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English



**7 FEBRUARY**

**2025**

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< Feb 2024

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**Daily**

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Ebook



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Feb 29 2024 CA Quiz - English  
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**Weekly**

Daily

PIB News



Weekly: 24-29 Feb 2024 CA Q&A - English  
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Weekly: 24-29 Feb 2024 CA Quiz - English  
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Monthly

Weekly

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**PIB News**



February 29 2024 PIB News - English  
Article



February 28 2024 PIB News - English  
Article



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## Hand Written Notes

### NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)

IICA + CMAI <sup>To</sup> → Strengthen carbon markets & support decarbonization in India

IICA - Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs

CMAI - Carbon Markets Association of India

2)



MoRD - Ministry of Rural Development

WDC-PMKSY 2.0 - Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana

DoLR - Department of Land Resources

### INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)

Panama <sup>Exit from</sup> → 1st Latin American Nation → Belt and Road Initiative of China

2)

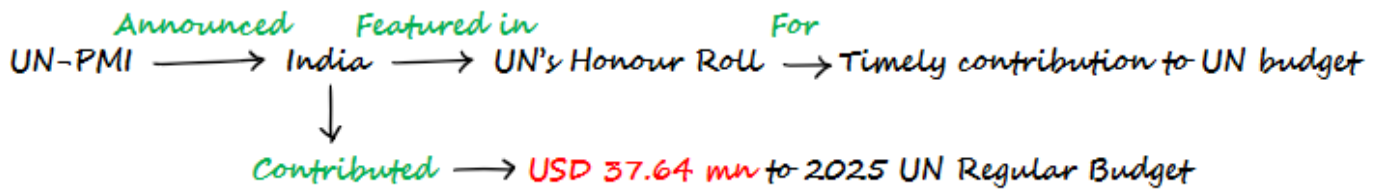


UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

WHOCC - World Health Organization Collaborating Centre

NIMHANS - National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences

3)

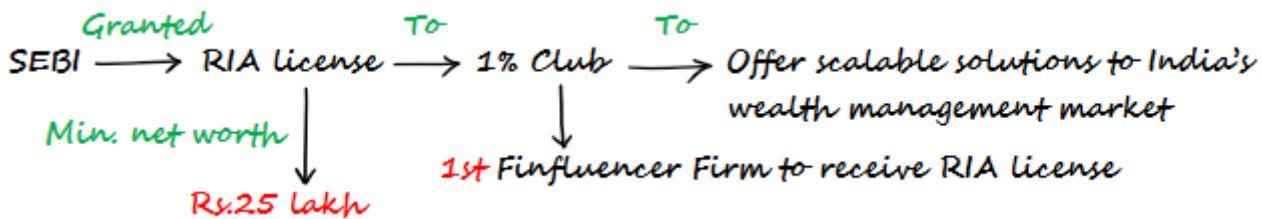


UN-PMI - Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

UN - United Nation

## BANKING & FINANCE

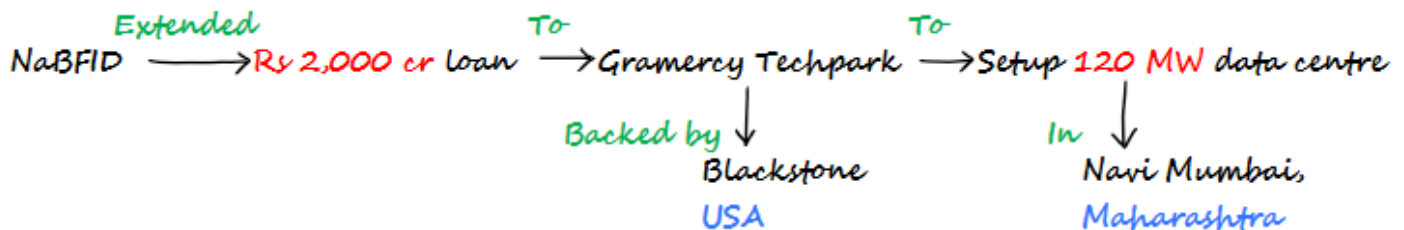
1)



SEBI - Securities and Exchange Board of India

RIA - Registered Investment Advisor

2)

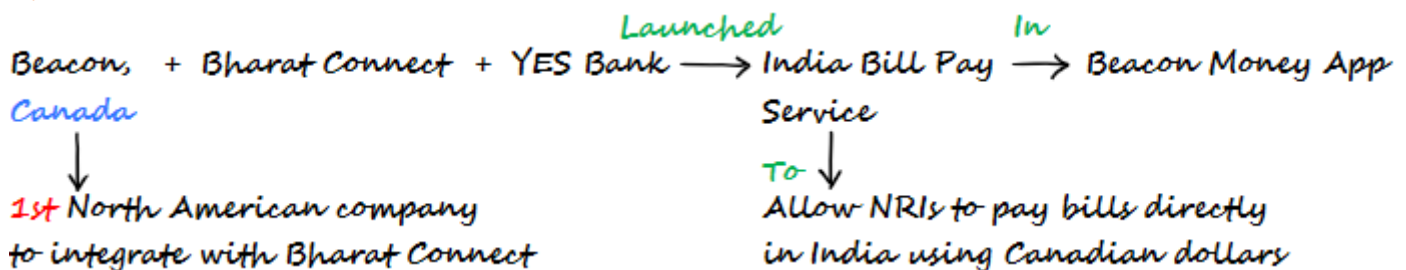


NaBFID - National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development

MW - Mega Watt

USA - United States of America

3)



NRI - Non-Resident Indian

4)

RBI's DPI  $\rightarrow$   $\uparrow$  By 11.11% Y-o-Y  $\xrightarrow{\text{To}}$  465.33 (Sep 2024)  $\curvearrowright$  445.5 (Mar 2024)

RBI - Reserve Bank of India

DPI - Digital Payments Index

Y-o-Y - Year-on-Year

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1)

NABARD  $\xrightarrow{\text{Approved}}$  Rs.903.21 cr (FY 2025)  $\xrightarrow{\text{For}}$  127 Projects  $\xrightarrow{\text{In}}$  Himachal Pradesh  
 $\downarrow$   
 $\xrightarrow{\text{To establish}}$  1.5 lakh liter per day Dairy Processing Plants, Kangra (Himachal Pradesh)

NABARD - National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development

## ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

1)

RBI  $\xrightarrow{\text{Approved}}$  TSI  $\xrightarrow{\text{To acquire}}$  100% stake  $\xrightarrow{\text{In}}$  TCPSL  $\xrightarrow{\text{For}}$  Rs.330 cr  
 (Indian subsidiary of Findi)

RBI - Reserve Bank of India

TSI - Transaction Solutions International

TCPSL - Tata Communications Payment Solutions Limited

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1)

Russia  $\xrightarrow{\text{Launched}}$  Soyuz-2.1v rocket  $\xrightarrow{\text{To}}$  Deploy military satellites into orbit  $\xrightarrow{\text{From}}$  Plesetsk Cosmodrome, Russia

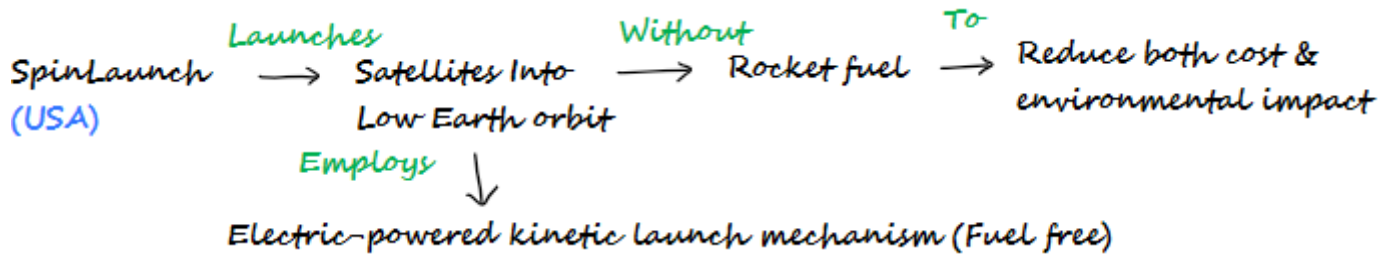
2)

US Navy  $\xrightarrow{\text{Tests}}$  HELIOS Laser Weapon  $\xrightarrow{\text{Via}}$  Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Preble  $\xrightarrow{\text{To}}$   $\uparrow$  Naval Operations  
 $\downarrow$   
 $\xrightarrow{\text{Developed by}}$  Lockheed Martin, USA

HELIOS - High-Energy Laser with Integrated Optical Dazzler and Surveillance

USA - United States of America

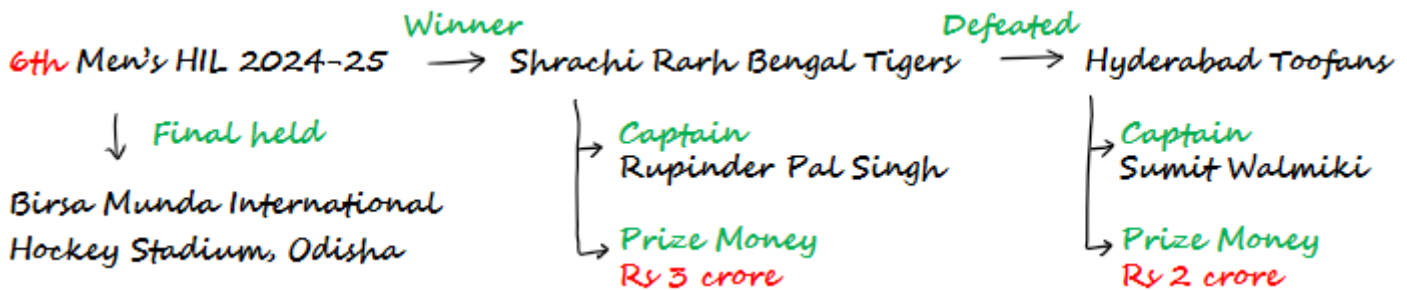
3)



USA - United States of America

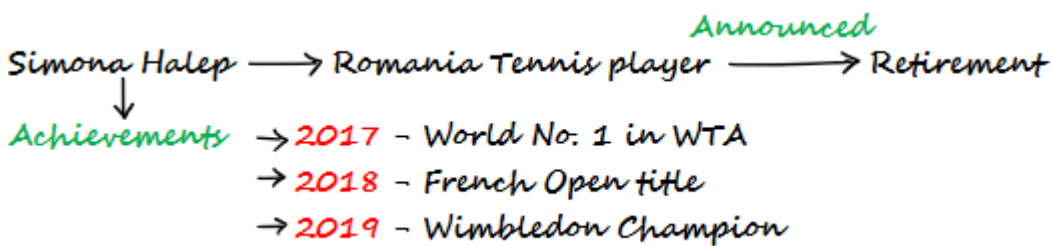
## SPORTS

1)



HIL - Hockey India League

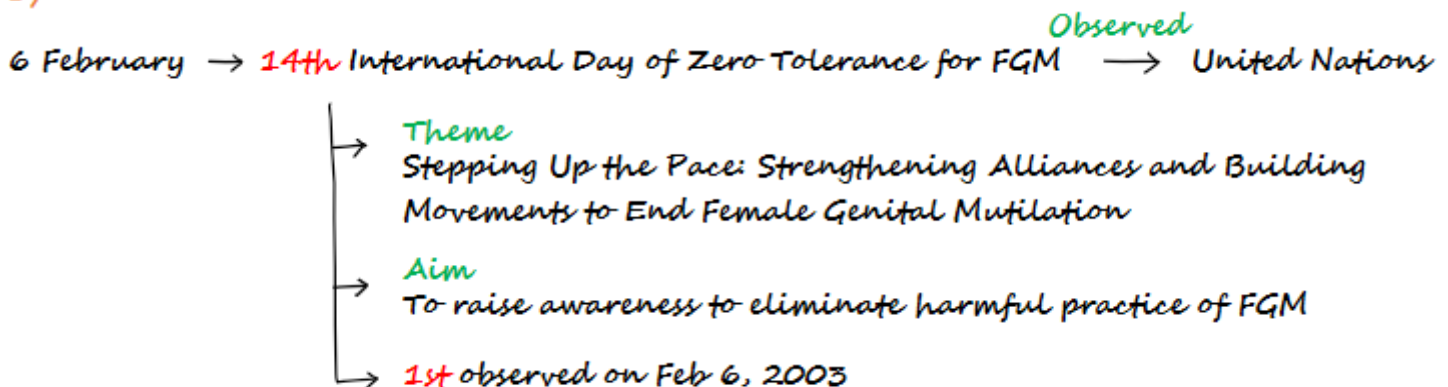
2)



WTA - Women's Tennis Association

## IMPORTANT DAYS

1)

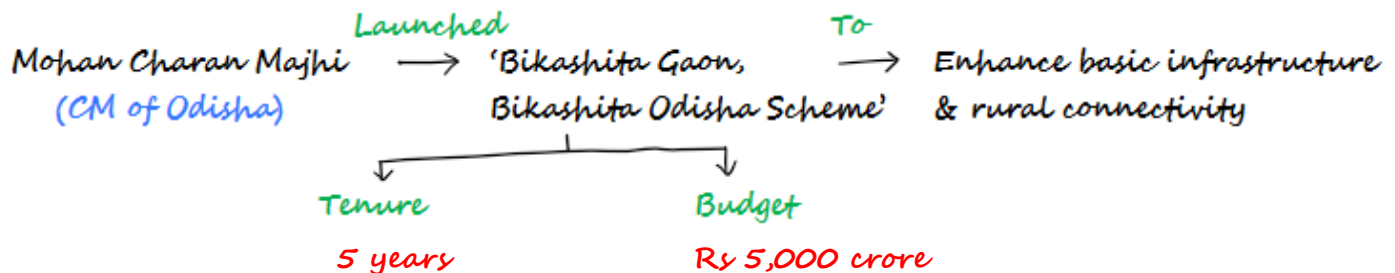




FGM - Female Genital Mutilation

## STATE NEWS

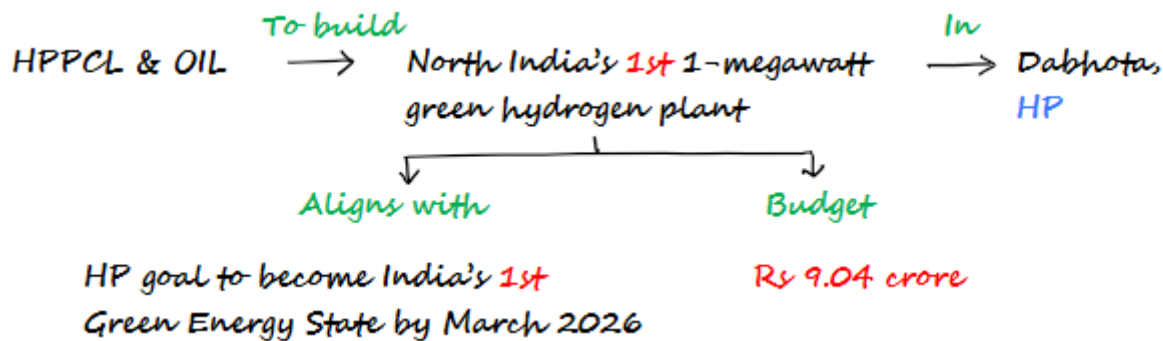
1)



CM - Chief Minister

ITDA - Integrated Tribal Development Agency

2)



HP - Himachal Pradesh

HPPCL - Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited

OIL - Oil India Limited

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- [IDFC FIRST Bank Simplifies Tax Payment with CBDT Partnership](#)
- [A quarter of freshwater fish species are at high risk of extinction: Report](#)
- [RenewBuy Introduces Smart Term Plan To Simplify Term Insurance For Indians](#)
- [Equitas Small Finance Bank revises SB deposit rates, introduces new slabs](#)
- [WMO and Mountain Research Initiative Strengthen Partnership to Tackle Climate Impacts on Mountain Regions](#)

## Detailed Content

Current Affairs 7 February 2025 : Headlines

 **AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY** **ENGLISH**

**International Day  
of Zero Tolerance  
for Female Genital  
Mutilation**

**February 6 2025**



**Russia launches  
Soyuz Rocket  
carrying military  
satellites**



**CURRENT AFFAIRS** **7 FEBRUARY 2025**

- IICA & CMAI Sign MoU to Boost India's Carbon Market
- Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Launched a Nationwide Campaign "Watershed Yatra"
- Panama Becomes 1st Latin American Nation to Exit China's BRI
- UNICEF Releases National Roadmap for Child & Adolescent Road Safety in India
- India Featured in UN's Honour Roll for Timely Payment of Regular Budget Assessments
- 'The 1% Club' Becomes First Finfluencer Firm to Get SEBI RIA license
- NaBFID Extends Rs 2,000 crore Loan to Blackstone-backed Data Centre
- Beacon Launches India Bill Pay for NRIs in Canada
- RBI's Digital Payments Index Increases to 465.33 as of September 2024
- NABARD Approves 127 Projects Worth Rs.903.21 Crore in Himachal Pradesh
- RBI Approves Findi to acquire 100% stake in TCPSL for Rs.330 crore
- Russia Launches 'Soyuz-2v Rocket' Carrying Military Satellites into Orbit
- US Navy Tests HELIOS Laser Weapon to Strengthen Naval Operations
- SpinLaunch Launches Satellites Into Space Without Rocket Fuel
- Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers Wins 6th 'Men's HIL 2024-25' Title
- Romania tennis player Simona Halep announces retirement
- International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation 2025 – February 6
- Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi Launched 'Bikashita Gaon, Bikashita Odisha' Scheme for Rural Development
- HP Government Initiates North India's First 1-MW Green Hydrogen Plant at Dabhota

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

### IICA & CMAI Sign MoU to Boost India's Carbon Market

On February 04 2025, Gurugram (Haryana) based Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with New Delhi(Delhi) based Carbon Markets Association of India (CMAI) during the IICA-CMAI Masterclass on Global & Indian Carbon Markets as part of the India Climate Week 2025 (February 3 to 7, 2025), held in New Delhi.



- The partnership aims to strengthen carbon markets and support decarbonization in India, while equipping industry professionals, policymakers, and academics with knowledge on navigating India's evolving carbon markets.

#### Key People:

The event was graced by Union Minister **Nitin Jairam Gadkari**, Minister for Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH), **Garima Dadhich**, Head of the School of Business Environment at IICA, and **Manish Dabkara**, President of CMAI.

#### Objective of the MoU:

The CMAI and the IICA will work together on training programs, joint research, conferences, and policy advocacy aimed at advancing carbon markets, low-carbon industrial solutions, and sustainable finance.

- The CMAI will serve as a knowledge partner to IICA.

**i.Training Programs:** Creating and offering courses on carbon markets, low-carbon industrial solutions, and sustainable finance.

**ii.Joint Research:** Collaborating on research and publishing findings on decarbonization strategies and carbon trading mechanisms.

**iii.Workshops and Conferences:** Hosting events to foster discussions among industry leaders, policymakers, and academics.

**iv.Policy Advocacy:** Advocating for regulatory and policy frameworks that support India's net-zero goals.

#### About Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA):

IICA, is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA) .

Director General (DG) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Ajay Bhushan Prasad Pandey

Headquarters – Gurugram (Haryana)

Established – 2008

#### About Carbon Markets Association of India (CMAI):

**i.CMAI** is a non-profit industry group focused on helping India transition to a net-zero future by decarbonizing difficult-to-reduce sectors.





ii. It works with key ministries like Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Ministry of Power (MoP), Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), and NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog.

**President** – Manish Dabkara

**Headquarters** – New Delhi (Delhi)

**Established** – 2022

### **Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Launched a Nationwide Campaign “Watershed Yatra”**

In February 2025, Union Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) launched a nation-wide campaign “**Watershed Yatra**” to encourage people’s participation and create awareness about the watershed development activities carried out under Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (**WDC-PMKSY 2.0**) in project areas.



- During the event, the Union Minister also announced ‘Watershed-Janbhagidari Pratiyogita’ under WDC-PMKSY 2.0 for 2025 and 2026.

#### **Key Participants:**

i. Union Ministers of State (MoS) **Dr. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani** and **Kamlesh Paswan**, MoRD were also present at the event.

ii. Additionally, concerned ministers of State/Union Territory (UT) Governments, senior officials and officials associated with implementation of WDC-PMKSY participated in physical mode in their respective states and launched the yatra simultaneously in their respective states/UTs.

iii. A total of about 800 Gram Panchayats (GPs) and **over 1 lakh people** participated in the Watershed Yatra launch program.

#### **About Watershed Yatra:**

i. The campaign will consist of van movements for around **60 to 90 days** across 805 projects, which is estimated to cover 6,673 GPs including 13,587 villages, in 26 states and 2 UTs.

ii. Various activities will be undertaken during the Watershed Yatra such as: Bhoomi Poojan of New Works, Lokarpan of Completed Works, Watershed Mahotsav, Watershed ki Panchayat, Awards and Recognitions to the Watershed Margdarshaks in projects, Bhumi-Jal Pitch and Shramdan, among others, will promote the message of sustainable resource management to the common people.

ii. Under the activity of **Watershed ki Panchayat**, experts from diverse fields will discuss about sustainable soil and water management practices and **around 8,000 individuals** having contributed in implementation of WDC-PMKSY works in different project areas will be honoured.

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iii. The Department of Land Resources (DoLR), MoRD, has developed a Learning Management System (**LMS**) on Watershed Development and hosted on its website, which has also been linked to 'MY Bharat' web-portal for further engagement of youth.

- A certificate will be issued to participating youths, which will encourage them to participate in Shramdaan activities, strengthening community participation in watershed projects.

#### About Watershed-Janbhagidari Pratiyogita:

- i. It is a unique model based on the principles of community-led watershed management, incorporating 'Public-Private-People Partnership (**4Ps**)'.
- ii. Under this initiative, the work done in the project areas through government funding and public participation will be assessed at the state level and the projects for their remarkable work will be awarded with an additional incentive of **Rs 20 lakh per project**.
- iii. The initiative has been assigned **Rs 70.80 crore**, which is estimated to benefit 177 projects annually.
  - The evaluation process for this year's competition will be done in the month of April 2025.

#### About WDC-PMKSY 2.0:

- i. It is a sub-component of PMSKY, which was initially launched as the Integrated Watershed Management Programme (**IWMP**) in 2009-10 and later integrated as the WDC-PMKSY in 2015-16.
  - The scheme is being implemented by DoLR, MoRD, which aims to develop degraded and rain-fed areas of the country, by undertaking watershed development projects in an integrated approach.
- ii. In 2021, the Government of India (GoI) introduced WDC-PMKSY 2.0 for the project period of 2021-2026, with revised target to rejuvenate **49.50 lakh hectares (ha)** of degraded land and with budget outlay of Rs 8,314 crore.
- iii. In January 2025, MoRD approved **56** new watershed development projects under WDC-PMKSY 2.0 with estimated cost of Rs 700 crores. These projects will be undertaken in 10 best performing states: Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Odisha, Karnataka, among others.

**Note:** 1,150 watershed development projects covering an area of about 50 lakh ha have been sanctioned in 2021-22 at a cost of Rs 12,303 crores under WDC-PMKSY 2.0.

#### About Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD):

**Union Minister-** Shivraj Singh Chauhan (Constituency- Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh, MP)

**Minister of State (MoS)-** Chandra Shekhar Pemmasani (Constituency- Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, AP) and Kamlesh Paswan (Constituency- Bansaon, Uttar Pradesh, UP)

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### Panama Becomes 1st Latin American Nation to Exit China's BRI

In February 2025, the President of Panama, **José Raúl Mulino Quintero** announced that Panama would not renew its participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative (**BRI**), making it the **1st Latin American** nation to withdraw from the global infrastructure program.

- This decision follows the visit of the United States of America's (USA) Secretary of State **Marco Antonio Rubio**, during which Panama faced pressure over its ties with China.
- Panama joined the BRI in **2017**, but the initiative faced growing criticism, regarding the high costs of projects and the financial strain of repaying loans by other countries.

**Note:** India strongly opposed the CPEC due to its route passing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (**PoK**), a region of India.

#### About Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):

- i. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched by China's President **Xi Jinping** in 2013, is a global infrastructure development and investment project aimed at enhancing Beijing's (China) global influence.



- The initiative seeks to establish extensive networks of land and sea routes that connect Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa, and Europe.

**ii.Global Reach:** The BRI involves over **140 countries** and regions. China, as a result, became a major trading partner for many countries, leading the world in total trade volume and a destination for global investment.

**iii.Flagship Project:** The most prominent BRI project is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (**CPEC**), a USD 60 billion venture linking **Gwadar Port** of Balochistan region in Pakistan to Xinjiang province in China.

- The **3,000 kilometer** (km) long CPEC encompasses a variety of infrastructure projects, including roads, railways, and energy developments since 2013.

**iv.**In 2023, **Italy** also withdrew from the BRI amid the USA concerns about China's expanding economic influence.

#### **About Panama:**

**President-** José Raúl Mulino Quintero

**Capital-** Panama City

**Currency-** Panamanian Balboa (**PAB**)

### **UNICEF Releases National Roadmap for Child & Adolescent Road Safety in India**

On February 4 2025, the United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**), in collaboration with the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre(**WHOCC**) for Injury Prevention and Safety launched a 'National Roadmap to address Road Traffic Injuries (RTIs) among children and adolescents in India' at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (**NIMHANS**) in Bengaluru (Karnataka).

- RTIs are the leading cause of death of children and adolescents, with **10%** of all road crash fatalities in India.
- The roadmap aims for a multi-sectoral action plan addressing road safety management, vehicular regulations, school safety initiatives and enhanced post-crash care.

**i.**On average, 45 children under 18 years old, lose their lives in road crashes daily, with 16,443 fatalities in 2022 alone. **5 million children** suffer non-fatal injuries requiring hospitalization each year.

**ii.**Between 2011 and 2022, approximately 1.98 lakh children and adolescents lost their lives in road crashes. **75%** of fatalities were among **14-17** year-olds. Head injuries are the leading cause of death in child road crashes, with **50%** of deaths occurring at the scene.

**iii.**Unsafe road conditions, lack of helmet use, and low adoption of Child Restraint Systems (**CRS**) contribute to the crisis.

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iv. Over half of safety-rated cars in India have a child-occupant safety rating of 3 stars or less. Only **20%** of large government hospitals have pediatric Intensive Care Unit (ICU) facilities.

**Note:** NIMHANS is planning to set up a polytrauma center in the North of Bengaluru, which will be a state-of-art Level 1 trauma centre.

### India Featured in UN's Honour Roll for Timely Payment of Regular Budget Assessments

In February 2025, The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations (UN-PMI) in New York announced that India has once again been featured in the UN's '**Honour Roll**' of 35 member states who have paid their regular budget assessments in full within the 30-day period specified in the financial regulations of the UN.

- According to the UN Committee on Contributions, as of January 31, 2025, India contributed **USD 37.64 million** to the 2025 UN Regular Budget.
- The UN Regular Budget is approved by UN General Assembly (UNGA) in December each year.
- Each member state is assessed based on the scale of assessment approved by UNGA, and corresponding payment notes are issued by UN in early January each year.

## BANKING & FINANCE

### 'The 1% Club' Becomes First Finfluencer Firm to Get SEBI RIA license

In February 2025, **The 1% Club**, a financial advisory startup founded by internet personality Sharan Hegde, became the **first** finfluencer-led company to obtain a Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) license from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).



- It aims to disrupt India's wealth management market by offering scalable solutions, including stock recommendations, thematic portfolios, small cases, and high-yielding debt solutions in the future.

#### Key Points:

- i. The 1% Club is now authorized to offer personalized financial planning services, which were previously launched under its Personal Chief Financial Officer (CFO) division.
  - The division currently manages assets worth **Rs.750 crore** (approximately USD 90 million) in assets under advisory (AUA).
- ii. The RIA license, granted after a thorough 6-month evaluation, positions the company to expand its tech-driven, low-cost advisory solutions.
- iii. The 1% Club aims to expand its advisory team from the current 40 members to major cities across India, which is expected to further solidify its presence in the market.
  - With a current membership base of 85,000 individuals, the company plans to launch more SEBI-approved investment products.
- iv. The firm's workshops, such as the "Money School," have already impacted 250,000 users. With the RIA license, The 1% Club can further monetize its advisory services, focusing on the growing retail investing market in India.



## Criteria for RIA License:

**i.Entity Type:** The firm must be a company or Limited Liability Partnership (LLP).

**ii.Qualification:** At least one director or partner must have a minimum of a graduate degree in any discipline from a recognized university.

- Additionally, professional qualifications like Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) or Master of Business Administration (MBA) (with a specialization in finance) may be considered.

**iii.Certification:** Individuals providing advisory services must have passed the National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM)-Series-X-A: Investment Adviser (Level 1) Examination.

**iv.Net Worth:** The firm must have a minimum net worth of **Rs.25 lakh** to register as an RIA with the SEBI.

**Note:** As of January 2025, there are only 1,300 RIAs in India.

## About The 1% Club:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)– Sharan Hegde

**Headquarters**– Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Established**– 2022

## NaBFID Extends Rs 2,000 crore Loan to Blackstone-backed Data Centre

In February 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based state-owned National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) announced that it has extended **Rs 2,000 crore** loan to Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based **Gramercy Techpark Private Limited**, backed by New York (the United States of America, USA)-based alternative investment management company Blackstone Inc., for setting up of **120 MegaWatt (MW)** data centre at Mahape in Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra.



- This will be the second such data centre by Gramercy in New Mumbai where the construction is expected to start in mid of 2025.

## Significance of Data Centres:

**i.**Data centres help in catering the computing and storage infrastructure demand, which is driven by two main factors: enterprises are rapidly shifting their businesses to digital platforms; increased accessibility of high-speed data has led to increase in internet usage.

**ii.**Also, the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which requires higher computational power and low latency than conventional cloud computing functions will also provide a boost to the data centre demand in India.

## Investment Projection for Data Centres:

**i.**The debt to equity ratio for such data centre projects is about **80:20**. Such projects are capital intensive and requires highly automated set-up.

**ii.**As per Mumbai based credit rating agency CRISIL Ratings Limited, to meet the rising demand for data centres, an investment of **Rs 55,000 crore to Rs 65,000 crore** is required over the next 3 financial years (FYs), mainly towards land and building, power equipment and cooling solutions.

## Other Key Points:

- i. In February 2025, NaBFID announced to raise **Rs 5,000 crore** through 15-year bonds at a cut-off rate of **7.25%**.
- ii. Also, the government-owned Power Finance Corporation Limited (**PFC**) raised Rs 3,950 crore via bonds which had an expected maturity time period of 10 and 20 years, with cut-off rates of 7.24% and 7.25%, respectively.

### About National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID):

It was notified as a Public Financial Institution (PFI) by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA) under Companies Act, 2013 in September 2024.

**Chairman-** Kundapur Vaman (K.V.) Kamath

**Headquarters-** Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Established-** 2021

## Beacon Launches India Bill Pay for NRIs in Canada

On February 5 2025, Beacon, a fintech firm on financial services for immigrants in Toronto (Canada), launched '**India Bill Pay**', a service that allows Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to pay bills directly in India using **Canadian dollars** from their **Beacon Money account** through the Beacon Money application(app).

- This first-of-its-kind service is designed to simplify bill payments for immigrants, in collaboration with Bharat Connect (formerly Bharat Bill Payment System, BBPS) and Mumbai (Maharashtra) based YES Bank Limited.
- With this launch, Beacon becomes the **1st** North American company to integrate with Bharat Connect.

i. Beacon's India Bill Pay enables NRIs to pay over 21,000 Indian billers, including utilities, loans, school fees, and hospital charges.

ii. This process is seamless, secure, and uses the Rupee Drawing Arrangement (**RDA**), regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (**RBI**).

iii. The benefits include **100%** digital Know Your Customer (KYC) and onboarding in 10 minutes, auto-fetch bill amounts with timely payment reminders.

## RBI's Digital Payments Index Increases to 465.33 as of September 2024

In January 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (**RBI**) revealed that its Digital Payments Index (**DPI**) has increased from 445.5 in March 2024 **to 465.33** as of September 2024, this marks an **11.11%** increase Year-on-Year (Y-o-Y).

- This increase in RBI's DPI was mainly driven by growth in payment infrastructure and payment performance across the country over the period.

### **About RBI-DPI:**

i. RBI had been publishing the composite RBI-DPI since **January 1, 2021**, with March 2018 as the base period (DPI score for March 2018 is set at 100). The index monitors the extent of digital payment adoption across India.

ii. The index is based on **5 key parameters**: payment enablers (25%); payment infrastructure- Demand-side factor (10%); payment infrastructure -Supply-side factor (15%); payment performance (45%) and consumer centricity (5%).

- Each of these parameters has sub-parameters which, in turn consist of various measurable indicators.

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

### NABARD Approves 127 Projects Worth Rs.903.21 Crore in Himachal Pradesh

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned 127 projects totaling Rs.903.21 crore for Himachal Pradesh (HP) in the fiscal year 2024-25. Chief Minister (CM) of HP Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced this development during a meeting with Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)s from Kangra, Kullu, and Kinnaur districts of HP to discuss budget priorities for 2025-26.



#### Breakdown of Approved Projects:

- **Public Works Department (PWD):** 50 MLA-priority schemes amounting to Rs.412.75 crore.
- **Jal Shakti Vibhag:** 23 schemes totaling Rs.179.07 crore.
- Rs.70 crore fund allocated for the Palampur city's beautification, Rs.135 crore for sewerage schemes, and funds for the construction of a heliport in the region.

#### Key Initiatives:

- **Dairy Processing Plant:** Establishment of a 1.5 lakh liter per day capacity dairy processing plant at Dagwar in Kangra district.
- **Electric Bus Charging Stations:** Installation of 96 charging stations to promote eco-friendly transportation.

#### Future Plans:

The state government aims to secure approval for additional MLA-priority projects from NABARD by March 2025. An allocation of Rs.1,087.77 crore under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) for 2024-25 has been made, reflecting a 5.28% increase from the previous year.

## ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

### RBI Approves Findi to acquire 100% stake in TCPSL for Rs.330 crore

In February 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the Mumbai (Maharashtra) based Tata Communications Payment Solutions Limited (TCPSL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Communications that operates white label Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) in India to sell its **100% stake** to Transaction Solutions International (TSI), the Indian subsidiary of Australian fintech company Findi.

- This acquisition strengthens Findi's presence in India's financial services sector, enhancing its efforts to expand ATM access, particularly for underbanked communities.
- Announced in November 2024, the **Rs 330 crore** (USD 59.1 million) acquisition includes an additional performance-based payment of up to Rs 75 crore (USD 13.4 million), depending on interchange rate changes.

i. With this acquisition, Findi gains TCPSL's white-label ATM platform, White label ATM (WLA) license, and payments switch, adding 3,000 ATMs to its network. This expands its total to over 12,000 ATMs making it one of Asia's largest ATM operators.

ii. TSI will deploy these ATMs at 180,000 FindiPay and BankIT merchant locations and integrate them into Indicash franchises, enhancing financial access across India.

**Note:** TCPSL launched India's first white-label ATM network, **Indicash**, in 2013 to support RBI's goal of expanding ATM access. It remains one of India's largest white-label ATM operators.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Russia Launches 'Soyuz-2v Rocket' Carrying Military Satellites into Orbit

On February 5 2025, a **Soyuz-2.1v** rocket carrying multiple payloads was successfully launched from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome in the Arkhangelsk Region, Russia. This mission was carried out in the interest of the Russian Ministry of Defence and aimed at deploying military satellites into orbit. The **Soyuz-2.1v** is a light-class rocket, designed for such tasks.



- This launch was conducted by the **Russian Aerospace Forces** (Vozdushno-kosmicheskiye sily, VKS), with support from their space troops.
- This launch was the 13th and final mission of the lightweight Soyuz-2 variant.

#### Key Points:

i. Soyuz-2.1v rocket is a light-class two-stage launch vehicle derived from the Soyuz-2.1b model.

The rocket, developed by the Progress Rocket and Space Center, was designed to deploy spacecraft into low circular and elliptical orbits.

The mission utilized a **3-stage** version of the Soyuz-2-1v, featuring the Volga upper stage, which was set to place the payload into an orbit with an inclination of **82.4 degrees** toward the Equator- identical to the rocket's first mission in 2013.

ii. After the launch, the Volga space tug, serving as the 3rd stage, was scheduled to be deorbited approximately **12 hours later**, with the reentry set for a Southern section of the Pacific Ocean.

iii. The successful deployment of these satellites further enhances Russia's space capabilities, bolstering its defence sector and ensuring strategic superiority.

**Note:** Between 2006 to 2024, a total of 72 Soyuz-2.1b rocket launches were conducted, placing 665 spacecraft into near-Earth orbits and various flight trajectories.

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**About Russia:**

**President-** Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin

**Prime Minister (PM)**– Mikhail Vladimirovich Mishustin

**Capital-** Moscow

**Currency-** Russian Ruble (**RUB**)

**US Navy Tests HELIOS Laser Weapon to Strengthen Naval Operations**

In February 2025, the United States Navy(USN) announced that it has successfully tested the High-Energy Laser with Integrated Optical Dazzler and Surveillance (**HELIOS**) system aboard the “**The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Preble (DDG-88)** in the middle of the ocean.



- The test was conducted in 2024 aims to assess and confirm the functionality, performance, and effectiveness of the HELIOS system against an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle(UAV) target.
- The United States of America’s (USA) Department of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E) annual report states that the Center for Countermeasures (CCM) assisted the USN by gathering imagery and data to verify the functionality and performance of HELIOS.

**About HELIOS Laser Weapon:**

i.The HELIOS system was developed for the USA by **Lockheed Martin**, an American defense and aerospace manufacturer.

ii.It is a high-powered laser weapon designed to neutralize threats such as fast attack boats, drones, and missiles. It employs two modes of attack: hard kill and soft kill.

- Hard Kill: Destroys the target directly using high-intensity laser beams
- Soft Kill: Disrupts the target’s electronic components to disable it

iii.It uses a **60-kilowatt (kW)** high-energy laser, with the potential for upgrades to reach between 120 kW and 150 kW.

iv.It features deep magazine, low cost per kill, speed-of-light delivery, and precise targeting.

v.Unlike traditional weapons, HELIOS functions almost silently and invisibly, with the destruction of the target being the only visible effect.

vi.Integrated into the USN’s Aegis Combat System, it functions as a key component of the ship’s broader defense network.

**SpinLaunch Launches Satellites Into Space Without Rocket Fuel**

SpinLaunch, a California-based company, has developed an innovative method to launch satellites into **low Earth orbit** without using traditional rocket fuel. Their system employs a ground-based, **electric-powered kinetic launch mechanism**, essentially a massive rotating arm, to catapult satellites into space. This approach aims to reduce both the cost and environmental impact of satellite launches.

I.The technology involves placing a satellite inside a vacuum-sealed centrifuge, where it is rapidly spun to high speeds before being released through a launch tube, propelling it toward space. Once the satellite



reaches a certain altitude, it can activate its own propulsion system to achieve the desired orbit.

ii. SpinLaunch has successfully tested its kinetic launch system as a fuel-free alternative to rockets.

Supported by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Airbus, and the United States (U.S.) Department of Defense, it plans to launch satellite constellations by 2026 for sustainable spaceflight.

iii. SpinLaunch aims to deploy satellite constellations into **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)**, offering a cost-effective and eco-friendly solution for launching communication, Earth-monitoring, and defense satellites.

iv. This method offers a promising alternative to conventional rocket launches, potentially making space access more affordable and environmentally friendly.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SpinLaunch is Jonathan Yaney.

## SPORTS

### **Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers Wins 6th 'Men's HIL 2024-25' Title**

In February 2025, **Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers** won the **first ever** title of the 'Men's Hockey India League 2024-25(HIL 2024-25)' by defeating **Hyderabad Toofans** 4-3 in the final tournament held at the Birsa Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela, Odisha.



- The 6th edition of Men's HIL 2024-25 tournament, featured 8 teams, was held from December 28, 2024, to February 1, 2025.
- The Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers for the 2024-25 season were led by Captain **Rupinder Pal Singh**, while the Hyderabad Toofans were led by Captain **Sumit Walmiki**.

#### **Prize Money:**

With this victory, Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers were awarded **Rs 3 crore** as the prize money, while the runners-up, Hyderabad Toofans, received **Rs 2 crore**.

#### **Highlights:**

i. **Jugraj Singh** scored a hat-trick (25', 32', 35') and Sam Lane added a goal in the 54th minute(m) to secure the title for Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers.

ii. **Gonzalo Peillat** found the back of the net twice (9', 39') and Amandeep Lakra scored once (26') for

Hyderabad Toofans, but their efforts fell short in the 4-3 defeat.

### Awards:

- Top Scorer of the Tournament 2024-25: Jugraj Singh (Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers)
- Player of the Tournament 2024-25: Sukhjeet Singh (Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers)
- Best Goalkeeper of the Tournament 2024-25: Bikramjit Singh (Hyderabad Toofans)
- Upcoming Player of the Tournament 2024-25: Arshdeep Singh (Hyderabad Toofans)
- Fairplay Award (Team) 2024-25: Uttar Pradesh (UP) Rudras

### About Men's Hockey India League (HIL):

i. The Hockey India League is a premier club-based hockey tournament organized by Hockey India, with participation from both Indian and International players.

ii. The **1st edition** of the Men's Hockey India League (**HIL**) was held in 2013 and was held every year till 2017 and resumed with the 6th edition of the Men's HIL in Rourkela.

- The Kalinga Lancers won the 5th edition of the Men's HIL in 2017.

**Note:** In January 2025, **Odisha Warriors** won the **1st edition** of 'Women's HIL 2024-25' by defeating Soorma Hockey Club **2-1** at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Munda AstroTurf Hockey Stadium in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

### About Hockey India :

**President-** Dr. Dilip Kumar Tirkey

**Headquarters-** New Delhi (Delhi)

**Founded-** 2009

### Romania tennis player Simona Halep announces retirement

On February 4, 2025, **Romania's Simona Halep**, a two-time Grand Slam champion and former world number one in WTA, announced her retirement from professional tennis at the age of 33.

- She announced her retirement from professional tennis, following a 6-1, 6-1 first-round defeat to Lucia Bronzetti at the 2025 Transylvania Open in Romania

### About Simona Halep

i. In 2017, achieved **World No. 1** in the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) rankings

ii. She won two Grand Slam singles titles, winning the 2018 French Open by defeating Sloane Stephens and the 2019 Wimbledon Championship with a victory over Serena Williams.

- She finished as the runner-up in three Grand Slam finals: the 2018 Australian Open, as well as the French Open in 2014 and 2017.

iii. Throughout her career, she secured 24 WTA singles titles and earned over USD 40 million in prize money. At the time of her retirement, she was ranked No. 870 in the world.

iv. In the 2022 United States (US) Open, Simona Halep tested positive for Roxadustat following her first-round loss. Initially handed a four-year ban, her suspension was later reduced to nine months by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in 2024.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation 2025 – February 6

The United Nations (UN's) International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (**FGM**) is observed annually on **February 6** across the globe to raise awareness and amplify global efforts to eliminate the harmful practice of FGM. This day serves as a platform for stakeholders to celebrate progress, advocate for the abandonment of FGM, and continue efforts to protect girls and women from this violation of their rights.



- 6 February 2025 marks the **14th observance** of UN recognised International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM.
- The theme of International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM 2025 is: **“Stepping Up the Pace: Strengthening Alliances and Building Movements to End Female Genital Mutilation”**.

### Background:

i. On February 6, 2003, **Stella Obasanjo**, the First Lady of Nigeria and a prominent advocate for the Campaign Against FGM, made the official declaration of **“Zero Tolerance for FGM”** in Africa at a conference organized by the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC).

- The first International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM was observed on **February 6, 2003**.

ii. Following this, February 6 was officially recognized by the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM.

iii. On **December 20, 2012**, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution **A/RES/67/146**, declaring February 6th each year as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation.

### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

i. FGM refers to the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural or non-medical reason and is referred to as a harmful traditional practice.

ii. FGM is most commonly performed on girls between the ages of **infancy** and **15 years old**, although it can also occur in adulthood.

iii. In many communities, it is performed in infancy, childhood, or before puberty and in some countries, it may be carried out on newborns or girls as young as **5-9 years old**.

### Global Impact of FGM:

i. Over **230 million girls** and women worldwide have survived FGM, which causes severe physical, psychological, and social harm, with consequences that last a lifetime.

ii. Each year, about 4 million girls are at risk of undergoing FGM, and this number is projected to rise to **4.4 million** in **2025**.

iii. **Africa** bears the heaviest burden, with over **144 million** cases of FGM, followed by **Asia** with **80 million** and the **Middle East** with **6 million** cases.

iv. Every year, **27 million** girls are at risk of becoming victims, and if action isn't taken, an additional 27 million girls may endure FGM by 2030.

v. At least 200 million girls and women have undergone some form of FGM, with 44 million girls under 14 being the most affected.

vi. Countries with the highest prevalence of FGM among girls **aged 15 to 49** include Somalia (98%), Guinea (97%), and Djibouti (93%).



### Global Joint Program on Eliminating FGM:

- i. Since 2008, the United Nations Population Fund (**UNFPA**) and United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**) Joint Programme has spearheaded the largest global effort to eliminate FGM, focusing on 17 countries in Africa and the Middle East.
- ii. Phase IV, launched in 2022, intensifies the push for FGM elimination by 2030 which targets strengthening local efforts and policy frameworks.
- iii. In 2008, the World Health Assembly (WHA) passed resolution **WHA61.16**, calling for unified action across all sectors to address FGM.
- iv. In partnership with the End FGM European Network and the United States of America (USA) End FGM/C Network, a global report was published in 2020, highlighting the ongoing threat of FGM in at least **92 countries**. A new update to this report will be released on **25 February 2025**.

### About United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA):

It began operating in 1969 as the United Nations Fund Population Activities.

Executive Director (**ED**)– Dr. Natalia Kanem

**Headquarters**– New York, United States of America (USA)

## STATE NEWS

### Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi Launched 'Bikashita Gaon, Bikashita Odisha' Scheme for Rural Development

In February 2025, the Chief Minister (CM) of Odisha, **Mohan Charan Majhi** launched the 'Bikashita Gaon, Bikashita Odisha(**BGBO**) Scheme' with a budget of **Rs 5,000 crore** for five years for the rural infrastructural development project in Odisha.



- The scheme aims to enhance the basic infrastructure of villages and improving connectivity in rural areas.

### About 'Bikashita Gaon, Bikashita Odisha(BGBO)' Scheme:

- i. The BGBO scheme aims to carry out development activities in all 53,845 villages of Odisha, with an annual allocation of Rs 1,000 crore, in the next five years between the Financial Years(FY) 2024-25 and 2028-29.
  - The Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department, Government of Odisha, is the responsible authority to clarify and modify the guidelines when needed.
- ii. Up to 35% of the total funds can be used for road projects, 40% for blocks under the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (**ITDA**) and a maximum of 5% for new innovative community projects.
- iv. The scheme will focus on linking unconnected roads and improving village roads, while also covering civic services, sports, education, and small-scale tourism to enhance rural living standards.
- v. The initiative supports the Odisha government's goal of becoming a developed state by **2036** and aligns with the national vision of a 'Viksit Bharat by 2047.'

**About Odisha:**

Chief Minister (CM) – Mohan Charan Majhi

Governor – Hari Babu Kambhampati

Capital – Bhubaneswar

Wildlife Sanctuary – Satkosia Gorge Wildlife Sanctuary (Angul)

**HP Government Initiates North India's First 1-MW Green Hydrogen Plant at Dabhota**

On February 5 2025, Himachal Pradesh(HP) Chief Minister(CM) **Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu** laid the foundation stone for North India's **first 1-megawatt (MW) green hydrogen plant** in Dabhota, Nalagarh Tehsil, Solan district.



- The Green Hydrogen Plant is a collaborative effort between the Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (HPPCL) and Oil India Limited(OIL), with an estimated investment of **Rs 9.04 crore**.
- This initiative aligns with HP's ambitious goal to become India's first Green Energy State by March 2026.

**Project Specifications:**

**i.Location:** The plant will be established on a 4,000 square meter(m2) site in Dabhota.

**ii.Technology:** Utilizing renewable energy(RE) sources, the plant will produce hydrogen through electrolysis, employing an alkaline potassium hydroxide solution as the electrolyte.

- This method aims to minimize Greenhouse gas emissions(GHG), contributing to a cleaner energy ecosystem.

**iii.Production Capacity:** The facility is designed to produce approximately 423 kilograms(kg) of green hydrogen daily, amounting to an annual output of 1,54,395 kilograms.

- Each kg of hydrogen production will require about 13 liters(l) of water, sourced from underground reserves via tube wells, and will consume approximately 52.01 units of electricity.

**iv.Strategic Significance:**

The green hydrogen produced will serve as a clean industrial fuel, offering a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels in sectors such as transportation, manufacturing, and energy storage.

**Note:** In April 2023, the HP Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with OIL , focusing on the development of solar energy, green hydrogen, geothermal energy, and compressed biogas(CBG).

**About Himachal Pradesh(HP):**

Chief Minister(CM)- Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu

Governor-Shiv Pratap Shukla

Capital – Shimla (Summer), Dharamshala (Winter)

National Park(NP) – Great Himalayan NP, Pin Valley NP, Khirganga NP

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