy conditions in the Gwalior-Chambal region led to a 1.7°C drop in temperature, while Bhopal, Indore and Ujjain continued to experience heat. The IMD forecast thunderstorms and rain in 12 districts over the next four days.

Mumbai

- Maharashtra has formed city and district-level committees to monitor LPG supply and curb black marketing and hoarding, amid panic booking and shortage concerns linked to the West Asia conflict.
- The government has approved ₹22,181 crore worth of infrastructure projects for the 2027 Nashik–Trimbakeshwar Kumbh Mela, aimed at improving facilities and enhancing the event's global appeal.
- The government has made RTO permits mandatory for electric auto-rickshaws and e-bikes used in passenger transport, aiming to bring them under the same regulatory framework as other public transport vehicles.

Pune

- A new Transit Mail Office (TMO) has been inaugurated at Pune Airport to streamline the handling and transit of mail consignments. The facility is expected to improve the speed and efficiency of domestic and international postal logistics.
- The PMC has launched an eight-point plan to improve city infrastructure, focusing on air quality, pedestrian safety and sustainable mobility. The plan includes creating a pilot emission-free zone in Shivajinagar and developing a 35-km cycling network.
- The PMC has unveiled an eight-point action plan to tackle air pollution and traffic congestion, focusing on better pedestrian infrastructure, public transport and non-motorised mobility. The plan also proposes a pilot emission-free zone in Shivajinagar.

Punjab

- The Punjab government has identified nine priority sectors for investment to boost industrial growth, highlighting opportunities in areas such as electronics system design and manufacturing at the Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit 2026.
- The Punjab government has made farmer registration mandatory on the Agritech portal to continue receiving benefits under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, requiring farmers to obtain a unique Farmer Registration ID.

Rajasthan

- A Rajasthan Food Safety Department report found over 24% of 31,347 food samples collected during 2024–25 failed quality standards, with adulteration rates reaching 32% in Behror-Alwar and 35% in Phalodi.

Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu's first thermal power plant with a captive offshore port has been inaugurated at Udangudi in Thoothukudi, with a capacity of 2×660 MW. The ₹13,077-crore project will boost the state's power generation and reduce dependence on purchased electricity.
- B. Bala Naga Devi, a 1995-batch IPS officer, has been appointed Director General of Police (Intelligence) in Tamil Nadu, becoming the first woman to head the state's intelligence wing. She earlier served as DGP of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW)-CID.

Telangana

- The Telangana government's proposal to integrate Intermediate education with the school system under a single authority has sparked debate, with educators and parents raising concerns over its impact on higher education preparation.
- Parts of Telangana are likely to witness thunderstorms and rainfall from March 15 to around March 20, with activity expected to intensify between March 17 and 18, according to the IMD.

Uttar Pradesh

- The Uttar Pradesh government has issued draft rules requiring cab and delivery app companies to obtain licences, with existing platforms given 90 days to register under the new regulatory framework.
- CM Yogi Adityanath reviewed law and order preparations ahead of upcoming festivals and police recruitment exams, directing officials to maintain strict vigilance and coordination across the state.

Upcoming News/Events

Madhya Pradesh

- Airlines Fly91 and Star Air plan to expand Indore's air connectivity, with Fly91 proposing flights to Jalgaon, Hyderabad and Goa, while Star Air will start Belgaum and Kolhapur flights via Mumbai from March 30.

Mumbai

- The government will form a committee to draft a comprehensive parking policy for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, with a report expected within 90 days amid rising vehicle numbers and parking shortages.
- The Maharashtra government plans to develop a world-class tourism project on a 100-acre plot at Gorai in Mumbai, featuring recreation zones, adventure activities, hospitality spaces and landscaped public areas.
- Maharashtra's Forest Minister Ganesh Naik has proposed a ₹775 crore masterplan to revamp Sanjay Gandhi National Park, including a leopard safari, upgraded tourist facilities and AI-based wildlife monitoring.

Pune

- The Pune Municipal Corporation will empanel 20 hospitals and 47 OPDs under the integrated MJPJAY and PMJAY schemes. The move aims to expand access to cashless and affordable healthcare for eligible residents in the city.
- The government plans to amend food safety laws to introduce stricter provisions against food adulteration, with the draft proposal currently under review before being sent for central approval.
- Pune health officials have urged the Maharashtra government to regulate advanced mobile ultrasound devices after a sex determination racket was uncovered, calling for stricter laws to prevent misuse.

Punjab

- Punjab will begin India's first fully digital Census from May 15, marking the country's first fully digital population enumeration. A voluntary self-enumeration process will start from April 30 ahead of the official count.
- Industrial groups have committed investments worth ₹10,000 crore in Punjab at the Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit 2026, with major companies planning to expand operations and create jobs in the state.

Rajasthan

- A western disturbance brought rain and hail in parts of Rajasthan including Hanumangarh, causing temperatures to drop by up to 3°C, while Jaipur recorded 36°C and IMD issued a thunderstorm alert for 12 districts on March 18.

Tamil Nadu

- Polling for the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections 2026 will be held on April 23, with counting of votes and results scheduled for May 4. The Model Code of Conduct has come into force immediately following the announcement of the election schedule.
- The Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation is launching a project to make streets around schools safer and child-friendly, transforming 10 school zones with improved footpaths, crossings and traffic-calming measures to enhance road safety.

Telangana

- The Telangana government estimates ₹6,500–₹7,000 crore for Phase 1 of the Musi Riverfront Development Project, which includes creating Gandhi Sarovar at Bapu Ghat and improving river stretches around the reservoir.
- All residents including Rohingya and other undocumented migrants, will be counted in the Census 2027, as the exercise records everyone living in an area regardless of citizenship status. Around 75,000 enumerators and 13,000 supervisors will be deployed.

Uttar Pradesh

- The Uttar Pradesh Mid-Day Meal Authority has started collecting district-wise data on LPG requirements to ensure uninterrupted cooking gas supply for the mid-day meal programme in schools.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Uttar Pradesh is witnessing positive transformation in education and could soon set new benchmarks, citing improvements in infrastructure, investment and learning environments under the state government.

GLOBAL UPDATE**Highlights of this week****Africa**

- Rwanda warned it may withdraw its troops from Mozambique's insurgency-hit Cabo Delgado region, saying the deployment's continuation depends on adequate funding and recognition of Rwanda's role in the counter-terrorism mission.
- Heavy rains and flooding in Kenya have killed at least 62 people, including eight children, with Nairobi reporting the highest number of casualties. The disaster has also displaced over 2,000 families as heavy rainfall continues in several regions.

America

- Senior officials from Colombia and Venezuela met in Caracas to discuss security, trade and energy cooperation, while Venezuela's acting president Delcy Rodriguez called for an end to U.S. sanctions on the country.
- Cuba said it opened talks with the United States as a U.S.-imposed oil blockade under President Donald Trump worsened its economic crisis. The move aims to ease pressure on the country's energy supplies and struggling economy.

Asia Pacific

- Kazakh voters approved a new constitution in a referendum with about 87% support, according to exit polls, with turnout around 73%. The changes could allow President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev a pathway to remain in power beyond 2029.
- North Korea launched more than 10 ballistic missiles into the sea from near Pyongyang during U.S.–South Korea military drills, according to South Korea's military. The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the launches did not pose an immediate threat to U.S. territory or allies.

China

- Top Chinese and U.S. economic officials held talks in Paris to address trade issues such as tariffs, rare earth supplies and tech export controls, ahead of a planned summit between Donald Trump and Xi Jinping later this month.
- China passed a new ethnic minority law prioritising the use of Mandarin in minority regions to promote national unity. Critics say the measure could erode cultural identities of non-Han communities and criminalise dissent as separatism under the law.

Europe

- Sweden's Liberal Party agreed to support bringing the anti-immigration Sweden Democrats into government after the September elections, a move expected to strengthen the right-wing bloc's chances of winning.

Middle East

- WHO released \$2 million in emergency funds to support health responses in Lebanon, Iraq and Syria amid the ongoing Middle East crisis. The funding from the Contingency Fund for Emergencies aims to strengthen medical services and humanitarian assistance in affected areas.
- Oil loading operations at the UAE's Fujairah port resumed after a drone attack and fire, though it remains unclear if activities have fully returned to normal at the major bunkering and crude export hub.

Pakistan

- Pakistan carried out airstrikes in Afghanistan, including a strike on a Kam Air fuel depot near Kandahar airport, causing civilian casualties, according to the Taliban and the UN, amid escalating tensions between the two countries.

United Kingdom

- Britain's economy showed zero GDP growth in January, missing expectations and highlighting weak momentum in recent months. The stagnation came even before the Iran war, which could add further pressure on the UK economy.

United States

- U.S. rejected mediation efforts by Middle Eastern allies to start negotiations to end the Iran war, while Iran said it would not consider a ceasefire until U.S. and Israeli strikes stop. The stance from both sides suggests the conflict may continue despite rising regional tensions and oil disruptions.
- President Donald Trump signed an executive order to combat fraudulent "Made in America" labels, directing regulators to crack down on companies falsely claiming products are domestically made. The order also calls for stricter enforcement and verification of origin claims in federal procurement.

Upcoming News/Events**Africa**

- African officials warned that rising oil prices triggered by the Iran conflict could disrupt monetary easing and threaten economic recovery, as higher fuel costs may hurt key sectors such as mining and force central banks to reassess policy.
- Ghana plans to submit a UN resolution recognising transatlantic slavery as the gravest crime in history and calling for reparations, expecting broad international support despite likely resistance from some European countries.

America

- Canada and the five Nordic countries have agreed to deepen their cooperation in the military procurement and strategic areas, as Prime Minister of Canada Mark Carney seeks new alliances to reduce dependence on the United States.
- Canada announced a C\$35 billion plan to strengthen Arctic defences, with Prime Minister Mark Carney saying the country can no longer rely on others, including the United States, for security in the region.

Asia Pacific

- Australia announced the deployment of defence troops to assist communities affected by severe flooding in the Northern Territory, particularly around the town of Katherine. Authorities are responding to flood emergencies triggered by heavy rains in northern Australia.
- The United States is reportedly preparing a new arms package for Taiwan, including advanced interceptor missiles, which could be approved by President Donald Trump after his upcoming visit to China.

China

- China is seeking to rebuild influence over North Korea through renewed diplomatic and economic engagement, as Pyongyang has grown closer to Russia since the Ukraine war. High-level visits and talks on trade and investment signal efforts to revive ties after years of strained relations.

Europe

- Germany's Prime Minister said it is sceptical about expanding the EU's Operation Aspides naval mission to the Strait of Hormuz, arguing the current mission in the Red Sea has not been effective in improving security.
- The European Union extended sanctions for six months against individuals and entities supporting Russia's war in Ukraine, keeping restrictions in place until September 15 despite earlier vetoes from Hungary and Slovakia.

Middle East

- Israel and Lebanon are expected to hold talks aimed at securing a durable ceasefire and disarming Hezbollah, though the timing and terms remain unclear. Lebanon is forming a delegation, while discussions hinge on Israel agreeing to a full ceasefire before negotiations begin.
- Iran said its relations with Arab Gulf states may need a "serious review" amid the U.S.–Israeli war on Iran, while denying responsibility for attacks on Saudi oil facilities. Tehran also called for greater regional cooperation and less reliance on external powers.

Pakistan

- China urged Afghanistan and Pakistan to resolve their tensions through dialogue and consultation rather than force, with Foreign Minister Wang Yi conveying the message during a call with Afghan counterpart Amir Khan Muttaqi.

United Kingdom

- The UK government said that it is considering targeted financial support for poorer households throughout the country to offset rising energy costs caused by the Middle East conflict, according to finance minister Rachel Reeves.
- Britain and Ireland will conduct live exercises to test their preparedness for incidents involving undersea cables, as part of enhanced maritime security cooperation. The move aims to protect critical infrastructure amid rising concerns over subsea cable disruptions.

United States

- U.S. President Donald Trump said he is considering loosening shipping rules under the Jones Act, which governs maritime trade between U.S. ports. However, he provided no specific details on potential changes to the law.

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