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## INFRAINSIGHTS

Insights Igniting Curiosity



## InfraShorts

- Macquarie plans to sell its 648-km India highway portfolio, starting the process next year.
- India constructs 18,714 km highways under Bharatmala Pariyojana in seven years.
- NHAI builds shelters for stray cattle along highways to prevent accidents, ensuring commuter safety and animal care management.
- Anand Vihar flyover opens, easing traffic for Ramprastha, Vivek Vihar, and Shresth Vihar residents.

## Building the Nation: Manmohan Singh's legacy in Infrastructure Development

Dr. Manmohan Singh, India's 14th Prime Minister (2004-2014), was instrumental in reshaping the nation's infrastructure. During his tenure, infrastructure spending rose to 8% of GDP by the 11th Five-Year Plan (2007-2012). Under his leadership, projects like the Golden Quadrilateral and North-South-East-West Corridors connected over 13,000 km of highways, boosting trade and reducing travel time. The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) invested Rs. 1.2 lakh crore to modernize over 60 cities, addressing challenges in transport, water supply, and housing.

Dr. Singh also prioritized rural electrification, with the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana electrifying 112,000 villages and providing free connections to 2.5 crore BPL households. Renewable energy capacity grew substantially, laying the groundwork for India's green energy goals. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) during his tenure attracted over Rs. 5 lakh crore in investments across highways, airports, and ports. Dr. Singh's vision for bridging the urban-rural divide and integrating India into the global economy remains a lasting legacy.

## India on track to build World's second-largest Metro network

India is set to achieve the milestone of having the second-largest metro network globally, with 993 km of operational metro rail across 23 cities and 997 km under construction in 28 cities, according to the Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs.

During a presentation to the parliamentary consultative committee, the minister emphasized the critical role of urban mobility in managing the rising urban population. The discussion covered the Metro Rail Policy 2017, ongoing projects in cities like Delhi, Jaipur, Patna, and Lucknow, and the high-speed RRTS network.



## New York to charge Fossil Fuel Firms for climate damage

New York Governor Kathy Hochul has signed the Climate Change Superfund Act into law, requiring major fossil fuel companies to pay fees to help the state combat the effects of climate change. Targeting top greenhouse gas emitters from 2000-2018, the law will fund critical infrastructure projects, including wetland restoration, road upgrades, and repairs from extreme weather events. Praised as a landmark step in holding polluters accountable, it faces expected legal challenges from the fossil fuel industry. Rules for implementing penalties and fund allocation are still in development. New York follows Vermont in enacting bold climate legislation.



## China approves World's largest Hydropower Dam amid concerns

China has approved the construction of the world's largest hydropower dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo river in Tibet, aiming to generate three times more energy than the Three Gorges Dam. Estimated to cost \$127 billion, the project involves drilling four 20km-long tunnels through the Namcha Barwa mountain. While China touts it as eco-friendly and vital for climate neutrality, critics warn of displacement, environmental damage, and risks from the site's earthquake-prone location. Concerns also focus on potential control over water flow to India and Bangladesh, affecting downstream ecosystems. India is reportedly exploring its own dam to counter the impact. Despite claims of minimal environmental effects, China has not disclosed how many communities will be displaced.

## Honda and Nissan Plan Merger to Challenge Chinese EV Makers

Honda and Nissan are in advanced discussions for a merger, potentially including Mitsubishi, to counter the growing dominance of Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers like BYD and intensifying global competition. The merger, which could position the group among the world's largest carmakers, seeks to pool resources and adapt by 2030 to avoid being left behind, said Honda CEO Toshihiro Mibe. This collaboration would enhance their EV capabilities against rivals like Tesla, with combined sales exceeding \$191 billion. Nissan CEO Makoto Uchida emphasized that the deal is not a bailout for Nissan, which has struggled with declining sales, job cuts, and challenges following the Carlos Ghosn scandal. However, the proposed merger faces political scrutiny in Japan over potential job losses and may disrupt Nissan's longstanding alliance with Renault, adding complexity to the negotiations in a rapidly transforming EV market.

## Global Coal demand is set to plateau through 2027

Global coal demand will peak at 8.77 billion tonnes in 2024 and remain steady through 2027, driven by renewable energy growth, says the IEA's Coal 2024 report. China, consuming a third of global coal, is expanding solar, wind, and nuclear power. While demand declines in advanced economies due to policies and alternatives, it continues rising in emerging markets like India and Indonesia. International coal trade is expected to hit 1.55 billion tonnes in 2024 before shrinking. The IEA highlights weather variability and rising electricity demand as key factors shaping future coal consumption trends.



## EAAIF Commits \$18.9M to Zambia's Green Bond for Solar Expansion

The Emerging Africa & Asia Infrastructure Fund (EAAIF), managed by Ninety One, has committed \$18.9 million to Copperbelt Energy Corporation Renewables' \$96.7 million green bond for a 136 MW solar plant in Zambia. Part of a \$200 million program, the project aims to address Zambia's energy crisis, heavily reliant on hydropower, by diversifying its energy mix. The plant will cut 126,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e emissions, create 800 jobs, and improve power supply for 146,000 end-users.



## VOC Port's Green Hydrogen Initiative

V.O. Chidambaranar Port has allocated ₹41,860 crore to establish itself as India's green hydrogen hub. This strategic investment will support the port's transformation with cutting-edge infrastructure and sustainable initiatives. The project is aimed at boosting India's clean energy sector by producing green hydrogen and ammonia, focusing on decarbonizing the energy mix. The move will significantly contribute to reducing the country's carbon footprint while positioning VOC Port as a critical player in the growing green hydrogen market.

## UP's First Digital Highway Unveiled

Uttar Pradesh is gearing up to build its first digital highway, a 101-kilometer four-lane corridor connecting Barabanki and Bahaich. Slated for construction by March 2025, the project aims to revolutionize connectivity and travel safety. The highway will include integrated optic fiber cables throughout its stretch, eliminating the need for future digging and ensuring seamless digital connectivity. Equipped with 24-hour surveillance featuring NPR cameras, advanced safety measures, and enhanced lighting, the corridor is designed to offer a safer and more efficient travel experience. This strategic highway will link key destinations, including Lucknow, Shrawasti Airport, National Highway-27, and the India-Nepal border, significantly improving regional and international connectivity. The project is part of the National Highway Authority of India's (NHAI) visionary plan to construct 10,000 kilometers of digital highways nationwide. This initiative reflects a major leap forward in modern road infrastructure, blending technology with transportation to support economic growth and foster seamless mobility in one of India's fastest-growing states.

## InfraIndia



## Indian Railways Plans Major New PPP Initiatives

Indian Railways plans to adopt a public-private partnership (PPP) model to develop critical infrastructure projects, including new lines, station redevelopment, and high-speed rail. The strategy aims to secure private investment to fund these initiatives, reducing the financial strain on the government. Additionally, the Railways seeks to enhance passenger amenities, operational efficiency, and network capacity. This move aligns with the broader vision of modernizing India's railway system and expediting the delivery of key projects.

## Navi Mumbai Airport Prepares for May Operations

Navi Mumbai International Airport achieved a major milestone with the successful landing of an IndiGo A320 aircraft during its first commercial flight validation test. This marks a significant step toward operational readiness, with the inauguration scheduled for April 17, 2025, and domestic flight operations starting by May 2025. The airport is expected to enhance regional connectivity and reduce congestion at Mumbai's existing airport. Developed by Navi Mumbai International Airport Limited (NMIAL), a partnership between Adani Airports Holdings Limited and CIDCO, the project highlights India's focus on expanding aviation infrastructure to meet growing passenger demand. The test landing signifies steady progress toward making the airport fully operational by early 2025.

## InfraHub



## DONER Ministry Approves 86 Projects Worth Rs 1970.54 Crore for Northeast in 2024

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region has approved 86 projects worth ₹1,970.54 crore for the Northeast region in 2024. These projects are aimed at fostering growth and improving infrastructure across the region. The funds will be utilized for key sectors, including transportation, healthcare, education, and sustainable development. The approval marks a significant step toward enhancing the region's overall development, ensuring better connectivity, and improving living standards. These initiatives are expected to create jobs, boost economic growth, and strengthen the region's integration with the rest of India. The move reflects the government's continued commitment to the progress of Northeast India.



**Abhishek Kumar**  
MBA-IDM  
SCMHRD'26

## Revamping Indian Railways: Safety, Speed & Sustainability

Indian Railways, a critical lifeline for the nation, has long been a symbol of connectivity and economic growth. In 2023-24, freight services accounted for ₹1,68,293 crore in revenue, overshadowing ₹70,693 crore earned from passenger services. However, operational challenges persist, with freight train speeds stagnating at 25 km/hr for over a decade. Safety concerns, such as the slow implementation of the KAVACH system—covering only 1,465 route kilometers in South Central Railway and 80 kilometers in North Central Railway—further underscore the need for modernization. KAVACH, a system designed to assist loco pilots in emergencies and inclement weather, remains underutilized, limiting its potential impact.

To address these challenges, the Standing Committee on Railways has outlined recommendations focusing on financial sustainability and operational efficiency. Revenue enhancement strategies include revising AC class fares to align with operational costs while keeping general class fares affordable and boosting non-fare revenue to 20% by 2030 through advertising and commercial ventures. Infrastructure development, such as streamlined land acquisition, improved government coordination, and expanding dedicated freight corridors, is also critical to achieving modernization goals.

Safety and modernization remain top priorities. The committee advocates for eliminating unmanned crossings, accelerating track renewals, and expanding KAVACH deployment. Additionally, increased investment in research and development, currently allocated ₹72.01 crore, will support innovation. These reforms aim to transform Indian Railways into a modern, efficient, and globally competitive transport system.

## Bidding war begins for ₹1,700 crore Vadhvan Port Project

ITD Cementation India, Navayuga Engineering, and MAN Infraconstruction are competing for a ₹1,700 crore contract to develop 200 hectares of land near the shore for Vadhvan Port in Maharashtra. Tendered by Vadhvan Port Project Ltd, the project includes shore protection and near-shore reclamation under the EPC model. Unmesh Wagh, Chairman of the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority and Vadhvan Port Project Ltd, expressed confidence in the bidders' capabilities, highlighting the ambitious port development's potential to bolster maritime infrastructure and economic activity in the region.

## Odisha Plans Expansion of Maritime Infrastructure with New Ports

Odisha is set to significantly boost its maritime capabilities with the development of new ports at Inchuri in Balasore and Bahuda in Ganjam, recently approved by Chief Minister Mohan Majhi. The government plans to adopt a transparent and efficient public-private partnership (PPP) model for their development, Industries Secretary Hemant Sharma announced. Additionally, a state-of-the-art shipbuilding and repair facility is also proposed, with potential locations at one of the new ports, while Odisha is intensifying its focus on industrial expansion and economic growth around Gopalpur and Dhamra ports.

## Mumbai Metro One debt to be acquired by Government Entity

Lenders to Mumbai Metro One, the vital lifeline connecting Versova to Ghatkopar and serving thousands of commuters daily, are in advanced discussions to transfer their outstanding debt to the National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL), which has offered ₹1,063 crore to acquire the ₹1,226 crore principal debt, according to sources. The proposal includes 15% cash payment, with the remainder in security receipts redeemable upon recovery of loans, and a Swiss challenge auction has been triggered, with the government guaranteeing any shortfall in recovery. This transformative initiative aims to ensure long-term financial stability for the project while safeguarding one of Mumbai's most crucial metro corridors.



For More Information :

[infrastructure\\_management@scmhrd.edu](mailto:infrastructure_management@scmhrd.edu)

[infrasummit.scmhrd.edu](http://infrasummit.scmhrd.edu)