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June 2026

Remarkable 12 Years of Narendra Modi Government

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CONTENTS

Manipur's Crisis: External Infiltration, Political Instability, and Poppy Farming's Impact on Youth Education and Mindset

Manipur faces a compound crisis driven by external infiltration, political instability, and illicit poppy farming. The porous 400 km India-Myanmar border has facilitated illegal infiltration, drug trafficking, and arms smuggling, intensified by Myanmar's 2021 military coup and ongoing conflict. The National Investigation Agency revealed that the "China-Myanmar module" of NSCN-IM supported banned outfits to infiltrate India, linking external politics to internal instability.

Poppy cultivation remains a critical issue despite recent declines. According to the Manipur Remote Sensing Applications Centre (MARSAC), cultivation dropped from 16,632.29 acres (2022-23) to 11,288.07 acres (2023-24), a 32.13% decrease. Between 2017-2024, Manipur destroyed 19,135 acres of poppy plantations. However, illicit fields still exist in hill districts like Chandel, Churachandpur, and Senapati. The drug trade's monetary value was estimated at $19.88 million in 2022 (0.7% of Manipur's GDP), with heroin seizures worth US$62 million in the same year.

Manipur's youth face severe unemployment: 22.9% (ages 15-29) versus the national average of 9.9%. This desperation drives participation in poppy farming, where cartels pay Rs 500-1,000 per day. Corruption and bribery permeate the drug trade, with enforcement officials allegedly compromised. The conflict has forced thousands of youth to abandon studies temporarily to protect villages, compromising educational ambitions.

Recent mindset shifts show resilience-youth increasingly pursue odd jobs and street ventures without social stigma amid economic stress. Civil groups in Kangpokpi resolved to ban poppy cultivation from 2026, reflecting public will. However, real economic alternatives remain essential; enforcement alone cannot stop cultivation when farmers lack viable income options.

— **Vijeet Kumar,** *Kshetra Media Pramukh, Purvottar Bharat, SJM*

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Quote-Unquote

By combining G7 capital, India's talent, and the ownership of Global South countries, we may also consider establishing an International Mobilisation Partnership for Accelerating Connectivity and Trade (IMPACT).

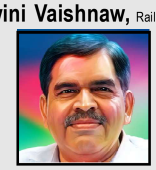
Narendra Modi, PM, Bharat

We have enough buffer stocks. Since last year, we've maintained stocks, so there shouldn't be a food shortage. But for farmers, it will have an impact, because this year's income will be stressed out.

Nirmala Sitharaman, Finance Minister, Bharat

Many innovations are also coming up. Innovations in terms of power requirement, water, and using certain water-cooling methods, which reduce water requirement by about 70%.

Ashwini Vaishnaw, Railway Minister, Bharat



We are forced to say that the killing of innocent Indian seafarers is not merely a bilateral issue—it is a challenge to the rule-based international order. Allowing such acts would erode the sanctity of international law and endanger maritime security globally.

Ashwani Mahajan, National Co-Convener, SJM

Why Did the US Trade Delegation Return Empty-Handed?

For quite some time, negotiators from both the US and India have maintained that the bilateral trade agreement between the two nations is nearing finalization. Yet, it appears that an impasse persists regarding this matter. The US Trade Representative (USTR), who had been in India for several days to finalize the agreement, returned to the US this week empty handed. This development has become a topic of discussion in the media. It is worth noting that India and the US had previously signed a framework for the trade agreement in February. Following the signing of that framework, statements from the US administration created significant confusion, as it contradicted India's stated position. Opposition parties and a section of the media capitalized on this situation to put the government in the dock. A primary point of contention was the US side's repeated claim that India had promised not to purchase oil from Russia-an issue, not even mentioned in the framework. Furthermore, the US side claimed India had committed to purchasing goods and services worth $500 billion from the US over the next five years, whereas the framework had merely expressed an intention to make such purchases. Additionally, the US side raised issues regarding agricultural imports that went beyond the scope of the framework. Naturally, while it was not always appropriate for the Indian government to refute every claim, even when it was false-given diplomatic sensitivities-it did reiterate its stance from time to time. Nevertheless, these issues led to unwarranted criticism if the government in the Indian media, with allegations that the government was capitulating to the US at the expense of national interest.

Barely less than two weeks, after the signing of framework of bilateral trade agreement between India and the US, the US Supreme Court declared the arbitrary tariffs (reciprocal tariff) imposed by President Trump unconstitutional. Consequently, trade experts believe that, in light of the Supreme Court's decision, the consensus reached on the trade framework between the two nations has lost its significance. When the interim framework for a trade agreement was signed in February, the US had imposed high 'reciprocal tariffs' on imports from several countries. Under the framework, the tariff burden on India was expected to drop to around 18 percent, whereas many competing nations would have faced relatively higher tariffs. This would have granted Indian exporters a significant competitive advantage in the US market. Therefore, renegotiation has become essential. This argument carries considerable weight. It raises a question for India: how can one rely on benefits that the US can no longer guarantee? From India's perspective, the proposed trade agreement now appears more like a one-sided market-access arrangement rather than a balanced trade deal. This is why Commerce Minister, Piyush Goyal, maintains that while the India-US trade agreement is nearly ready, it cannot be signed unless India secures a competitive advantage over other nations.

As a result, the economic rationale behind the February framework has fundamentally shifted. The assumptions upon which the framework was built no longer hold true. Therefore, unless the terms are renegotiated to reflect the changed circumstances, the previous interim framework can be considered largely obsolete, as it fails to deliver the expected special benefits to India. Despite the framework agreement of February 2026, several issues remained unresolved. These include access to agricultural markets, dairy imports, tariff reductions on automobiles and industrial goods, digital trade and data governance, intellectual property concerns, 'rules of origin,' and issues regarding the movement of professionals and visas. Notably, the US seeks tariff reductions from India on automobiles, agricultural products, dairy items, medical devices, and alcohol. India remains firm against lowering these tariffs for two reasons: the livelihoods of people in the agriculture and dairy sectors, and strategic industrial development. Regarding dairy, a specific issue involves the practice of feeding animal-derived feed to livestock-often referred to as 'non-vegetarian milk'-which India cannot accept due to cultural and religious reasons.

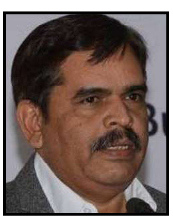
Digital trade and data-related regulations are also significant stumbling blocks in the agreement. India views data as a strategic resource and is unwilling to compromise its future policy-making sovereignty, whereas the US opposes data localization efforts, and advocates for the free cross-border flow of data. It is worth considering whether India-poised to become a future digital superpower-can agree to such terms. The US seeks stronger patent protections to benefit its pharmaceutical and technology industries, while India aims to ensure the continued availability of affordable medicines and maintain flexibility within patent laws to foster the growth of its own technology sector.

Furthermore, the US administration has been consistently tightening its visa and immigration laws, sparking significant resentment not only within the Indian government but also among the general public. Yet, the draft trade agreement made no mention whatsoever of these issues. The US President and administration have frequently made statements regarding the imposition of sanctions on India for purchasing Russian oil, as well as granting permission for such purchases; this creates the impression that the decision to buy oil from Russia hinges on the US's discretion. However, the reality is quite different. In fact, oil purchases from Russia so far in 2026 have significantly exceeded those during the same period in 2025; specifically, in June, India is expected to import 2.55 million tonnes of oil daily from Russia-a figure that not only sets a record but also accounts for nearly half of India's total oil imports. While India has been reaping substantial economic benefits from these purchases, the US's stance on the matter is simultaneously becoming a hurdle in trade agreements between the two nations.

Twelve Years of Modi Government: Why He Continues To Be Invincible

On May 26, 2014, Narendra Modi took the oath as Prime Minister, leading the first non-Congress government, after Bharatiya Janata Party secured an absolute majority. Since independence, India has experienced varying degrees of economic growth, although the growth rates in several smaller nations with similar initial conditions were significantly higher. Consequently, while India's economic growth rate hovered between 3 and 4 percent during the first three decades post-independence, small nations in West Asia—and elsewhere—recorded much faster economic growth alongside technological advancement. While India was categorized as a developing nation, these smaller countries were gaining renown as "Asian Tigers."

Even rate of poverty reduction was not very impressive. Though, there were earlier efforts to assess poverty in India, the very first assessment of poverty, based on a specific framework was conducted only in 1973–74; when the Planning Commission introduced the concept of the poverty line, according to which, 54.9 percent of the population was estimated to be living below it. Although the definitions of the poverty line evolved over time, as recently as 2012–13, 21.9 percent of the population—amounting to 269.3 million (26.93 crore) people—was still considered to be below the poverty line. Meanwhile, according to the World Bank's definition—which classified those earning less than $1.25 per day in 2012–13 as living under acute—one-third of the world's 1.2 billion poor people, or 400 million, were in India.



India's enhanced stature during present regime, at the global level reflects a more assertive and confident national presence.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

However, by the year 2025, the proportion of the total population living in extreme poverty—based on the World Bank's definition, which was upgraded to US$2.15 per day—has fallen to just 2.3 percent; even under the more updated definition of US$3 per day, the figure is estimated at merely 5.3 percent. This can certainly be considered a major achievement. Yet, today, both in India and globally, there exists a definition of poverty that extends beyond this extreme form, that is, "multidimensional poverty." Measuring this involves ten indicators: two related to education, two to health, and the remaining six covering housing, electricity, sanitation, clean cooking fuel, drinking water, and asset ownership. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Multidimensional Poverty Index dropped from 0.117 to 0.069 in just five years, between 2015–16 and 2019–21. NITI Aayog reports that multidimensional poverty declined from 29.17% in 2013–14 to an estimated 11.28% in 2022–23, marking a reduction of approximately 18 percentage points over the decade.

In other words, it can be said that India has witnessed a significant reduction not only in extreme poverty but also in multidimensional poverty. Generally, many economic experts argue that if the focus shifts to redistribution, as part of poverty-reduction efforts during a period of economic growth, the rate of growth itself might slow down. Therefore, they contend that prioritizing redistribution during phases of economic growth is not advisable. Economists who hold this view—and who are also proponents of free trade and free markets—include not only experts from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund but also tall figured like Prof. Jagdish Bhagwati and his co-author Prof. Arvind Panagariya are in the same league.

Refuting the arguments of such economists, the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not only prevented a decline in India's economic growth rate but has also achieved significant success in alleviating both multidimensional and extreme poverty. Despite massive efforts to reduce poverty at a much faster pace than before—and notwithstanding the setback of a year due to COVID-19—India's real GDP continued to grow at an average annual rate of approximately 7.5 percent during Narendra Modi's tenure.

It is essential to analyze the efforts made by this government to understand and resolve this puzzle. We also need to identify which policies proved effective in reducing inequality and poverty in the country. It’s important to understand that while in the earlier years, the pace of poverty reduction was much slower, how Narendra Modi’s regime could make significant strides in poverty reduction, making growth to be much inclusive than before.

Financial Inclusion

Despite numerous development efforts undertaken between independence and 2014, the country did not witness significant progress in financial inclusion. This is evidenced by the fact that 580 million (58 crore) Jan Dhan accounts were opened between 2014 and 2026. Jan Dhan accounts are zero-balance accounts, meaning no initial deposit is required to open them. It is heartening to note that by June 2026, deposits totaling ?3 lakh crore had accumulated in these Jan Dhan accounts initiated for the poor.

Another dimension of financial inclusion is Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). Previously, a substantial portion of the funds allocated by the government for welfare schemes failed to reach the intended beneficiaries due to corruption. However, following the opening of Jan Dhan accounts, these were linked with Aadhaar (UID) and mobile phone numbers; consequently, the entire welfare allocation is now transferred directly into the beneficiary's account, eliminating any possibility of leakage. This process is known as the 'JAM Trinity'—comprising Jan Dhan accounts, Aadhaar, and mobile connectivity—an achievement India has realized through its own technological prowess.

Darling of Women: Housing, Sanitation, Clean Fuel, Electricity, and Water

A particularly stark reality of the journey from independence until 2014 was that, even in 2014, 123 million people in the country lived in *kutcha* (makeshift/temporary) houses, while 317 million lived in semi-permanent structures. In contrast, over just the last 12 years, 30 million houses have been built in rural areas and 10 million in urban areas, and another 12 million approved/ under construction.

The compulsion to practice open defecation was long considered a major stigma for the nation. It is a matter of satisfaction that since 2014, 128 million toilets have been constructed across the country, effectively resolving the issue of open defecation. Today, the country has achieved near-total electrification, and access to drinking water has reached most regions under the 'Har Ghar Nal Se Jal' (Tap Water in Every Home) scheme. Regarding clean fuel, while there were only 130 million LPG connections in 2014, the figure has now risen to over 340 million; notably, 100 million of these new connections were provided under the 'Ujjwala Yojana,' which supplied free cylinders and gas stoves to women from impoverished backgrounds. Housing, water, electricity, sanitation facilities, and LPG connections represent achievements that have benefited society at large, and the poor in particular. However, women have experienced the greatest empowerment, as access to toilets, water, and LPG connections has brought about a transformative change in the lives of women from underprivileged families.

Not just social infrastructure, which Narendra Modi government has built in the last 12 years, it also has focused on social reforms through legislations, which have changed the lives of the women and that too Muslim women.

For Muslim women in the age group ranging from 15 years to 80 years and even above, were living

[Conitnued on page no. 22]

INDIA'S GROWTH STORY: A Decade of Transformation and the Unfinished Agenda

The Growth Canvas: A Nation on the Move

India in 2026 is a nation in the midst of a profound structural transformation — one that is perhaps without precedent among democracies of comparable size and complexity. The latest MoSPI data, under the new base year series of 2022-23, records real GDP growth of 7.4–7.6 per cent for FY 2025-26, with Q4 clocking 7.8 per cent — making India the fastest-growing major economy in the world for the fourth consecutive year. From a GDP of 1.84 trillion dollars in 2014, India has grown to approximately 4.15 trillion dollars by 2026 — a more than two-fold expansion in dollar terms. The IMF's April 2026 World Economic Outlook projects India at 6.17 trillion dollars by 2030 and the third-largest economy by 2031. These are not statistical artefacts — they reflect genuine productive capacity addition across infrastructure, manufacturing, services and the digital economy.

Yet, honest policy analysis demands that growth be assessed not only in aggregate terms but in its composition, distribution and sustainability. India's growth story in the NDA decade (2014–2024 and beyond) is one of extraordinary achievement in some domains and unfulfilled promise in others. Both must be held simultaneously in view. This article — drawing on MoSPI national accounts, IMF projections, RBI bulletins, World Inequality Database findings, NASSCOM industry data, and NITI Aayog's Viksit Bharat framework — maps the full terrain of India's growth story with the balance that the subject demands.

Physical Infrastructure: The Decade's Defining Achievement

If one domain defines the NDA decade unambiguously, it is the transformation of India's physical infrastructure. National highway construction accelerated from approximately 12 km per day in 2014 to over 28 km per day by 2023,

The Viksit Bharat 2047 goal is within reach. But it demands, above all, the courage of honest and balanced assessment.

Dr. Dhanpat Ram Agarwal

expanding the network from 91,287 km to 1,46,145 km by FY 2023-24. Indian Railways undertook the most ambitious capital investment programme in its 170-year history: the Vande Bharat Express fleet now covers 136 routes; dedicated freight corridors are fundamentally changing goods-movement economics; and 100 per cent broad-gauge electrification — pursued for decades — was achieved in 2024. Operational airports expanded from 74 in 2014 to over 157 by 2024 under the UDAN regional air connectivity scheme, bringing air travel within reach of Tier-2 and Tier-3 India for the first time. The Union Government's capital expenditure, rising from Rs 4.84 lakh crore in FY 2014-15 to Rs 18.82 lakh crore in FY 2023-24 — a near-fourfold increase — has been the primary vehicle of this transformation, with measurable multiplier effects on logistics efficiency, employment and regional connectivity.

Digital Public Infrastructure: A Global Benchmark

India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) stack — the JAM Trinity of Jan Dhan bank accounts, Aadhaar biometric identity and mobile connectivity — has created a governance and financial inclusion architecture that development economists globally now study as a template. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, launched in August 2014, has opened over 53 crore bank accounts, bringing hundreds of millions of previously unbanked citizens into the formal financial system. The Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) architecture, riding on Jan Dhan and Aadhaar, has transferred over Rs 38 lakh crore directly into beneficiary accounts since inception — eliminating intermediary leakage that had historically diverted welfare resources.

The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana — the world's largest government-funded health insurance programme — covers over 55 crore beneficiaries, providing up to Rs 5 lakh annual health coverage to households that previously faced catastrophic out-of-pocket medical expenditure.

The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has become arguably India's most globally admired innovation. In FY 2025-26, UPI processed approximately 170 billion transactions — accounting for roughly 40 per cent of all global retail digital payment transactions. Nations across Southeast Asia, West Asia and the Pacific are adopting or adapting the UPI model. DigiLocker, CoWIN, ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce), and the Account Aggregator framework together constitute a DPI stack that gives India a genuine first-mover advantage in the architecture of the global digital economy. This is not merely a technology achievement — it is a governance revolution that compresses decades of financial inclusion into a single interoperable platform.

Welfare Economy: Housing, Water and Social Security

The NDA decade has witnessed welfare delivery transition from intent to infrastructure at a scale that few democratic governments anywhere have attempted. The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) has constructed over 4 crore pucca houses — the world's largest social housing programme by units built in a decade. For millions of families living in kutcha houses vulnerable to floods, cyclones and disease, a permanent pucca home represents a transformation in quality of life that no GDP metric fully captures. The Jal Jeevan Mission has taken piped water coverage in rural households from 16.8 per cent in 2019 to over 78 per cent by 2026, connecting more than 15 crore rural homes to tap water supply. The Ujjwala Yojana has provided free LPG connections to over 10 crore below-poverty-line families, dramatically reducing indoor air pollution and the burden of firewood collection borne disproportionately by women.

The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) — the world's largest government-funded health insurance programme — covers over 55 crore beneficiaries, providing up to Rs 5 lakh annual health coverage to households that previously faced catastrophic out-of-pocket medical expenditure. Taken together, these programmes represent a tangible and measurable improvement in the floor of living standards for India's most vulnerable citizens — a welfare economy that complements the market economy and is among the NDA decade's most enduring contributions.

Startups, Unicorns and the Innovation Economy

India has emerged as the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world, after the United States and

China. DPIIT-recognised startups have grown from approximately 400 in 2014 to over 1,40,000 by 2026. India now hosts over 115 unicorns — startups valued at 1 billion dollars or more — across fintech, edtech, healthtech, logistics, agritech and SaaS. Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Delhi-NCR, Pune and Mumbai have become genuine global innovation hubs attracting substantial venture capital. The Startup India initiative, the Fund of Funds for Startups managed by SIDBI, and tax incentives for recognised startups have collectively created the institutional scaffolding for this ecosystem.

India's technology ambition is moving decisively beyond services outsourcing. Chandrayaan-3's successful soft landing on the lunar south pole in August 2023 — a world first — demonstrated deep-technology capability at a fraction of comparable missions' cost. The India Semiconductor Mission is attracting global chip manufacturers, with facilities announced by Tata, Micron, and others. The National Quantum Mission (Rs 6,003 crore outlay) and the National AI Mission (Rs 10,372 crore) signal long-term investment in technology sovereignty. These are the building blocks of a future-facing innovation economy.

Chandrayaan-3's successful soft landing on the lunar south pole in August 2023 — a world first — demonstrated deep-technology capability at a fraction of comparable missions' cost.

Soft Power and India's International Repositioning

India's geopolitical standing has been transformed during the NDA decade through a sophisticated multi-dimensional exercise of hard and soft power. The G20 Presidency of 2023 — culminating in the New Delhi Declaration, the historic inclusion of the African Union as a permanent G20 member, and 200-plus ministerial meetings across India — positioned the country as the indispensable voice of the Global South. The operationalisation of the Quad (with the United States, Japan and Australia), the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) announced at G20, and deepening strategic partnerships with the EU, UK, UAE, and ASEAN nations have diversified India's external relationships at a pace the preceding decade did not approach.

India's soft power — projected through yoga (which now has a global observance on 21 June), Indian cinema, cuisine, the achievement of a 32-million-strong diaspora, and the UPI-DPI story — is at its strongest in independent India's history. The International Solar Alliance and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, both Indian initiatives, have established New Delhi as a multilateral leader in climate action. India's Brand Index and Trust Index scores in global surveys have risen consistently. This repositioning has direct economic implications — it attracts investment, trade partnerships and technology transfers from a diversified global network rather than dependence on any single partner.

The Unfinished Agenda: Paradoxes That Demand Honest Assessment

Against this record of achievement, India's policymakers must engage honestly with structural paradoxes that remain unresolved. Despite record gross FDI inflows of 81 billion dollars in FY 2024-25, net FDI collapsed to a mere 353 million dollars — as repatriation by existing investors surged to 43.99 billion dollars in April-December 2024, and outward FDI by Indian corporations rose sharply. The OECD confirmed that FDI flows to India declined in calendar year 2024 even as global FDI rose. Private corporate capital expenditure has fallen below 11 per cent of GDP against a peak of 16.8 per cent in FY 2008. An economy where growth is increasingly powered by public investment alone — with private capex declining and net FDI near-zero — carries fiscal and sustainability risks that must be addressed.

The rupee's depreciation of approximately 11 per cent in FY 2025-26, breaching Rs 90 per dollar in December 2025, compressed India's dollar-denominated GDP and — combined with MoSPI's GDP base-year revision — contributed to the IMF repositioning India as the sixth-largest economy in April 2026, behind the United Kingdom and Japan. CPI inflation has moderated to 3.48 per cent as of March 2026, a genuine achievement; but elevated crude oil prices near 96 dollars per barrel pose renewed inflationary risk given India's 85 per cent import dependence. The World Inequality Database's 2023 study documents that India's top 1 per cent now holds 22.6 per cent of national income and 40.1 per cent of national wealth — concentration levels exceeding South Africa, Brazil and the United States. The welfare programmes have raised the floor; but the ceiling has risen faster. Inclusive growth remains an unfinished agenda.

The AI Employment Challenge

The most structurally significant near-term challenge is the disruption of the IT services and BPO sector by Artificial Intelligence. This industry employs over 5.4 million workers, contributes 7.5 per cent of GDP, and through high wages generated cascading consumption across real estate, education, aviation and retail. Net hiring by India's top five IT companies in the first nine months of FY 2025-26 amounted to just 17 employees — compared to approximately 18,000 net additions in the same period a year earlier. TCS announced 12,200 layoffs in July 2025. EY estimates entry-level IT roles have fallen 20–25 per cent since 2023. Bernstein Research's April 2026 open letter to the Prime Minister warned of deep spillover effects across the consumption economy. The opportunity is equally real: NITI Aayog projects over 3 million new AI-complementary roles by 2030 for a suitably skilled workforce. Managing the displacement and capturing the opportunity simultaneously demands a National AI Reskilling Mission at the scale of MNREGA for the formal sector — an imperative that is planned but not yet operationalised at the required magnitude.

The Road to Viksit Bharat 2047

NITI Aayog's Viksit Bharat 2047 vision targets a 30-trillion-dollar economy and 18,000-dollar per capita income by the centenary of independence. The mathematics require approximately 9.1 per cent real annual growth sustained over 21 years. The building blocks are genuinely present: a young demographic dividend (65 per cent of the population under 35), world-class digital infrastructure, an expanding manufacturing base under the PLI framework, a globally respected innovation ecosystem, and a strategic positioning as an alternative supply-chain partner to China for the world's leading economies.

The path from vision to reality demands an honest confrontation with the unfinished agenda: reviving private investment through a credible regulatory compact, deepening net FDI quality, broadening the tax base, reskilling millions for the AI economy, reducing income concentration, and strengthening institutional quality and contract enforcement. India's growth story is ultimately a story of extraordinary ambition meeting extraordinary complexity. The physical infrastructure is transformed. The digital architecture is world-class. The welfare floor has been raised for hundreds of millions. The geopolitical standing is the strongest in independent India's history. The innovation ecosystem is vibrant and globally recognised. These achievements deserve recognition — not as partisan victories, but as national ones. The unfinished agenda — private investment revival, income equity, currency resilience, employment quality in the AI age — demands the same quality of policy resolve that delivered what has been completed. The Viksit Bharat 2047 goal is within reach. But it demands, above all, the courage of honest and balanced assessment. ❑❑

India's growth story is ultimately a story of extraordinary ambition meeting extraordinary complexity. The physical infrastructure is transformed. The digital architecture is world-class. The welfare floor has been raised for hundreds of millions.

CA Dr Dhanpat Ram Agarwal, Ph.D Economics, National Co-convenor, Swadeshi Jagran Manch and Principal Researcher & Founder Director, Institute of International Trade (IITrade), Kolkata

Key Sources: *MoSPI National Accounts (2026) | IMF WEO April 2026 | RBI Bulletin May 2025 | World Inequality Database 2023 | NASSCOM FY26 Annual Report | EY India AI Impact Analysis 2025 | NITI Aayog Viksit Bharat 2047 (2024) | Ministry of Jal Shakti JJM Data 2026 | DPIIT Startup India Report 2025 | OECD FDI Report April 2025 | G20 India 2023 Presidency Outcomes | Bernstein Research April 2026*

Understanding the BRICS Expansion

BRICS began as a grouping of major emerging economies that were expected to play a larger role in the global economy owing to large populations, substantial territories, rapidly growing economies and increasing influence in international politics. The term “BRIC” was coined in 2001 by economists at Goldman Sachs to refer to Brazil, Russia, India and China, which were projected to become major drivers of global economic growth in the 21st century. The first BRIC summit was held in 2009, and in 2010 South Africa joined the grouping, transforming it into BRICS.

To be noted, it was never founded with the motive of anti-western alliance though today it appears more like an anti-western alliance. The founding motive of BRICS was to increase the voice of emerging economies in global governance not to create an anti-Western alliance. Importantly, BRICS founded with motive of expanding economic cooperation among major developing countries.

The founding members characteristics of BRICS represents that originally it was a club of major emerging powers rather than merely a coalition of developing countries. Lately, the expansion of BRICS is a cause of concern which is also facing a growing criticism from the western countries. The primary reason behind the criticism of recent expansion of BRICS lies in its new members which include countries that do not necessarily possess the demographic, economic, territorial or geopolitical scale that originally characterized the founding members. The original concept of BRIC appears to be diluted amid this expansion as admitting countries lack comparable economic or geopolitical weight which in turn changes the nature of the grouping ultimately. Today, BRICS appears like a broader political bloc with less coherence and fewer shared characteristics. With more diverse membership, it may become harder to maintain consensus on economic reform, trade, development finance and geopolitical issues.

India’s foreign policy increasingly reflects a balancing strategy. On one hand, India participates actively in BRICS. On the other hand, India is also a member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue alongside the United States, Japan, and Australia. Consequently, India occupies a unique position.

Annu Kumari

Moreover, China's relative influence within BRICS has strengthened due to this expansion. With the addition of smaller economies, Beijing can increase its ability to build coalitions and shape agendas as China is by far the largest economy in the bloc. BRICS expansion serves the objective of China to create a larger diplomatic network supportive of its economic and geopolitical interests.

However, there is a paradox. The BRICS expansion may increase China's diplomatic reach but at the same time it could also make BRICS less effective as a decision-making body. For example, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates are partners in many areas but also compete for regional influence, investment, logistics hubs and economic leadership in the Gulf. Similarly, other members have differing positions on energy markets, regional conflicts and relations with major powers. So, to achieve consensus will become an uphill task within BRICS.

Concerns regarding BRICS Expansion: Form Indian Lens

A major feature of India's BRICS trade is that it is highly concentrated. China is India's largest BRICS trading partner whereas Russia's share surged after 2022 because of discounted oil imports. Trade with Brazil and South Africa is comparatively modest. While new BRICS members such as Saudi Arabia and UAE are important energy suppliers.

The more important number for geopolitics is not total BRICS trade but relative dependence. China accounts for largest share of all BRICS exports. On the other hand, India accounts for a much smaller share. Many BRICS members trade more with China than with India. Also, several new members are heavily integrated into China's trade, energy, infrastructure, or investment networks. This is one of the reasons why some Indian strategic analysts worry that BRICS expansion increases China's structural influence.

For China, a larger coalition allows it to present its positions as broader Global South concerns rather than merely Chinese interests. Therefore, it can be stated that BRICS expansion will indirectly strengthens China's influence in forums such as the UN, WTO, IMF, and World Bank.

However, it also needs to noted that many BRICS members have interests that differ from China's. For instance, India has border disputes and strategic competition with China. While Brazil generally pursues an independent foreign policy. Importantly, Saudi Arabia maintains close security ties with the United States, whereas United Arab Emirates balances relations among China, the U.S., India and Europe. Egypt and Ethiopia have disagreements on regional issues. As a result, BRICS is not comparable to a military alliance where members are expected to vote together. To conclude, China supports BRICS expansion to increase its diplomatic influence and strengthen demands for a more multipolar world order, but the diversity of BRICS members means Beijing cannot assume automatic support in the UN, WTO, IMF, or other international bodies.

For India BRICS is not the platform of de-dollarisation

The role of the U.S. dollar in the international financial system is one of the most important debates within BRICS. It is important to distinguish between dollarisation and weaponisation of the dollar. Dollarisation refers to the widespread use of the U.S. dollar in international trade and finance. Whereas weaponisation of the dollar refers to the use of the dollar's dominant position in the global financial system to impose sanctions, restrict transactions or exert political pressure.

India's position is generally better understood as opposition to the weaponisation of the dollar rather than opposition to the dollar itself. As India continues to hold substantial dollar reserves and conduct large volumes of trade in dollars. Also, India benefit from access to dollar-denominated financial markets. Therefore, India is not advocating the replacement of the dollar as the world's reserve currency. In its place, India supports creating alternative payment mechanisms and local-currency settlement options so that countries are less vulnerable to unilateral financial pressure.

India's Strategic Balance

India's foreign policy increasingly reflects a balancing strategy. On one hand, India participates actively in BRICS. On the other hand, India is also a member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue alongside the United States, Japan, and Australia. Consequently, India occupies a unique position. Through BRICS, it can advocate against the weaponisation of global financial systems. Through the QUAD, it can maintain strategic partnerships with major democracies and help balance China's rise in the Indo-Pacific.

The dual engagement of India demonstrates that it seeks strategic autonomy: supporting reforms to the international order while maintaining productive relations with both western powers and emerging economies. ❑❑

Annu Kumari: *Assistant Professor, Sri Aurobindo College (Evening), University of Delhi*

Swadeshi as Economic Nationalism:
From Self-Containment to Strategic Integration

The term Swadeshi has historically evoked images of the spinning wheel, the license-permit raj, and a consistent policy message: India must build by blocking out the world. From 1950 to 1991, the import-substitution era sought to manufacture domestic goods behind high tariff walls, but instead bred inefficiency, obsolescence, and the so-called "Hindu rate of growth." The post-1991 reforms opened the economy, yet left India primarily as a consumer of foreign goods rather than a controller of global supply chains. Foreign direct investment (FDI) flowed largely into services and software, while manufacturing remained at the backseat.

Prime Minister Modi's 2026 diplomatic tour signals a fundamental rethinking. The old definition of Swadeshi – self-reliance through self-containment – has quietly expired. In its place stands a new doctrine: self-possession within global networks, wherein Indian workers and firms own the factory floor while inviting the world's best technology, capital, and partnerships onto it.

Strategic Logic: The MoUs and Sectoral Depth

The commitments secured during the tour reveal a coherent strategic logic. In the semiconductor sector, Tata Group held advanced talks with ASML (Netherlands), which holds a near-monopoly on extreme ultraviolet lithography machines essential for cutting-edge chips. No tariff war could compel ASML to transfer such knowledge; only a strategic partnership offering market access, investment guarantees, and diplomatic goodwill could.

In green hydrogen, Sweden and Norway signed agreements covering electrolyzer technology and carbon capture. India's National Green Hydrogen Mis-

Swadeshi 2.0 will not be won on diplomatic selfies in Rome; it will be won on wafer starts in Dholera.

Prof. Deepak Sharma

sion – targeting five million tonnes of annual production by 2030 – cannot succeed without Nordic expertise. Rather than attempting to invent everything from scratch (a classic Swadeshi trap), the government is importing knowledge and embedding it into domestic manufacturing. Similarly, the UAE's $5 billion pledge for strategic petroleum reserves and defence shipping follows the same pattern: energy security, a core Swadeshi goal, is achieved through foreign capital and infrastructure operated by Indian workers and ports.

If this new model has a physical address, it is the Dholera Special Investment Region in Gujarat. Tata Electronics is already constructing India's first commercial semiconductor fab with Taiwan's Powerchip. The Netherlands' semiconductor pact provides diplomatic cover and supply chain access, while UAE-linked logistics and energy projects occupy 3,000 earmarked acres. Europe brings technology; the UAE brings capital; Dholera provides land, labour, and political will. This is not a walled garden but controlled integration.

If 30% of the $40 billion in MoUs materialises as capital expenditure over three years, India could see $12 billion in fresh investment. At current capital-to-job ratios, that implies nearly 480,000 direct manufacturing jobs, plus twice as many indirect roles. Dholera alone could claim 120,000 of those, potentially transforming a 22,000-square-kilometre blueprint into Gujarat's answer to Shenzhen.

Critiques & Strategic Rejoinder

In domestic political discourse, inviting foreign firms has long been painted as a betrayal of self-reliance. The critique writes itself: "You are handing strategic sectors to Dutch and Emirati companies. What happened to Atmanirbhar Bharat?" The government's implicit answer is that 21st-century strategic autonomy requires deep integration, not isolation. A semiconductor fab dependent on Chinese raw materials is vulnerable; a fab dependent on Dutch machines but operated by Indian engineers and owned by Indian firms is strategically autonomous, even if the technology originates elsewhere. Old Swadeshi sought to replace everything. New Swadeshi seeks to own the most valuable layers of the value chain – assembly, testing, packaging, and eventually design. The ASML machines will remain Dutch, but the wafers produced in Dholera will be Indian, as will the jobs and export revenues.

Implementation Hurdles

Caution remains warranted. Between 2014 and 2024, Indian states signed commitments worth over $1.2 trillion, but actual FDI inflows stood at $596 billion – a gap between handshake and humming factory floor that has undone many ambitious announcements. Three persistent hurdles are land acquisition, utility infrastructure, and skilled labour. Dholera's fab cluster requires 50 million litres per day of ultra-pure water and one gigawatt of stable power, both still under construction. Gujarat's Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) produce 1.4 lakh graduates annually, but chip-specific training began only last year. Moreover, competitors such as Vietnam and Mexico are signing binding contracts while India remains at the MoU stage. As one European CEO noted off the record: "We like India's democracy. We love Vietnam's speed."

Modi's 2026 tour successfully rebranded India from "market" to "maker" in European capitals. The $40 billion figure represents real negotiating heft. However, converting that heft into factory floors depends on execution: environmental approvals in 90 days, not 900; water and power lines connected by 2027; and industrial training institutes rewired for chip fabs, not just traditional fitter trades. Swadeshi 2.0 will not be won on diplomatic selfies in Rome; it will be won on wafer starts in Dholera. For the first time in a generation, India has a coherent answer to the old question – how to be both nationalist and global. The answer is not walls; it is workbenches. ❑❑

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Reset of Bharat's Strategic Autonomy - I

Bharat: Strategic Autonomy Vs Constructive Strategic Stability

The world has been more turbulent since beginning of 2025. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on the anniversary of the nuclear tests: "India will not bow down to anyone". It heralded the successful execution of its strategic autonomy.

However, it has been a daunting challenge during the US President Donald Trump's tenure and China's disruptive role post Operation Sindoor. Pakistan may be seen as balancing its strategic interests but it is faithfully playing the role as dictated by the US and China at the cost of its fiercest internal revolt in the entire country.

To become a Viksit Bharat, Bharat must play a more proactive role and truly avoid bowing to anyone, as Modi frequently states. Its credibility among the Global South and within its neighbourhood is at stake. Strategic autonomy is indeed in need of a reset.

Vinod Johri

Punitive tariffs and multiple sanctions, along with waivers on Russian military platforms, Russian oil, and Chabahar Port, have taken their toll. During the recent BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting in New Delhi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar criticised unilateral non-UN sanctions on Bharat, calling them "unjustified", even as Delhi awaited waivers on Chabahar and Russian oil. Later at the conference, he noted the unnecessary resort to unilateral coercive measures and sanctions, which are inconsistent with international law and the UN Charter. These measures "disproportionately affect developing countries". But it is too late to say so.

Strategic autonomy has yet to tread a long way despite the deals with the EU and France. The purchase of 36 Rafale fighters in 2016, subsequent contracts for 18 naval versions, together with the rejection of US, Russian, European, and Swedish offers were seen as a combination of advanced technology and trust. Bharat has not defied Trump's coercive tariffs and warnings over de-dollarisation in BRICS. *The IRIS Dena, an Iranian Moudge-class frigate was torpedoed and sunk by the United States Navy's nuclear-powered submarine USS Charlotte in the Indian Ocean on 4 March 2026, after it returned from the Indian Fleet Review 2026.* It dented Bharat's image as a net security provider.

'Strategic' is associated with restraint, sovereignty, and national interest. 'Partnership' is variable, dynamic, and transactional. Strategic autonomy originates from non-alignment adopted after independence. With adversarial relations with the US intensifying, Bharat was gradually pulled towards the Soviet Union. Confronted with simultaneous threats from Pakistan, China, and the US in 1971, Bharat was compelled to sign the first formal Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the USSR. The then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi insisted that the phrase "India is a non-aligned country" be inserted into the treaty, although it functioned de facto as an alliance.

BharatIOn has evolved from non-alignment to multi-alignment, multi-engagement, and multipolarity, culminating in strategic autonomy, whose utility appears to be diminishing in a disrupted global order. The strategic autonomy remains an immaculate conception. With Bharat's oldest ally, Russia, the relationship is special, privileged and strategic. The partnership with the US has evolved from an estranged democracy into a comprehensive, global and strategic partnership. Relations with China have fluctuated between war and border skirmishes, signifying deep mistrust. The EU is a more recent entrant into the strategic club, though largely in trade and commerce. Relations with Vietnam were elevated to an enhanced comprehensive strategic partnership during the recent visit of President To Lam.

Lately, there has been intense debate regarding strategic autonomy and Bharat's graded strategic relations with other nations. Strategic autonomy is a dynamic policy that requires periodic recalibration in line with contemporary geopolitics and geo-economics. The recent summit between Xi Jinping and Donald Trump in Beijing confirmed a shift in the US strategic approach towards China — from rivalry and competition towards stable relations. Diplomatic vocabulary acquired a new phrase from Xi: "constructive strategic stability", replacing the Biden-era term "strategic competition". Trump went further in a Fox News interview, describing the meeting as resembling a "G2", recalling earlier remarks made by President Obama that had caused consternation. Trump displayed unusual restraint and respect towards Xi, praising his leadership extensively. The subsequent Xi-Putin summit was described as a meeting between the dear friends in an everlasting strategic partnership. In both cases, Xi conceded little to either Trump or Putin. These developments call for a reassessment of Bharat's strategic autonomy.

At the recent Chennai conference, the majority opinion supported the establishment's approach, calling it 'pragmatic'. In February 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had undertaken a major diplomatic tour to France and the United States from February 10 to 13 though the progress in trade deals with the US has been slow. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's international engagements focused on artificial intelligence governance, bilateral trade, and strategic defense agreements with Western leaders. Regarding the two kinetic assaults on Iran, critics argued that Bharat had effectively taken sides even before the conflict began. It appeared aligned with the US and Israel, particularly after Modi addressed the Knesset 48 hours before the Iranian Supreme Leader was assassinated in an Israeli precision strike. Apparently, both US and Indian intelligence agencies believed the conflict would end swiftly. Delhi remained silent, despite PM Modi's earlier repeated assertion that "this is not an era of war" and that only a political solution could resolve conflicts. Bharat's attempt to balance strategic relations with the US, Russia, China, Israel, the EU, and Vietnam has resulted in too many competing priorities.

Some voices have been raised that Bharat's recent diplomatic difficulties might have been avoided with more skilful handling of Trump's claim that the US facilitated the ceasefire during Operation Sindoor. *There may be conflicting views over this assertion. Donald Trump kept on reiterating that he facilitated the ceasefire even during the Operation Sindoor without Bharat's asking for it. Bharat's insistence that there was no third-party mediation was based on truth and ground reality. The US role even during Bharat-Pakistan war 1971 was embedded with its strategic interests. The United States, Britain, and China used the United Nations to manage the Kashmir dispute for decades, but the prolonged diplomatic process ultimately resulted in approximately half of the region remaining outside of Bharatiya control, divided between Pakistan and China. Pakistan financially, diplomatically and militarily aided by the US and China since its formative years, tried to transform its image from a state sponsor of terrorism into that of a responsible mediator in conflict resolution but this is only a façade to mislead the world.*

Pakistan's aborted efforts failed to facilitate the impending ceasefire between the US and Iran, where Israel is conspicuously absent. *Let us watch the future developments in the unending US-Iran war instead of evaluating Bharat's strategic strength in the Indian ocean region and South Asia. But it is sure that Bharat was assert itself in South Asia as a strong nation and as a protector of South Asian countries both in economic and strategic cooperation despite China and the US having their interests in the region.*

At another seminar, Bharatiya diplomat Jawed Ashraf remarked emphatically: 'Silence is not strategic autonomy', hinting at Bharat's silence regarding what many consider illegitimate actions by the US and Israel against Iran and others. To become a Viksit Bharat, Bharat must play a more proactive role and truly avoid bowing to anyone, as Modi frequently states. Its credibility among the Global South and within its neighbourhood is at stake. Strategic autonomy is indeed in need of a reset. ❑❑

(*Source:* The PIONEER 27.05.2026, India's strategic autonomy needs a reset By Ashok K Mehta. *The author's views in Italics are personal.)*

Alternative Lens view of Vembu's Welcome Appeal

Padmashri Sridhar Vembu is a nationalist technocrat dedicated to uplifting rural Bharat and the nation for nearly four decades. The main argument of this piece is to analyse Vembu's recent public appeal to Bharatiya talent abroad to return and contribute to the nation, examining its implications and the responses it has generated. As the founder of Zoho, Vembu embodies simplicity, vision, and a blend of scientific and social values.

Vembu is known for being accessible and for frequently sharing his opinions online, including his recent post on X, urging Bhartiya's abroad to return home. This appeal ignited debates and responses reflecting on national soft versus hard power, the psychology of migration, and peer sharing of personal experiences. These responses reveal the complexity of persuading top talent to return and engage in nation-building efforts.

Our nation is young, and our aspirations are huge. The world is witnessing a transition in geopolitics, supply chains, value addition, technological breakthroughs, artificial intelligence, economic parameters, controlling stakes, warfare, education systems, and disruptive technological ecosystems. The world is divided between aging and young nations. Developed nations are more dependent on machines than humans. Our nation, with a working population of 60 crore, is desperate to engage this demographic productively.

Despite this, a missing link forced Sridhar Vembu ji to author a retreat appeal. Some see this as equivalent to begging. The trust in our youth's capabilities is unstable. This stems from an old education system that produced many youths for repetitive work.

Zoho is well aware of the need for a timely supply of well-educated talent in mathematics, pure sciences, and engineering. Sridhar ji is restricting himself to that.

The homecoming appeal itself is a reflection that our march towards the "Vikshit Bharat" is invincible. Our aspirations are unstoppable. Sridhar Ji is exploring all the routes to the holy destination.

Alok Singh

Sridhar ji knows well the platinum mines that we own in the social sciences and soft power. But hard power has diluted the choices of even first-generation professionals working abroad. It's the dollar that has trapped youths from premier institutions from working in sectors in which they aren't trained, on taxpayers' money that highly subsidized their education. For example, even civil engineers aspire to work in a software company.

The sectors well understood by Sridhar ji are information technology, information technology-enabled services, data centers, artificial intelligence, human aptitude, and the education system, apart from many other webs of the ecosystem.

Zoho has its own training school, and eligibility is not based on ornamental degrees but on aptitude and an individual's learning curve. Zoho School produces its own software professionals, and the qualifications required to join are minimal. The perception is that even a 10th-grade individual can be trained at a Zoho school to join the world of software professionals.

An individual with a low learning curve could easily get trained to work in a software company. The majority of our software businesses, including exports, are in usage cases. The high-learning-curve jobs are the target of artificial intelligence. Until recently, it was easy for Zoho School to produce its own professionals. The learning curve is a metric for measuring learning proficiency. The learning curve portfolio includes low, high, S-shaped, and many other variants. A low learning curve means an individual can learn quickly, while a high learning curve means an individual can learn slowly. It's the context that decides whether a low learning curve or a high learning curve is better. The S-shaped learning curve can be interpreted as fast learning at the beginning and slower learning later. There are various learning curves depending on the job. For example, a good doctor has a steep learning curve, while a good delivery boy has a shallow one. The learning curve is not determined solely by the amount of time spent learning, but also by other resources, such as the money and materials spent to help an individual learn the job.

We are not a nation of beggars, and neither is Sridhar ji. We are the primary source of universal peace and the original source of energy. We preserve 'Astra' (armaments) and 'Shastra' (knowledge) simultaneously.

The worldwide companies are feeling the heat of engagement with artificial intelligence. The traditional software companies are restricting their hiring processes. Geopolitics and an aging world, leading to diminishing demand, are creating constraints on the demand side. Aging China is emerging with dark factories. Dark factories are run without fans, room heaters , and thus without air conditioning and lighting.

The entry barrier for survival in the artificial intelligence sector is high. The learning curve is also high. This steep learning curve means the talent Bharat needs in a short time is difficult to find. This concern forced Sridhar ji to try the appeal to our best minds who are working for non-Bharatiya stakeholders. The Zoho founder is right and has done a responsible appeal.

The world, which is struggling to attract young talent, is opening research centres in Bharat. The Global Capability Centres (GCCs) of many companies, spread across various countries, are opening offices in Bharat. The profile of our quality of jobs has changed, and a clear transition is visible from being a supplier of use cases to a supplier of talent for research and development.

These developments create a dichotomy. On the one hand, we are appealing for the homecoming of our talents while, at the same time, deep-pocket foreign-owned companies are exploring avenues for their GCCs in our land.

The homecoming appeal itself is a reflection that our march towards the "Vikshit Bharat" is invincible. Our aspirations are unstoppable. Sridhar Ji is exploring all the routes to the holy destination.

We also aspire to think beyond artificial intelligence, which means what is next beyond artificial intelligence. At the culmination of the last century, it was computers and information technology; a quarter century later, it's artificial intelligence. We have a portfolio of work in our hands, which includes catching up on disruptive technology, thinking and executing beyond the contemporary, and leveraging our soft power in infinite other ways.

We are not a nation of beggars, and neither is Sridhar ji. We are the primary source of universal peace and the original source of energy. We preserve 'Astra' (armaments) and 'Shastra' (knowledge) simultaneously. ❑❑

(Alok Singh has a doctorate in management from the Indian Institute of Management Indore and promoter of Transition Research Consultancy for Policy and Management.)

The Mindset of Postponing Marriage among the Younger Generation

A Social Challenge of Our Times

Every civilization rest upon certain enduring institutions that sustain its continuity across generations. Among these, the family occupies a unique and indispensable place. Within the family that values are transmitted, traditions are preserved, responsibilities are learned, and emotional security is nurtured. Further, Dharma begins at home; society merely reflects what families practice. So, family has not only the unique culture but also the sacred bridge connecting ancestors, the living, and future generations. The family is not merely a social arrangement but also place for the child where it inherits values and samskaras.

We must strive for a balanced vision of progress, one that embraces both individual aspirations and the enduring importance of family life. The choices made today will shape the character of future generations.

Mahadevayya Karadalli

The Family is the Foundation of Civilized Society

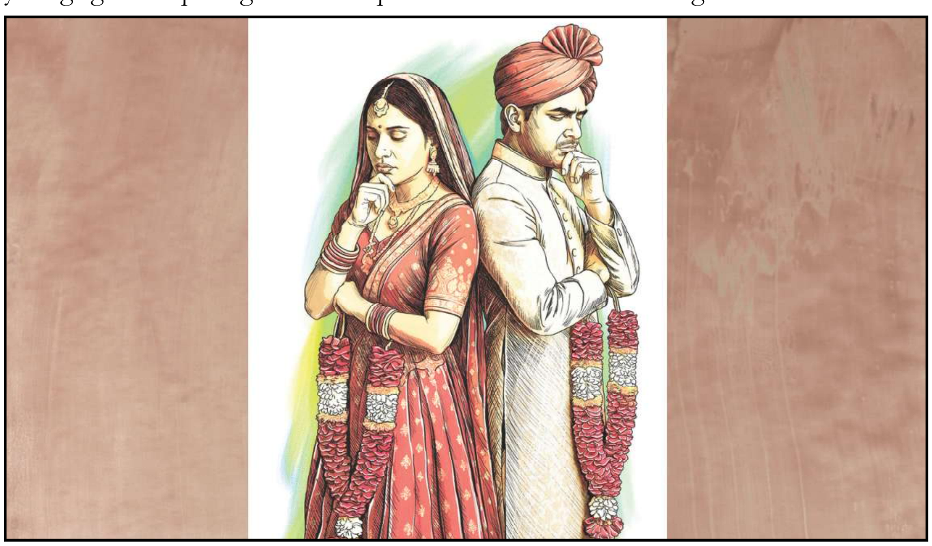
In the Bharatiya civilizational tradition, marriage has never been viewed as a purely personal contract between two individuals. It has been regarded as a sacred union that contributes to the welfare of the two family, society, and future generations. Since in the family resides Dharma, in Dharma resides the nation. The Sanatana system of marriage serves as the foundation upon which stable homes, responsible citizenship, and cultural continuity are built.

However, in recent decades, significant social transformations have altered attitudes towards marriage and family life. Increasingly, young men and women are postponing marriage, while some are choosing to remain unmarried altogether.

Understanding the Causes of Delayed Marriages

The phenomenon of delayed marriage cannot be explained by a single factor. It is the result of multiple social, economic, educational, and cultural changes.

One of the most prominent reasons is the pursuit of higher education and professional careers. Young people today spend a considerable portion of their young age in acquiring academic qualifications and establishing themselves in com-



petitive professions. Hence, Career development often takes precedence over family formation.

Economic independence has also transformed traditional perspectives. Many young women and men are financially self-reliant and prefer to postpone marriage until they achieve personal goals and financial stability. While economic empowerment is undoubtedly a positive development, it sometimes leads individuals to perceive marriage as an optional rather than essential stage of life.

Urbanization and modern lifestyles have further contributed to this shift. The growing emphasis on individual freedom, personal aspirations, and self-fulfilment often encourages young adults to delay long-term commitments. In many cases, marriage, parenthood, and family responsibilities are viewed as constraints upon personal growth rather than complementary aspects of a meaningful life.

Additionally, Children since childhood for one or other reason are out of lovely home environment. As a result of which the weakening of intergenerational bonds has reduced opportunities for younger generations to appreciate the joys and significance of family life. Absence of Coparcenary family system, the Traditional family gatherings, festivals, community interactions, and shared cultural experiences that once nurtured a positive view of marriage are gradually diminishing in many urban settings.

Consequences for Society

While individuals possess the freedom to make personal life choices, large-scale social trends inevitably influence the collective future of society.

Marriage and career need not be viewed as competing objectives. With mutual understanding and family support, both partners can continue their education and professional development after marriage.

One concern frequently raised by demographers is the declining birth rate in many countries. When marriages occur later and family size decreases, population growth slows significantly. Beyond demographics, delayed marriages may also contribute to emotional and social challenges. Loneliness, social isolation, and weakened family networks are becoming increasingly common in many parts of the world. Elderly parents often find themselves without adequate family support, while younger generations may lack the close-knit familial relationships that traditionally provided emotional stability.

The rise in single-person households, declining birth rates, and shrinking family structures can gradually weaken community bonds. Villages lose population, neighbourhood relationships diminish, and society becomes increasingly individualistic. Material prosperity alone cannot compensate for the loss of human relationships and social connectedness.

The Importance of Timely Marriage

The concept of "timely marriage" should not be understood as coercion or the denial of educational and professional opportunities. Rather, it emphasizes the importance of balancing personal aspirations with family responsibilities. Awareness about Bharatiya G[hasthâúrama is need of the hour. Our Puranas often warned that those who doesn't have children will not achieve Mukti. Grasthashrama is the pillar upon which all other stages of life rest. Where there is family, there are values; where there are values, there is prosperity. The Bharatiya family is not a contract of convenience but a covenant of duty, affection, and continuity. Family life is the sacred field where the seeds of Dharma blossom into civilization. The strength of Bharat does not begin in palaces or parliaments; it begins in families

Marriage and career need not be viewed as competing objectives. With mutual understanding and family support, both partners can continue their education and professional development after marriage. Throughout history, countless individuals have successfully pursued academic excellence, professional achievement, and family life simultaneously. Parents, too, play a vital role in shaping positive attitudes towards marriage. Instead of treating marriage as a burden or merely a social obligation, families should present it as pious obligation of couples and also an opportunity for companionship, shared growth, and meaningful contribution to society.

Young people should be encouraged to understand that Marriage and family life are not restrictions on freedom; they are opportunities to cultivate responsibility, compassion, and selflessness." Further youth has to understand wealth, status, and professional success, though valuable, are ultimately means to enrich life rather than ends in themselves. Human relationships, family bonds, and the joy of nurturing future generations remain among life's most profound sources of fulfilment.

Rebuilding a Family-Centred Culture

Addressing the challenge of delayed marriages requires collective effort. Families, educators, community organizations, and cultural institutions all have important roles to play.

First, families should create warm and harmonious environments where younger generations can experience the benefits of strong family relationships. Youth has to understand that Marriage and family life are not restrictions on freedom; they are opportunities to cultivate responsibility, compassion, and selflessness. Thorugh celebration of Festivals, family gatherings, and community interactions help cultivate a sense of belonging and appreciation for family life.

Second, educational institutions and community organizations should promote balanced perspectives that recognize both individual achievement and social responsibility. Young people should be encouraged to view marriage and family not as obstacles to progress but as integral dimensions of a complete and meaningful life.

Most importantly, society must support young couples by reducing practical barriers to marriage and parenthood. Affordable housing, employment opportunities, childcare support, and flexible work arrangements can make family life more attainable and sustainable.

A Call for Correction

The future of any civilization depends not only upon economic growth, technological advancement, or political power but also upon the strength of its families. A society that neglects family life risks losing the very foundation upon which its culture, values, and continuity rest.

The challenge before us is to restore respect for the institution of family as a cornerstone of human flourishing. Education, career success, and personal freedom are valuable achievements; yet they attain their fullest meaning when harmonized with relationships, responsibility, and generational continuity.

We must strive for a balanced vision of progress, one that embraces both individual aspirations and the enduring importance of family life. The choices made today will shape the character of future generations. Therefore, thoughtful & responsible action, and renewed commitment to family values are essential for preserving social stability, cultural continuity, and the well-being of humanity itself. With joint efforts of all stake holders. Individually and Collectively shall try to address this Social Challenge of Our Times i.e. the Mindset of Postponing Marriage among the Younger Generation to maintain Continuity of Family system and its Stability. ❑❑

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[Conitnued from page no. 7]

Twelve Years of Modi Government:
Why He Continues To Be Invincible

under the threat that any time, their husbands could speak, three words Talaq-Talaq-Talaq, and their lives would be ruined as they will not be able to stay even for a minute in their home. With a single legislation, declaring this act as criminal, Muslim women have been free from this threat forever.

In the process, delay in women's reservation has hurt perceptions of women. Higher women turnout in West Bengal signalled dissatisfaction, contributing to electoral setbacks for Mamta Banerjee's TNC.

Along-with GDP growth, Narendra Modi's achievements are clearly visible across multiple sectors. Expansion of road, rail, air and water transport infrastructure, digital payments, significant advancements in space technology, and push towards self-reliance in defence production; these developments have been substantial. India's enhanced stature during present regime, at the global level reflects a more assertive and confident national presence.

Mindset of the people towards the government, has been positively impacted by these factors. Perhaps, this is the reason that surveys consistently show that the popularity of both the government and the Prime Minister has remained largely undented over the years.

Opposition should also take an important lesson for the opposition. Instead of engaging in unconstructive criticism or opposing the government on frivolous issues, there is a need to present a well-thought-out and credible roadmap. Such a roadmap should address the key socio-economic challenges facing the country and offer meaningful alternatives for further progress. ❑❑

From buffer to flow economics: How India is reshaping its foreign capital strategy

The RBI and government are no longer simply guarding the dollar equation. They are engineering both sides of it: how much leaves, and how much comes in.

Anilesh S. Mahajan

When Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Sanjay Malhotra unveiled a package of measures on June 5 to draw in foreign capital, the market read it as a currency-defence operation. The components pointed that way. Wider access to government bonds, incentives for FCNR(B) deposits, concessional forex swaps, tax relief for foreign investors and easier entry into debt markets—all converged on an immediate goal: steadying a rupee that had slid to a record low of 96.90 to the dollar in late May and shed close to 6 per cent over a year.

The market obliged. The rupee rallied nearly 1 per cent, its strongest day in two months. Analysts reckoned the combined package from the RBI and the government could pull in $25 billion to $40 billion, and some private estimates ran as high as $50 billion to $75 billion if global bond allocations rise.

The more telling story: what Malhotra laid out was the clearest signal yet that India is moving away from defending external stability through reserves and towards actively engineering the flow of capital; and that shift says a good deal about where the economy stands and how its policymakers now read the world.

For most of the past decade, India's external strategy rested on buffers. Build reserves, accumulate insurance, intervene when markets turn disorderly. It worked well. Reserves climbed to an all-time high of $728.49 billion in the week to February 27, and even after months of dollar sales they stood at $682.3 billion by late May—roughly 11 months of import cover and among the strongest external positions in the emerging world.

But the problem is no longer the quantity of reserves but the quality of flows. India has seen no classic episode of capital flight, yet the composition of foreign money has turned lopsided. Investors have so far in 2026 pulled roughly Rs 2.2 lakh crore out of Indian equities, the heaviest annual exit since the market was first opened to them in 1993, dragging foreign ownership of Indian stocks down to about 14.7 per cent, a 14-year low, against the 18.9 per cent held by domestic institutions.

Debt has held up better, cushioned by India's 2024 entry into J.P. Morgan's emerging-market bond index, but the broader picture is of a system that looks stable in aggregate even as it grows steadily more volatile at the margin.

The external backdrop has sharpened that volatility. The West Asia conflict that erupted in late February closed the Strait of Hormuz, through which close to a fifth of the world's oil passes, and pushed Brent crude to an average of about $117 a barrel in April, its highest in nearly four years, with daily prices spiking as high as $138.

May brought no calm, only violent swings. Brent climbed above $110 in the first half of the month, touching about $113 before tumbling towards the high $80s by its close as hopes of a US-Iran understanding firmed, the same retreat that finally let the rupee crawl back from its record low. For a country that imports roughly 87 per cent of its crude, the bill landed fast all the same.

India's monthly oil import outgo climbed from around $14 billion before the conflict to roughly $17.5 billion at its height. Crude sits at the heart of the problem because oil is India's single largest source of dollar demand. That is the logic behind Prime Minister Narendra Modi's repeated appeals to Indians to conserve fuel, behind the push on ethanol blending and energy efficiency, and behind the broader drive to lift domestic manufacturing and trim import dependence. What first looked like political messaging is in substance an effort to shrink the country's appetite for dollars at the source.

So the RBI's response has run along one track and the Modi government's along another, and the two have begun to converge. For nearly a year, the central bank's playbook was textbook. Sell dollars, use forwards and swaps, manage liquidity, damp the swings, all while insisting, as Malhotra reiterated, that it targets no particular level for the rupee and steps in only to curb volatility.

Every intervention carries a hidden cost, though. Much of the reserve stockpile was built when the rupee was considerably stronger than now, and in recent months the bank has been selling dollars into a weaker rupee to head off disorderly depreciation. This is not a hedge fund buying high and selling low, since the RBI is not trading for profit. A harder reality is setting in underneath. In a world of persistent dollar strength, holding a vast reserve pile has become costlier to maintain, and rebuilding it later means attracting capital or buying dollars back at rates less favourable

than those that prevailed when the reserves were first accumulated. Intervention still works. It has simply become a less elegant solution.

That is what makes the June package significant. Rather than lean only on stockpiled dollars, the RBI is trying to shape the flow of future ones, and the specific steps reveal the design. It widened the fully accessible route (FAR) so that every fresh issue of 15-year, 30-year and 40-year government bonds is now fully open to foreign buyers, an attempt to deepen the long end of the market where index trackers and pension funds tend to sit. It opened a concessional swap and hedging window, running to September 30, for external commercial borrowings by public-sector firms and for FCNR(B) deposits raised by banks, which lowers the cost of bringing those dollars in.

On three-to-five-year FCNR (B) deposits it went further still, agreeing to absorb the full hedging cost and to exempt the money from cash-reserve and statutory-liquidity requirements, freeing banks to offer non-resident Indians sharper rates. Alongside, it eased the remaining curbs on foreign investment in debt, raised the limits for NRIs and overseas citizens of India, restored to nine months the window for repatriating export earnings, and added tax relief on government securities.

Stripped of the jargon, every lever pulls the same way: make it cheaper, easier and more rewarding to park foreign money in India, and do it through several channels at once rather than bet on any single one. These are instruments for managing flows rather than reserves, and they form the supply side of a strategy whose demand side is already running through Delhi's campaign to curb the oil bill, raise efficiency and produce more at home.

Put the two halves together and the design is precise. The Modi government is working to shrink the economy's demand for dollars through lower import dependence, energy diversification, ethanol blending and domestic manufacturing. The central bank is working to expand the supply through bond markets, NRI deposits and foreign portfolio participation. One compresses outflows, the other widens inflows, and together they amount to a coordinated attempt to improve India's external balance without choking growth.

Taken together, economists reckon the package could draw in as much as $50 billion, enough to cover much of the balance of payments (BOP) gap projected for 2026-27. The bond market offered an early nod, the benchmark 10-year yield easing three basis points to 6.96 per cent on the day of the announcement. The backdrop explains the haste: between April 1 and June 2, foreign investors had taken a net $13.4 billion out of equities and a further $0.3 billion out of debt.

The design is deliberately wider than the template India reached for in 2013, when then RBI governor Raghuram Rajan leaned on a single FCNR(B) swap window that drew close to $26 billion. This time the money is meant to arrive through bonds, deposits and borrowing all at once. But the approach carries real limits. The interest-rate gap between India and the United States is far narrower than it was then, which dulls the appeal of NRI deposits and, on past form, tends to send banks to raise dollars more cheaply in global markets instead.

Much of what the package courts is also debt-creating and reversible, since swaps, borrowings and deposits add to external liabilities that must eventually be serviced or repaid and can leave as fast as they arrived if sentiment sours. By shouldering the hedging cost on FCNR(B) money, the RBI takes the currency risk onto its own book rather than making it disappear. And none of it reaches the root of the strain, the oil-driven current-account bill, so the measures buy financing rather than a cure. Their success, most analysts agree, rests on the one variable Delhi cannot dictate—an easing of the West Asia conflict and the crude spike that came with it.

There is a political edge to this as well. Much of the package tilts the field towards foreign money in ways domestic players do not share. On the same day, the government used an ordinance to scrap long-term capital gains tax on foreign institutional holdings of government bonds, a break resident investors do not get, while banks raising FCNR(B) deposits have the RBI absorb their hedging cost and win exemption from the cash-reserve and liquidity rules that bind ordinary domestic deposits.

To parts of the financial industry this looks less like a level playing field than a subsidy for outsiders, and the grievance has grown sharper as a domestic lobby, emboldened by the louder turn toward self-reliance, has gained weight in policy debates. Foreign investors have drawn their own conclusion. Many suspect that concessions extended under duress and resented at home will not endure, that the windows, several of which already expire on September 30, will be narrowed or the terms quietly walked back once the rupee steadies, and quite possibly sooner than the long-dated bonds and multi-year deposits the scheme is meant to attract.

The choice is revealing. With the rupee under pressure, the RBI could have raised rates, as oil-importing peers such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka have done, or tightened liquidity, or mounted a more aggressive defence of the currency. Instead, the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously to hold the repo rate at 5.25 per cent and keep its neutral stance, leaving in place the 125 basis points of cuts delivered since early 2025.

It held even as it trimmed its growth forecast for 2026-27 to 6.6 per cent from 6.9 per cent and raised its inflation projection to 5.1 per cent, with about four in five economists in a Reuters poll having expected exactly this kind of pause. "We remain confident to withstand shocks with minimum pain amidst heightened global uncertainties," Malhotra said, signalling a clear preference for inflow measures over monetary tightening.

The reasoning is not hard to follow. India's challenge today is not solvency but sensitivity. A country sitting on $682 billion in reserves is not struggling to pay its bills. It is trying to navigate a world in which oil shocks, geopolitical conflict and portfolio reallocations can move billions across borders in a matter of days, and in that world reserves alone no longer suffice.

The old model was buffer economics, accumulating dollars and deploying them when pressure hit. The new model is closer to flow economics, shaping the movement of capital before the pressure arrives. The progression is easy to trace, from reserve accumulation to intervention, swaps and forward-market management, and now to a deliberate effort to steer flows on both sides of the ledger.

That may prove the most consequential economic shift of 2026, less because it moves the rupee today than because it changes the philosophy through which India manages its external sector. For three decades, the country stored stability. It is now trying to manufacture it, and that is a far larger story than any single monetary-policy decision. ❑❑

https://www.indiatoday.in/india-today-insight/story/from-buffer-to-flow-economics-how-india-is-reshaping-its-foreign-capital-strategy-2924040-2026-06-09

Universal Values for A Protective World

There can be widespread agreement that the way of out of massive distress and high risks in our deeply troubled world is to be found on the path of peace, environment protection and justice. However somehow this does not get reflected in the actual trends in recent and present times. Why? There are many reasons, but one of the missing links certainly is the neglect of the simultaneous creation of widespread and strong value systems in society which are in tune with these most important objectives.

Can we create peace in our world if most people have strong feelings of hostility and revenge? Can we protect environment if most people do not care about the impact of their life-style on environment? Can we create a just society if most people see nothing wrong in snatching the share of others if they can?

The answers to these questions are obvious. Our world cannot achieve the most essential and important objectives without these being internalised by a very large number of people in the form of conducive value systems.

Some core values are essential not just for creating a better and safer world but also for saving it from ruin. Such values should be treated as universal human values. These core values should be such that at least in an open discussion these should be acceptable to everyone i.e. people of all faiths and nationalities. There can be a broad agreement on identifying and understanding these various core values properly, and on the basis of such an understanding continuing efforts should be made for wider acceptance of these values and deep commitment to them. This can be an extremely creative and participatory process.

Apart from institutional reforms, there is a clear need to spread the values of environment protection, peace and a world without borders among as many people as possible, particularly youth.

Bharat Dogra

One such core value, obviously, is non-violence. This means that we try our best to lead a life, in various ways, which does not involve any violence towards fellow human-beings and other forms of life. We consciously train ourselves not to be violent and aggressive towards others, in action and thought. We do not try to take undue advantage of others, we do not try to deprive and exploit others, we do not inflict any physical and emotional violence on others, we do not harm others to get ahead of them.

A related value is that of non-dominance, or not trying to dominate others. A person may not indulge in any physical violence but if he has an excessive and persistent tendency to try to dominate others, at times he may end up creating even more distress than someone who indulges in physical violence habitually. The inclination that many human beings have towards pushing relations in ways that only their desire or view prevails, without bothering about the distress caused to others and society, should be disciplined and checked. Instead of relationships of dominance, we need relationships of understanding and co-operation at all levels. Instead of trying relentlessly to dominate others in daily life, we need to listen to others, try to understand them, give importance to what they have to say and be caring towards them. This will be useful at levels, all the more so in improving gender relationships. Once people train, restrain and educate themselves (or learn from others) to be non-violent and non-dominating in their relationships, on the one hand this improves their own life and of their near ones, creating more happiness and harmony, but as a result of such efforts being made all over the world, the world becomes a much more peaceful and happier place.

A person who from innermost heart wishes well for all is already a good world citizen and this strength increases further when there is a protective attitude towards all forms of life and their habitats. This must be part of an overall highly protective attitude towards environment. This was always important, but today this is needed more than ever before.

Another core value is that of accepting equality of all human beings and becoming genuinely free of any discriminative bias on the basis of gender, nationality, ethnicity, colour, religion, caste etc. Thus we sincerely wish well for all human beings, regardless of their nationality or religion. As long as nation-states exist, a citizen's first loyalty is of course to his own nation but this shouldn't (in normal circumstances) stand in the way of sincerely wishing well for all the rest of humanity and not wishing ill for anyone. This core value also includes the belief that all human beings are capable of living together in relationships of friendship, respect and co-operation, regardless of their religion, nationality, caste, colour etc.

A person who from innermost heart wishes well for all is already a good world citizen and this strength increases further when there is a protective attitude towards all forms of life and their habitats. This must be part of an overall highly protective attitude towards environment. This was always important, but today this is needed more than ever before.

While this is often stated, it is not adequately emphasised that this must come with important life-style decisions and choices in order to have any meaningful impact. A commitment to environment protection is effective only if it is accompanied by carefully reducing adverse impact as much as possible and contributing to environment protection whenever possible. If prevailing value systems include such care and caution about environment, then this will go a long way in protecting our planet. A value system which honours simplicity and rejects consumerism is highly conducive for protection of environment. At the very least the consumption of all harmful goods should be given, for example the consumption of all intoxicants like alcohol and tobacco can be given up.

A life restrained in material consumption not only helps in environment protection, but creates more space for helping others, particularly those in need. Values of kindness and compassion must be backed by efforts to create the space for this.

Most of this takes us in the direction of bringing our own life in conformity with the welfare of others, particularly those placed in more difficult situations. It is within this framework that all efforts at self-improvement and improving one's capabilities and creativity should be made, so that the ability to contribute to the welfare of the wider world is also enhanced (along with the ability to contribute to our own welfare). When a person with such an understanding progresses the rest of the world also progresses while a self-centred person spreads his ambitions in ways that are often at the cost of others. A determination in improving one's capacity for helping others and contributing to the welfare and protection of the wider world increases the ability to make several improvement in one's life.

A very simply stated value that can actually bring a lot of change is for anyone to guide one's daily conduct by this simple precept—I'll try as far as possible in my daily life not to cause any distress to any other human being or form of life. In some workshops we discussed this and participants tried this in simple matters of daily life to discover that this reduces distress and stress among them as well as their near ones.

A closely related value is to always try to be on the side of justice, and to build up the courage to do so. This in turn is related to the wider commitment to truth and honesty in life. One should be able to honestly explore and finding truth, and then guide conduct on this basis to the extent possible, instead of falsely believing in whatever happens to be convenient.

Honesty is often discussed in the context of financial matters. This is important, of course, but a much wider honesty is needed in all relationships, and in standing by what one perceives as truth and justice.

While these values hold firm for most situations, these can't be absolute. Exceptions arise. Short-term violence may be needed to prevent someone or some force from committing heavy destruction. A nation faced with a very unjust and destructive invasion may have no option but to take up arms in self-defence, and this use of violence as a last resort in a difficult situation should be seen as courage. Regarding all as equal today does not means that those with a long history of injustice should not get special benefits (in fact this will help society to move in direction of equality).

Strengthening of such universal values over which very broad-based agreement can be reached will contribute a lot to resolving the most serious problems of our deeply troubled world.

Action plans to change governance systems, create new institutions or reform old ones in a big way attract a lot of attention. But such institutional reforms can succeed only when the issues advanced by them have the enthusiastic support of a very large number of people. Apart from institutional reforms, there is a clear need to spread the values of environment protection, peace and a world without borders among as many people as possible, particularly youth.

This needs a very strong and continuing campaign which can be sustained year after year. Such campaigns will try to change value systems at all important levels including family, school and college, various community organisations and elsewhere. Such a campaign can creative conducive conditions for big, badly needed reforms in governance systems which may not appear likely or practical just now. ❑❑

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Market Access Challenges for India in its FTA with EU (Part-II)

The EU-India FTA offers India significant market access but also poses major challenges. The EU has secured substantial concessions and embedded extensive non-tariff measures in the deal. Unless Indian businesses prepare to meet these regulatory standards, projected export gains may not materialise.

Biswajit Dhar

[Continued from the previous issue ...]

II. Regulatory Standards

As noted earlier, of the 20 chapters in the EU-India FTA, NTMs are the subject matter of at least six chapters, not counting intellectual property protection. A list of these chapters is provided in Annex Table III. This section discusses four of the more important NTMs: sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, environmental standards, and international labour standards.

(i) Food Safety and Product Quality Standards

Compliance with the EU's complex regulatory standards will be critical for Indian businesses seeking to realise the expected gains from this FTA. The European Commission has made clear the significance it attaches to these regulations, stating that "human, animal, and plant health are non-negotiable". It has emphasised that the bloc follows very stringent, science-based standards to protect human, animal, and plant health, and that all products imported from India under the agreement would have to respect these standards without exception.

Critical to the implementation of EU food safety regulations are "Impact Assessments" that analyse the potential alignment of production standards between domestic and imported products, especially on pesticides and animal welfare.

The chapter on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures demands greater transparency and predictability for trade in plant and animal products, including marine products. It introduces clear timelines and mechanisms for important procedures such as import conditions and approvals, audits, adaptation to regional conditions for animal and plant health, listing of establishments for products of animal origin, exchange of information, and certification.

The chapter on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) insists on effective implementation of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. This agreement

stipulates that "technical regulations are not prepared, adopted or applied with a view to or with the effect of creating unnecessary obstacles to international trade" and that they should "not be more trade restrictive than necessary to fulfil a legitimate objective".[19] Additionally, technical regulations must be based on relevant international standards.

The EU has established elaborate domestic regulations to implement SPS and TBT measures. The General Food Law Regulation (Regulation 178/2002) provides an overarching and coherent framework for the development of food and feed legislation, covering all stages of food and feed production and distribution. Similarly, non-food consumer products are covered by the General Product Safety Regulation (Regulation [EU] 2023/988), which ensures that consumer products must be safe and that member states' market surveillance authorities must act against dangerous products.

Both regulations include mechanisms to ensure effective implementation. The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) ensures the exchange of information between EU member states, enabling food safety authorities to take swift action in case of risks to public health arising from the food chain. The Safety Gate is the rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products.

Over the years, the number of products originating from India that the RASFF has labelled as carrying varying levels of risk has consistently been high. In 2024 and 2025, the RASFF identified 217 and 211 products from India respectively as carrying potential risk, potentially serious risk, or serious risk—the second highest after Turkey.[20]

The EU has been a strong votary of environmental protection and labour rights, both of which are articulated in the FTA in the chapter on Trade and Sustainable Development. This chapter introduces two sets of regulations intended to enhance environmental protection and the adequate protection of workers' rights.

As noted earlier, the Indian government expects its agricultural and processed food exports to receive "a transformative boost" from EU tariff cuts. In 2024-25, these products accounted for just over 7% of India's total exports to the EU, while during the same period India's total agricultural and processed food exports accounted for over 12% of its total exports. There is thus potential for increasing exports to the EU—potential that can be realised if adequate investments are made in upgrading production facilities as well as regulatory institutions in the country.

(ii) Environmental Standards and International Labour Standards

The EU has been a strong votary of environmental protection and labour rights, both of which are articulated in the FTA in the chapter on Trade and Sustainable Development. This chapter introduces two sets of regulations intended to enhance environmental protection and the adequate protection of workers' rights. India had consistently opposed the inclusion of these issues in trade agreements, arguing that doing so would constrict its sovereign policy space.

The EU has favoured strict measures for reducing the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and introduced an Emission Trading System (ETS) to regulate their emission within its jurisdiction in 2005. From earlier this year, the EU has introduced the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) to restrict imports of products from countries whose GHG emissions are relatively higher. The CBAM is a carbon tax imposed at the border on imports, initially covering six carbon-intensive sectors deemed at high risk of carbon leakage: iron and steel, aluminium, cement, fertilisers, hydrogen, and electricity.

The CBAM would increase compliance costs, as Indian exporters would have to meet the EU's exacting emission norms to enter the single market. The EU is a significant market for two of the sectors covered under the CBAM—iron and steel, and aluminium—and this market has grown over the past few years. EU members accounted for almost 22% of India's exports of iron and steel in 2019-20, rising to over 25% by 2024-25. Similarly, the share of aluminium exports to the EU increased from 8% to 14% during the same period.

The only silver lining is that the EU has offered to extend to India some concessions it had earlier provided to the US. In late 2025, the EU allowed concessions to smaller US exporters, exempting their EU importers from reporting requirements.[21]

In all its FTAs, the EU has introduced international labour standards, insisting that partner countries commit to promoting trade in a way conducive to decent work for all,[22] as expressed in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization of 2008. India, on the other hand, had consistently opposed any explicit linkage between trade agreements and international labour standards, arguing that this would amount to the imposition of yet another formidable non-tariff barrier.[23]

In its FTA with the EU, India has made a major departure from its past position by agreeing to include provisions on "Multilateral labour standards and agreements", explicitly introducing international labour standards into the agreement. The chapter on Trade and Sustainable Development includes two important provisions in this regard. First, India and the EU "recognise that violation of fundamental principles and rights at work cannot be invoked or otherwise used as legitimate comparative advantage"—in other words, labour exploitation cannot be used to gain unfair advantage. Second, labour standards should not be used for protectionist trade purposes, which suggests that non-implementation of international labour standards would not be used as justification for imposing trade barriers.

III. Final Word

India's largest FTA has brought with it expectations that the country's merchandise exports would increase significantly. For these expectations to be realised, however, Indian businesses would have to prepare themselves to comply with the plethora of regulatory standards that the EU has included in the FTA.

In all its FTAs with major economies, projected gains have not been realised due to India's lack of preparedness. These FTAs have witnessed an anomalous situation in which India's trade deficits with its partners have consistently increased. The Government of India needs to work in close coordination with business to avoid repeating this dubious record while implementing what EU President Ursula von der Leyen described as the "mother of all deals". ❑❑

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19 Article 2.2 of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

20 Author's calculation using data from the RASFF database, See, European Commission. 2026. RASFF Window.

21 European Commission. 2025. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: On the application of the Regulation on the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

22 Decent work means "opportunities for everyone to get work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration", and is the core of SDG8.

23 India's position on inclusion of labour standards in trade agreements remained unchanged since it was explicitly stated by the then Commerce Minister, Murasoli Maran, at the Doha Ministerial Conference in 2001.

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https://www.theindiaforum.in/international-affairs/market-access-challenges-india-its-fta-eu

India's edible oil problem-II

[Continued from the previous issue ...]

Health concerns around palm oil

India imports most of its palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia, which together account for around 85% of the global palm oil supply, making palm oil one of India's largest imported commodities by volume. Over time, cheap imported palm oil began replacing several traditional oils in large-scale food production because it was easier to source and more economically viable for the industry. Many blended and refined oils sold in Indian markets also contain palm oil, often without consumers realising it. However, excessive palm oil consumption has raised serious health concerns. At nearly 50% saturated fat, palm oil is linked to higher LDL cholesterol levels and an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, according to the WHO and multiple independent studies. Despite these concerns, key industries, including cookie manufacturers, restaurants, and hotel chains, continue to rely heavily on palm oil due to its price and availability, further deepening India's reliance on imported edible oils.

The health crisis behind rising oil consumption

The rising oil consumption is not only an economic issue but also, over time, becoming a health emergency. Over the last two decades, the consumption of edible oil in India has grown rapidly, which we already discussed in the previous section. In previous years, changing food habits and modern lifestyles have sharply increased oil intake across India. From fried street food to fast food, and from processed snacks to bakery products, each meal requires a large amount of edible oil. And in recent times, Food delivery apps and restaurant culture have accelerated the consumption of oily food. We have discussed the economic impacts of large oil consumption, but what about the health of Indians?

It has become clear that consuming large amounts of oil can lead to health issues and diseases. Let's talk about the per capita edible oil consumption. In the 1960s, India's per capita edible oil consumption was just 3-4kg annually, which has increased to nearly 25.3kg in 2024-25 and is projected to increase to 40kg by 2030-31. In just 60 years, India's oil consumption has grown nearly 7 times. If we go more precisely, the data shows that in 2001, the average edible consumption was around 8.2 kg per person per year. This data also showed that consumption has almost tripled over the last two decades.

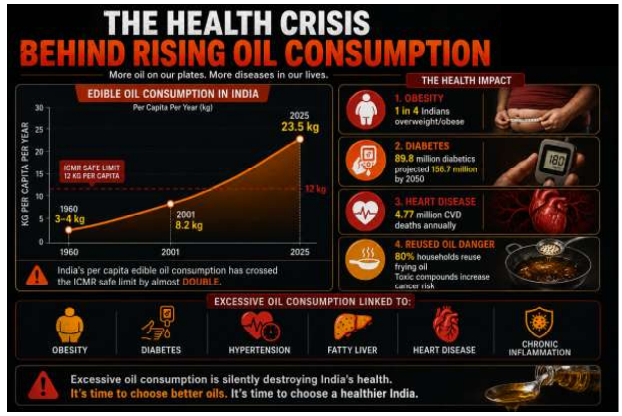
According to government data, self-sufficiency increased from nearly 36.8% in 2015 to around 44% by 2024, driven by higher domestic oilseed production and policy support.
Dhruv Mishra

It becomes more concerning if we check the ICMR-recommended limit. Indian Council of Medical Research, the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination, and promotion of biomedical research, recommends a daily intake of 20–30 grams of visible edible oil per person, which translates to a maximum of roughly 12 kg per year. Currently, Indians are consuming almost twice as much edible oil. Overconsumption of oils leads to different health diseases like Diabetes, obesity and Hypertension.

Reused cooking oil and hidden risks

According to the NFHS-5 Data, Nearly 24% Women and 23% men are considered overweight or obese. India ranks among countries with rapidly rising obesity rates. According to the World Obesity Atlas, India has the second-highest number of overweight and obese children globally. By 2040, it is projected that nearly 56 million Indian children may become obese. And it is not limited to obesity, but it is also true for other diseases like diabetes. According to the diabetes, India currently has around 89.8 million adults with diabetes, and by 2050, India's diabetes cases may reach 156.7 million, which is huge in numbers. If we look at the data, diabetes cases in India increased massively over time.

Diabetes prevalence in India had nearly doubled over the last three decades, rising from around 3% in 1990 to nearly 6% by 2021. According to doctors and researchers, unhealthy diets, excessive oil consumption, processed foods, and obesity are mainly the reasons for the increase in diabetes cases. India is also witnessing a sharp increase in heart disease and cardiovascular diseases, which are linked to unhealthy dietary habits and excessive oil consumption. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a broad term for conditions affecting the heart or blood vessels. It has now become one of the leading causes of death in the country, accounting for nearly 28% of all deaths in India as of 2016, according to the Global Burden of Disease study, and responsible for 45% of all deaths in the 40–69 age group, according to WHO India data. For the last few decades, the number of cardiovascular disease deaths in India has exploded. In 1990, there were around 2.26 million CVD deaths annually, which had nearly doubled to 4.77 million by 2020. According to health experts, this rise is strongly linked to overconsumption of oily and processed foods.



At the same time, hypertension, or high blood pressure, has become increasingly common across the country. More than one in four Indians now suffers from hypertension, but a large number of cases remain undiagnosed, untreated, or poorly controlled. According to the reports, nearly 80% of Indian households reuse frying oil multiple times. The reheated oil generates harmful trans fats, free radicals and toxic compounds that can increase inflammation inside the body and raise the risk of heart disease, fatty liver disease and even certain cancers.

How global events affect Indian kitchens

In India, the sheer size of the population dictates our import dependency and in effect, is vulnerable to supply shocks due to global events. India is heavily dependent on imported edible oil, making it vulnerable to global geopolitical crises. As India imports a large quantity of edible oil, international conflicts directly affect Indian households. For instance, the Russia-Ukraine war clearly exposed this vulnerability. India imports large quantities of sunflower oil from Russia and Ukraine. Due to the war, global supply chains were disrupted, leading to higher edible oil prices in India. Since India depends heavily on Indonesia and Malaysia for palm oil imports, export restrictions immediately increased prices. Global fluctuations in palm oil, soybean oil, and sunflower oil prices can quickly affect the prices of packaged foods, restaurants, and household cooking across the country.

Currency fluctuations further worsen the problem. Since edible oils are purchased in dollars, a weaker Indian rupee increases import costs even if international prices remain stable. Basically, the rising dependence on imported cooking oil means Indians kitchens are closely linked to global wars, export bans, and shipping disruptions. As a result, even geopolitical conflicts thousands of kilometres away can directly raise cooking oil prices for Indian consumers. This growing dependence has transformed edible oil from a basic kitchen commodity into a major strategic and economic concern for India.

Government response and PM Modi's appeal

The rise of imported edible oil and the rapid increase in lifestyle diseases have also prompted government intervention. PM Narendra Modi has repeatedly urged In-

dians to reduce their oil consumption. Recently, he urged reducing oil consumption by 10% and said, "Isse desh seva bhi hogi aur deh seva bhi hogi," meaning it would serve both the nation and the body.

First, he highlighted this issue on Independence Day, while addressing the nation, warning that obesity and lifestyle diseases could become major challenges for India in the coming years. Later, on World Health Day, he again stressed that reducing excessive oil consumption is not merely a personal health choice but also a social responsibility.

According to health experts, excessive edible oil consumption is directly linked to rising obesity, diabetes, hypertension, fatty liver disease, and cardiovascular problems across the country. Therefore, reducing excessive oil consumption can improve public health while lowering import dependence and reducing pressure on the import bill. Alongside public awareness campaigns, the government has also launched initiatives such as the National Mission on Edible Oils–Oilseeds (NMEO-OS) and the National Mission on Edible Oils–Oil Palm (NMEO-OP). These missions aim to increase domestic oilseed production, improve farmers' incentives, strengthen self-sufficiency in edible oils, and reduce India's long-term dependence on imports. The government's approach now treats edible oil not just as a food commodity, but also as an issue connected to economic security, public health, and national self-reliance.

What you can do: Practical steps to reduce excessive oil consumption

According to health experts, reducing oil consumption requires both individual self-awareness and long-term lifestyle changes. One of the simplest steps one can take is to measure daily oil consumption rather than pouring it freely during cooking. Doctors also suggest that reusing or reheating the cooking oil can lead to many diseases, as reheating generates harmful trans fats, free radicals and toxic compounds that can increase the risk of heart attack, diabetes, fatty liver and certain cancers. Moreover, experts recommend switching to less-processed, cross-pressed oils wherever possible and rotating among different oils rather than relying on a single type for all cooking.

To make your life easier, you must start reading labels on packaged foods, as many processed foods contain hidden fats and refined oils. Reducing the consumption of deep-fried snacks, fast food, bakery products and heavily processed foods can significantly lower long-term health risks. At the same time, healthier cooking methods such as steaming, grilling, roasting, and air frying can help reduce unnecessary oil intake. It is also important to teach healthier eating habits to children from an early age, especially as obesity and lifestyle diseases are rising in the younger population. According to doctors, balanced diets, moderation, and home-cooked food remain among the most effective ways to improve long-term health and reduce excessive reliance on edible oils.

Conclusion

Cooking oil may seem like an ordinary kitchen ingredient, but behind every bottle lies a much larger story of foreign dependence, changing food habits, rising health risks, and economic vulnerability. Today, India imports a large share of its edible oil requirements. Despite being an agriculture-driven country, India leaves Indian households increasingly vulnerable to global wars, export restrictions, supply chain disruptions, and international price shocks. At the same time, excessive edible oil consumption has contributed to rising obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and other lifestyle-related illnesses across the country. Therefore, it is no longer limited to agriculture or food consumption alone. It has become deeply connected to public health, economic security, food inflation, and national self-reliance. While government missions and policy reforms aim to improve domestic oilseed production and reduce import dependence, long-term change will also require healthier food habits, balanced consumption, stronger support for farmers, and greater public awareness. The future of India's edible oil challenge will depend not only on increasing domestic production but also on changing how the country consumes food. ❑❑

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https://www.opindia.com/2026/05/india-edible-oil-problem-creating-a-health-crisis-burdening-economy-import-dependent-supply-chain-disruptions/

Literate entrepreneurs must step forward to build educated society: Kashmiri Lal

Businessmen are cultured and very gentlemen. They are self-organized. Their connection with social groups brings them vast experience and a keen understanding of social issues. Therefore, it is crucial that literate businessmen come forward to build an educated society said Kashmiri Lal, a senior Sangh Pracharak and National Organiser of the Swadeshi Jagran Manch. He was speaking about business-related issues at an event organised by Team CAIT Nagpur in the city recently. Kashmiri Lal said that the Swadeshi Vyapari Munch (Forum) has been established at the national level under the aegis of the Swadeshi Jagran Manch, whose national convener is Balkrishna Bhartia. This forum will also have an office in Nagpur. "We need to gather more traders who work for the national interest, business interest, and the benefit of the traders," said Kashmiri Lal.

Ajay Patki, National Co-Convener of the Swadeshi Jagran Manch and Contact Head of the Swadeshi Vyapari Munch, said that "The Swadeshi Business Forum will work for the welfare of traders, with offices in Delhi and Nagpur, as well as branches across the nation." Bhartia, National President of the Confederation of All India Traders and National Convenor of the Swadeshi Vyapari Manch, said that a kind of cold world war is underway to take control of the global economy and increase the number of followers of one's religion.

"Every citizen, shopkeeper, and consumer is a soldier in this battle to defend its country's interest," he added. Kishore Dharashivkar said we must adhere to our culture and invoke Swadeshi through our values. Dhyaneshwar Rakshak said that all the saints of our country also followed and promoted Swadeshi. On the occasion all the people present collectively took the Swadeshi pledge. Formal vote of thanks was proposed by Raju Jain.

https://www.thehitavada.com/Encyc/2026/5/29/literate-entrepreneurs-must-step-forward-to-build-educated-society-kashmiri-lal.html

SJM writes to Gor, protests the killing of Indian seafarers

The Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) has written to United States ambassador,Sergio Gor demanding accountability for those responsible for the attacks that killed three Indian seafarers and seeking adequate compensation and justice for the victims' families.

The SJM has also demanded an assurance that such acts would not be repeated through adherence to international legal obligations. Three Indian seafarers were killed last week following the US attack on a tanker off the coast of Oman. Expressing concern over the safety of Indian sailors amid tensions in West Asia, New Delhi also issued a statement condemning the attack and summoned US chargé d'affaires Jason Meeks to register a strong protest over the incident.

"We would like to reinforce that India reserves the right to raise this matter at appropriate international forums, including the United Nations and the International Maritime Organization, to ensure that justice is neither delayed nor denied," Ashwani Mahajan, the National Co-Convenor of the organisation said.

Mahajan said the "tragic, unprovoked killing" of three unarmed Indian seafarers by US Armed Forces has sent a wave of disbelief and anger among the people of India.

"...We would like to remind the US administration that this act by US armed forces is a serious violation of the international law governing the seas, armed conflict, and human rights," Mahajan wrote.

Referring to the attacks as a clear violation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which guarantees the freedom and safety of navigation on international waters, the SJM added that the act by the US armed forces "endangering and extinguishing innocent lives at sea strikes at the very foundation of international maritime cooperation."

Demanding a time-bound investigation, the SJM has pointed out that under international human rights law, such actions also violate the universally recognised right to life.

"We are forced to say that the killing of innocent Indian seafarers is not merely a bilateral issue—it is a challenge to the rule-based international order. Allowing such acts would erode the sanctity of international law and endanger maritime security globally," Mahajan wrote.

https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/sjm-writes-to-gor-protests-the-killing-of-indian-seafarers-101781637835152-amp.html

As rupee depreciation continues unabated, experts debate over government response

A few days ago, Arvind Panagariya, Chairman, 16th Finance Commission of India and professor at Columbia University let the cat among the pigeons with a social media post that advised Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to not let the psychology of ?100 per dollar determine the Bank's policy response.

The context was the continuing depreciation of Indian rupee against US dollar, and Panagariya argued that even if rupee touches a historic low of 100 against a US dollar, "100 is just a number, like 99 and 101", and the right response at this moment is to let the rupee depreciate.

The comment saw a flurry of responses from various quarters, with people like Ashwani Mahajan, National Co-convener of Swadeshi Jagran Manch, saying India must take every possible step to curb this instability.

Panagariya's argument is that whether the oil shortage, which is causing the depreciation of rupee due to India's heavy dependence on oil imports, is short-lived or long-lived, no response is the best response.

"If the oil shortage is short-lived (3 months to a year), the rupee will depreciate now but will substantially recover once the oil-import bill shrinks and foreign capital seeks Indian investments precisely to take advantage of the 'cheap' rupee. If oil shortage is long-lasting (One to an unknown number of years), a resort to anything other than depreciation will be a losing proposition and trying to defend the rupee will continue to bleed the reserves until they are exhausted," he says.

In fact, Gita Gopinath, former IMF deputy managing director and professor at Harvard University says the policy question is whether to deplete reserves to support the rupee and her argument will be to let the rupee adjust to arrive at lower imports, higher exports and to encourage capital inflows.

Ashwani Mahajan, while agreeing to the problems RBI interventions could give rise to, says he is unable to digest the argument of letting rupee have a free fall, keeping status quo, and not doing anything to curb imports in a country like India.

"In fact, there is huge scope for self-reliance, by encouraging domestic production of the commodities by raising tariffs on imports equivalent to the disadvantage to the domestic production. For instance, if in the production of a product, the domestic producer faces a cost disadvantage due to higher electricity tariff, cesses of various kinds, logistics bottlenecks, and many others, its the bound duty of the government to raise tariffs on imports, at least to the higher cost, for which at least our domestic producers are not responsible. My experience from the industries shows that we can reduce the imports by at least 25 to 30% if we adopt these safeguards. IMF, World Bank economists are actually 'ceteris paribus economists', and don't understand this very simple logic," he says.

https://www.fortuneindia.com/amp/story/economy/domestic-tractor-wholesales-likely-to-grow-at-1-4-pc-in-fy27-icra/143683?perpetual=1

Tech-Enabled Goods Transportation Services Reduce Logistics Costs for MSMEs: C-DEP-IIT Delhi Study

The Centre for Digital Economy Policy Research (C-DEP), in collaboration with IIT Delhi, released its report titled 'Study of Technology-Enabled Intra-City Logistics for MSMEs' at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The report assesses the role of tech-enabled goods transportation services in improving the logistics cost and efficiency for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

The report was released by the Shri Praveen Khandelwal, Member of Parliament and Secretary General of Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) and Shri Ashwini Mahajan, Co-Convener of Swadeshi Jagran Manch.

MSMEs contribute to nearly 30% of India's GDP and 45% of industrial output, yet face persistent challenges in intra-city goods movement, including high transport costs, unreliable vehicle availability, and delays in transportation of goods. Based on interviews with MSMEs, tech-enabled goods transportation service providers, and analysis of aggregated data from these service providers, the study finds that technology-enabled goods transportation services have become a key enabler of day-to-day business operations for small businesses.

Speaking at the report release, the honourable Chief Guest, Shri Praveen Khandelwal, said, 'The key to India becoming a developed nation depends on lowering logistics costs for our MSME's.' He mentioned that 'A significant part of logistics costs in India can be attributed to road transport. If India is to bring logistics costs down to 4-5% of GDP, improving cost efficiency in road-based and intra-city logistics will be key.'

Shri Ashwini Mahajan, Co-Convener of Swadeshi Jagran Manch, said, 'MSMEs have always been the backbone of our economy, and today with intervention of technology, they have proven their mettle - from developing anti-drone systems to strengthening our defence sector, things we couldn't imagine years ago. India's tech ecosystem, exemplified by UPI and our space capabilities, has grown so strong that other nations now seek to collaborate with us. India as a country has immense potential to lead, and our rising global ranking signifies the same.'

https://www.bignewsnetwork.com/news/279065962/tech-enabled-goods-transportation-services-reduce-logistics-costs-for-msmes-c-dep-iit-delhi-study

SJM organises 'Mahila Vichar Varg'

Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) organised a one-day programme 'Mahila Vichar Varg' in Nagrota. The programme was hosted by Lakshmi Sharma.

On this occasion, Devyani Rana, MLA Nagrota was chief guest. In her address, Rana highlighted the importance of using Swadeshi products and explained how every citizen can contribute to strengthen the national economy by adopting indigenous goods and practicing responsible savings at household level.

Anita Sharma, Prant Mahila Pramukh, spoke about the diverse areas of work undertaken by Swadeshi Jagran Manch and its role in promoting economic nationalism and social awareness.

Deepali Handa, Prant Sah Mahila Pramukh, elaborated on the functioning and outreach of Swadeshi Jagran Manch across J&K and India.

Vishal, RSS Karyavah and Ajay Chandel, Prant Sah Sanyojak, emphasized the objectives and organizational functioning of Swadeshi Jagran Manch.

Dr. Raj, Dr. Himja Mehngi, Prant Yuvti Pramukh, Mayank Gupta and Dr. Ajay Singh also spoke on the occasion. Tehsildar, Sumit Kohli; Ex-Sarpanch, Rameshwar; VHP worker, Ashok and Lambardar Jagti, Mohinder Kumar were also present on the occasion. Varda Sharma conducted the programme.

https://www.dailyexcelsior.com/sjm-organises-mahila-vichar-varg/

Swadeshi Jagran Manch organises workshop

Swadeshi Jagran Manch organised a one-day workshop for its team members and citizens of District Udhampur at Raghunath Palace, Udhampur. The programme was hosted by Advocate Suhani Katoch.

According to a handout issued, Dr Munish Sharma, Seh-Sanyojak SJM, highlighted the working of Swadeshi Jagran Manch and emphasised the importance of entrepreneurship skills. Anita, Praant Mahila Pramukh and Deepali Handa discussed various areas of Swadeshi activities in Jammu and Kashmir and across India. During the programme, Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range, was the guest of honour. He appreciated the efforts of Swadeshi Jagran Manch and encouraged youth to work towards a self-reliant India. On the occasion, Amita Sharma, Prashant, Jaigopal Kalsotra, Rakesh Khajuria along with other workers, students and participants from various educational institutions were also present.

https://www.dailyexcelsior.com/swadeshi-jagran-manch-organises-workshop/

Student development programme held

A student development programme on "Entrepreneurship and Self Reliance" was organised today at Free Progress Academy, Konthoujam by Swavalambi Bharat Abhiyan, Manipur Prant.

Speaking at the event, DM University Vice Chancellor and North East Convenor of Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, Prof W Chandbabu, urged students to shed the job-seeking mindset and work towards making the nation self-reliant. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of India becoming the most developed nation by 2047 is being pursued by organisations like Swadeshi Jagaran Manch and Swavalambi Bharat Abhiyan.

Prof Chandbabu stressed the goal of making every household productive and self-sufficient.

"We must use locally made products and focus on producing quality goods", he said, adding that skill-based learning is vital. "Mere academic knowledge without skills will not solve unemployment", he noted, calling for emphasis on practical training for students. Free Progress Academy principal Laidhangbam Indrakumar said the school will roll out NEP 2020 activities from the 2027 session.

https://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=26..030626.jun26

SJM backs PM Modi's call for austerity measures amid energy crisis

The Swadeshi Jagran Manch supported Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for austerity measures to address the emerging energy crisis. The support came after the PM urged citizens to conserve petrol and diesel by reducing unnecessary vehicle usage, limiting foreign travel, working from home and holding meetings online.

National Co-Convenor of Swadeshi Jagran Manch Ashwani Mahajan said, "The Prime Minister also appealed to the citizens to avoid buying of gold, reduce consumption of cooking oil, avoid buying foreign brand goods and use Swadeshi, reduce use of chemical fertilizers and move towards natural farming, are all aimed at reducing dependence on imports and save valuable foreign exchange".

He said the organisation welcomed and endorsed the Prime Minister's appeal, especially regarding reducing petrol and diesel consumption. "This will reduce the country's dependence on foreign nations. Furthermore, it will not only save valuable foreign exchange but also enable the country to effectively overcome shortages of these commodities caused by supply disruptions."

"Swadeshi Jagran Manch firmly believes that this clarion call by the Prime Minister, will definitely have a significant impact on the mindset in the country, which will not only encourage people to reduce the consumption of petro-products, but also motivate our scientists, academia and industry to find new alternatives to the petroleum products for our day-to-day needs", he said.

"Apart from this we need to become self-reliant in clean tech manufacturing, which includes electric vehicles, including motor and batteries; solar energy equipment including solar cells; wind energy equipment; green hydrogen; nuclear energy etc. Once, we become self-reliant in clean energy and clean tech manufacturing, we shall not only be able to reduce our dependence on oil producing and exporting countries for imported crude oil, but also China and other countries for solar and wind equipment, electric vehicle components and others", he said.

https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/india/swadeshi-jagran-manch-backs-pm-modi-s-call-for-austerity-measures-amid-energy-crisis/ar-AA22ZMtO

Call for 'trader first' motto at vyapari manch launch

The Swadeshi Jagran Manch has formed a national-level Swadeshi Vyapari Manch under the leadership of national convenor Balakrishna Bharati, with a dedicated office formally inaugurated in Nagpur. The announcement was made during a programme organised by Team CAIT Nagpur (Confederation of All India Traders) in the city, which concluded with participants taking a collective Swadeshi pledge.

National co-convenor of Swadeshi Jagran Manch and Swadeshi Vyapari Manch contact chief Ajay Patki said the organisation would establish branches across the country with the slogan, 'Nation First, Trade First and Trader First'.

Senior Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) pracharak and national organiser of the Swadeshi Jagran Manch, Kashmiri Lal, called upon educated traders to play a greater role in building an educated and socially responsible society. Addressing the gathering, Lal said traders are naturally organised, experienced in dealing with society, and possess strong social awareness. "Educated traders must come forward to create an educated society," he said. High-lighting challenges faced by traditional businesses due to the rise of online commerce, Lal urged traders to adopt innovative schemes to attract customers and strengthen local markets. He stressed the need for all trader organisations to unite on a common platform to raise issues concerning commerce and business communities. ❑❑

https://www.pressreader.com/india/the-free-press-journal/20260528/281784225753374

Swadeshi Activities

Zila Vichar Varg/Training Workship

Pictorial Glimpses

Bhuvneshwar, Odisha

Jamshedpur, Jharkhand


East Medinipur, Central Bang


Agartala, Tripura


Jhunjhunu

North Bastar, Chhattisgarh

Jhudpur, Rajasthan

Chaibasa, Jharkhand

Devas, Malva Prant

Puri, Odisha

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Swadeshi Activities

Zila Vichar Varg/Training Workship

Pictorial Glimpses

Chhattisgarh

Washim, Maharashtra

Baleshwar, Odisha

Chandigarh

Dibrugarh, Asam

Ujjain, Malva Prant

Siliguri, Uttar Bang

Patna, Bihar

Bokaro, Jharkhand

Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh

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