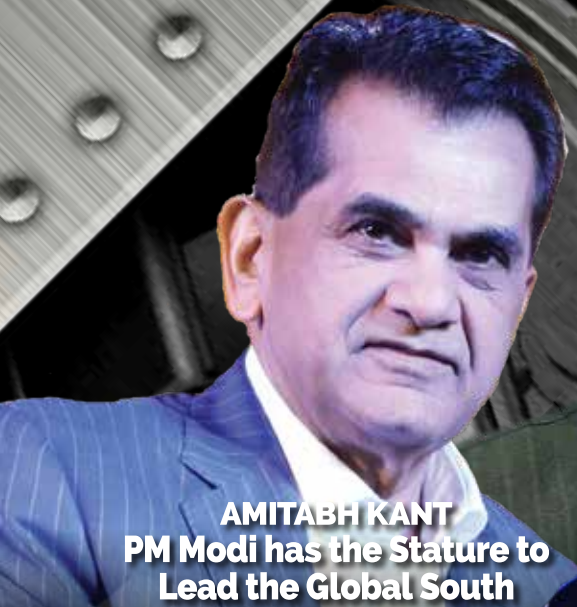


# DESTINATION INDIA CONVERSATIONS



**AMITABH KANT**  
PM Modi has the Stature to  
Lead the Global South



**S JAISHANKAR**  
Time for a More Equitable  
Global Order!



**R C BHARGAVA**  
The Evolving Business  
of Making Cars



**ROHINI NILEKANI**  
Best Private Initiatives Can  
Drive Social Change



**RONNIE SCREWVALA**  
The Future of Business,  
the Next Decade!

**THE 'FIVE EYES' AND MORE!**  
**MULTIPLE MOTIVES APPEAR AS THE PLOT THICKENS!**

# ONE THOUSAND WORDS

A PICTURE FROM OUR TIMES



At the recently concluded G20 summit in the capital, the global who's who were in town, like never before in the history of our nation. Seen here is a selection of global leaders. A special program for the accompanying spouses, a visit to the National Gallery.



## IN THIS ISSUE

Voices.....	5
A Fair and Rule Based World Order .....	6
The '5 Eyes' and More! The Plot Thickens as Multiple Motives Emerge .....	8
The G20 Success: India Did India Proud! .....	14
ONOE: A Reform that Needs more Reflection, Data and Debate .....	18
The Security Environment And India's Defence Preparedness.....	20
Of What Best Drives Samaaj, how Best Private Initiatives Can Drive Social Change.....	24
Aroon Purie Gets Lifetime Achievement Award from AIMA.....	29
Pushing the PM's Mandate; Modi has the Status to lead the Global South .....	30
The Future of Business, the Next Decade!.....	32
The Making of Maruti and the Evolving Business of Building Cars in India.....	38
Aviation will Ride the Economic Boom .....	42
Bringing Back India's Maritime Glory to our Present Times.....	44
Senior Citizens Need a Better Deal in Life!.....	46
India's Bamboo Industry: An Effective Eco-system awaits a Second Coming!.....	48
From a khandar to a Majestic Fort: A Tale of Genius and Wizardry .....	52
The Importance of Indian Heritage as Tourism Assets.....	54
The Way Forward for Heritage Tourism .....	56
Robust Growth Ahead for Indian Aviation.....	58
ICC ODI Cricket World Cup. Will it be an Encore? .....	62
Re-creating Memories of 'Delhi Durbar' .....	66
Talking Geometry with Sanjay Bhattacharya.....	68
"Modi: From Vision to Reality", Effectively Recalls the PM's Contributions in India's all-round Development .....	69
Hotelier K B Kachru Celebrates his Five Decade long Journey in Hospitality.....	70

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This issue, we have taken on an extra dimension to embrace 'conversations'. It is an essential component of democracy; the more we debate and deliberate, the more chances we arrive at a better understanding of issues and concerns. However, very often the habit to debate also glosses over inaction, lack of drive to move on. Somewhere, we need to strike that artful balance!

With the Indo-Canada row in full blaze, the hope is it will settle some age-old issues and bring about a shared understanding of what is 'freedom of expression', for instance. The K factor has been kept alive for too long; in far away lands when the homeland is free from any such aspirations. Any such whipping boy is hopefully no longer required by friendly nations. In these same months, these havens of terrorist activities might be threatening law and order in cities where they have been encouraged for ulterior gains. The time has come to start nipping them, no longer buds, but starting to bloom.

With so much international spotlight on the above, the gains of the G20 have got sidelined, in fact, some have started wondering on how we will bring them to get the traction they richly deserve.

This issue we focus on both, the multiple angles of conspiracy that have appeared in public domain. There are too many actors on stage to make it a simple act of killing. Gang wars, money trails, international espionage agencies, governments snubbed over a period of time. Alongside, we also capture the gains of G20 summit in New Delhi; some of these are here to stay.

There were some inspiring conversations at the 50th convention of AIMA, All India Management Association. On issues like trends in business today, how the rich can concern them more imaginatively in making the difference in our samaaj, and how industry icons have made it possible to change the way we live – from cars to aircraft in the sky. How education is being differently valued, the role of degrees and on the ground training.

To more such 'conversations' in the coming issues ahead. Happy reading!

**Navin Berry**  
Editor

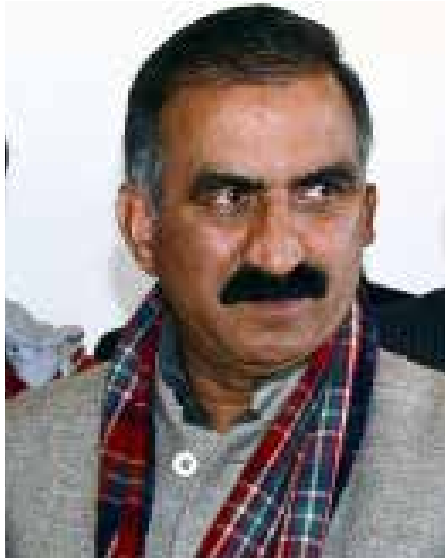
# ONE THOUSAND WORDS

A PICTURE FROM OUR TIMES



Not often do we carry photos in cluster and not have to identify any of the people featured. Like this one! At the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Kashi Cricket Stadium, PM Modi hosted the former rock stars of Indian cricket.

# VOICES



## HAPHAZARD CONSTRUCTION WAS A RECIPE FOR DISASTER

"This is a man-made tragedy. For lessons, we have looked at the causes. People built multi-storey buildings without caring for structural engineering and soil strata. Such haphazard construction was a recipe for disaster. In fact, the planned part of Shimla didn't suffer any damage. Construction in the nullahs and river beds blocked the gushing waters. A rampant hill cutting at 90 degrees for road widening destabilised the mountain strata, making them highly prone to landslides. We are now changing the construction rules. No building activity on a 45-degree slope will be allowed. Hill-cutting for private development has been banned. Rules on structural design and load bearing capacity of strata are being reframed and will be strictly enforced. Instead of hill-blasting for roads, we need to shift to tunneling. That is an expensive proposition but will be more beneficial in the long term as it shortens distances, costs less in maintenance, and saves the environment. That is what I have suggested to NHAI. There was logic behind the British building 103 tunnels on the Kalka-Shimla rail route."

- Himachal CM Sukhu in an interview to *The Hindustan Times*

## PM MODI IS WORKING ON A CHANGE IN MINDSET

"It was a change in mindset. If you look at the man who runs his country and you look at Swachh Bharat, and he said it, he's the first person to go to the UN and talk about toilets. Now, that was a risk. I don't think he has a fetish about toilets. He really wanted to change a mindset, and when you have a conversation with him, he thinks that the thing that holds India back is our mindset. And we talk about this. All of us talk about this at cocktail parties. We are such bright people. We could do X, Y, Z if only our mindset changed. I think this man's actually trying to change mindsets now. I remember once when I had a conversation with him, I said he understands very clearly what the correlations to this mindset changer are. Tourism is a very big hot button for him. He believes tourism is a higher margin service business than IT, to be honest. That's his real view. He feels it has higher margins, and he sees the lack of cleanliness in India as an impediment to India getting a huge chunk of that. That's a very enlightened thought.

So he's a very practical person. I would tell you that I think he's created two things, transparency and traceability, that for sure with the help of people in this room, he's going to be able to do, and I certainly think he's changed the mindset. Everybody is going to think twice about going back to their old ways. And to be honest, as a large company, I can tell you very clearly that corruption in New Delhi and at the top levels is virtually non-existent now. Virtually non-existent."

- Anand Mahindra on PM Modi



## INDIA NEEDS TO GROW AT 8 PER CENT



"\$20 billion of World Bank capital over the last 60 years led to \$800 billion in lending. And if I put that \$800 billion into today's dollars, it would have been more than \$2 trillion, that is an immense capacity to make a difference. These institutions need to be transformed if they are to meet the challenges of a world on fire....."

"I think this is a reasonable thing to say that a stretched target, an ambitious goal, a possible aspiration for India is an eight-fold growth between now and the end of the half century, that an 8 per cent a year, which isn't my forecast on current policy.

But I believe given India's potential even in the more challenging world economy, I believe that is an imaginable goal and an eight-fold expansion of the economy is transformative on the lives of hundreds of millions of people."

- Former Treasury Secretary, US, Lawrence Summers while delivering a lecture 'The World is on Fire' organised by the CII and Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance

# A Fair and Rule Based World Order, that Applies to Us Equally, Ensuring an Equitable Distribution of World's Resources

India's External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, was at the UNGA last week, spelling out India's concerns and hopes of a new global order. A most articulate presentation of the emerging global scenario where India is being seen as a most representative voice of the global South. We present excerpts from his speech, highlighting his aspirations of a world where we are more equitable sharer of the Earth's resources.



by S JAISHANKAR

**N**amaste from Bharat. The world is witnessing an exceptional period of turmoil as it is. Structural inequities and uneven development have imposed burdens on the global south, but stresses have been aggravated by the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and the repercussions of ongoing conflicts, tensions, and disputes. As a result, socio-economic gains of recent years have been rolled back. Resources for sustainable development are severely challenged and many countries really struggle to make ends meet. Navigating the future appears even more daunting today.

At this juncture, it was with a sense of exceptional responsibility that India took up the presidency of the G20. Our vision of One Earth, One Family, One Future sought to focus on the key concerns of the many, not just the narrow interests of a few. In the words of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it was to bridge divides, dismantle barriers, and sow seeds of collaboration that nourish world where unity prevails over discord and where shared destiny eclipses isolation. The New Delhi G20 leaders' declaration articulates our collective ability to do so.

The New Delhi Summit also affirms that diplomacy and dialogue are the only effective solutions. The international order is diverse and we must cater for divergences, if not differences. The days when a few nations set the agenda and expected others to fall in line are over.

As the United Nations itself symbolizes, finding common ground is an imperative to listen to others and to respect their viewpoints. This is not weakness. It is the basics of cooperation. Only then can collective efforts on global issues be successful. Recognizing that growth and development must focus on the most vulnerable. We began the G20 presidency by convening the voice of the Global South Summit. This enabled us to hear directly from 125 nations and place their concerns on the G20 agenda. As a consequence, issues which deserve global attention got a fair hearing. More than that, the deliberations produce outcomes that have great significance for the international community.

It was also noteworthy that at India's initiative, the African Union was admitted as a permanent member of the G20. By doing so, we gave voice to an entire continent, which has long been its due.

This significant step in reform should inspire the United Nations, a much older organization to also make the Security Council contemporary. Broad representation is after all, a prerequisite for both effectiveness and credibility. The outcomes of the New Delhi G20 summit will surely resonate for years ahead. Among them is an action plan for sustainable development goals, a crucial need of the day. Equally important are the high principles of life, lifestyle for environment, and the Green Development Pact as they shape our approach to our planet's future. The transformative role of digital public infrastructure has also finally been recognized as the salience of women-led development in building an inclusive and progressive society. The reform of international financial institutions has been given due weight, as has the resolution of debt vulnerabilities.

The New Delhi G20 outcomes are expressed both as larger policies and as specific initiatives. They could be about building cities for tomorrow, of fighting corruption, eliminating hunger or delivering quality education, ending plastic pollution or preserving the ocean-based economy or for that matter, enhancing food security or even mapping global skills. Some address longstanding issues like gender divide and climate

action. Others focus on new concerns such as responsible harnessing of artificial intelligence. All in all, we have placed for the world's consideration a set of actionable propositions, constructive solutions, and new directions. Even as we encourage collective endeavours, India also seeks to promote cooperation with diverse partners.

From the era of non-alignment, we have now evolved to that of Vishwa Mitra, a friend to the world. This is reflected in our ability and willingness to engage with a broad range of nations and where necessary harmonize interests. It is visible in the rapid growth of the Quad. A mechanism today so relevant to the Indo-Pacific. It is equally apparent in the expansion of the BRICS grouping of independent minded nations, or in fact, the emergence of the I2U2 combination. Recently, we hosted the creation of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).

The forging of the Global Biofuels Alliance was another notable development. This willingness to work in an open-minded manner on specific domains is now a defining characteristic of the emerging multipolar order. All nations pursue the national interests. We in India have never seen that as being in contradiction with global good. When we aspire to be a leading power, this is not for self-aggrandizement, but to take on greater responsibility and make more contributions. The goals we have set for ourselves will make us different from all those whose rise preceded ours. India demonstrated this during the Covid through the vaccine, our endeavours, like the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure have gathered wide support.

Our espousing of the international year of millets is enhancing global food security. We have built development partnerships with 78 nations across geographies, and we have also been first responder in disaster emergency situations.

The people of Turkey saw that in February, as did those in Syria. A commitment is understandably even greater. Closer home when Sri Lanka experienced a severe economic crisis, it was India that first stepped forward. But even in distant regions, partners such as the Pacific Islands have appreciated our contributions to meet their needs in health, in technology and in climate action.

The most populous nation and the fifth largest economy in the world, knows that its progress makes a real difference to the world, especially so when so many nations identify with us for reasons of history, of geography, and of culture. They follow our experiences closely and evaluate our solutions for the larger relevance. Last week, the United Nations assess progress towards achieving SDGs. The mood here reflected the struggle to overcome challenges, especially those of resource paucity. It is therefore vital at this midway that we expand our capacities and regain our confidence.

As the largest contributor to meeting SDG targets, India's achievements should give heart to others on this journey. After all, the global multidimensional poverty index records that we have halved the global MPI value in the last 15 years, lifting 415 million people out of poverty. That progress has now moved onto a higher level with ambitious socioeconomic initiatives covering financial inclusion, food and nutrition, health and water supply, as well as energy and housing. We are seeking to demonstrate that social welfare need not be the sole prerogative of the developed world.

Excellencies programmes underway in India highlight the transformational role of digital delivery of public goods. It has facilitated scaling up, it has enhanced efficiency, and it has combated corruption. The national objective of leaving no one behind is forging ahead in so many dimensions. Moreover, the democratization of technology has opened mindsets instilled confidence and inspired innovations.

**As a civilizational polity that embraces modernity we bring both tradition and technology equally confidently to the table. It is this fusion that today defines India, that is Bharat.**

In our deliberations, we often advocate the promotion of a rules-based order. From time to time, respect for the UN charter is also invoked, but for all the talk, it is still a few nations who shape the agenda and seek to define the norms. This cannot go on indefinitely, nor will it go unchallenged. A fair, equitable and democratic order will surely emerge once we all put our minds to it. And for a start, that means ensuring that rule makers do not subjugate rule takers. After all, rules will work only when they apply equally to all.

We must never again allow an injustice like vaccine apartheid to recover, to climate action too cannot continue to witness an evasion of historical responsibilities. The power of markets should not be utilized to steer food and energy from the needy to the wealthy. Similarly, respect for territorial integrity and non-interference and internal affairs cannot be exercised in cherry picking.

When reality departs from the rhetoric, we must have the courage to call it out. Without genuine solidarity, there can never be real trust. This is very much the sentiment of the global south. Next year, the United Nations will be hosting the summit of the future. This should serve as a serious opportunity to drive change, champion fairness and reform multilateralism, including the expansion of the Security Council memberships, we must address global challenges imbued with the conviction that we are one earth and one family with one future.

India has entered the 'Amrit kaal' where greater progress and transformation awaits us. We are confident that our talent and creativity now so visibly unleashed will power us forward. The world saw a glimpse of what is to come when our Chandrayan 3 landed on the moon. Today, our message to the world is in digitally enabled governance and delivery, in the widening ambit of amenities and services, in rapidly growing infrastructure and in our energetic startup culture, it is visible too in vibrant cultural expressions such as in the arts, yoga, wellness, and lifestyle.

Our latest assertion is in a pathbreaking legislation to reserve one third of the seats for women in our legislatures. I speak for a society where ancient traditions of democracy have struck deep modern roots. As a result, our thinking, approaches and actions are now more grounded and authentic. As a civilizational polity that embraces modernity we bring both tradition and technology equally confidently to the table. It is this fusion that today defines India, that is Bharat. **D**

# The '5 EYES' AND MORE! THE PLOT THICKENS AS MULTIPLE MOTIVES EMERGE



by IQBAL CHAND MALHOTRA

**I**n any unnatural death, there is always a history, a motive, a perpetrator, the evidence, and an intended opportunity. The murder of Khalistan supporter Harjit Singh Nijjar on 18 June 2023 at Surrey in British Columbia is one such unusual case that has more to it than meets the eye.

Two masked suspects, described as heavysset men pumped bullets into Nijjar who was sitting inside his truck and thereafter fled the scene. Several weeks later, after painstaking investigations, the police confirmed that there was a getaway driver as well, who helped the two assassins flee the scene of crime in a silver 2008 Toyota Camry. All three suspects remain at large till date.

*(Continued on Page 10)*

**This article says there has been a murder. It appears so far none of the eye witnesses have been interrogated. No evidence has been presented to the public. Indian authorities have denied any information has been shared. But India has been called out? The most obvious needle of suspicion would point towards India! Why? Simply because there is a pro-Khalistan person involved. And there is a history of so-called champions for Khalistan working out of Canada. In any Sherlock Holmes mystery, it is always the least suspect who had a reason, never the most obvious one. And there are in any murder mystery till then, unseen players who had their own reasons. Could other players have taken advantage from this killing, knowing there were multiple gains to be had? A new gain could be to sully India's growing clout globally and the recent success of G20. Remember the murder took place more than three months earlier, so why this timing? Just after G20 summit was over, even as some reports are suggesting Trudeau was planning to raise the issue at the summit itself. Surely as a G7 member, he was going at odds with his own friends; then, why this self-goal? Did Trudeau lose his plot somewhere? And, did Trudeau wade into the deep waters muddied by a host of issues coming together, alongside with the need to keep his government stay in power?**



# The Challenge is also an Opportunity to Set Things Right! The West Must Begin to Respect India's Concerns

by NAVIN BERRY

**A**s a subject it has been on the boil for some time. Of the choosing of Canada's internal politics. That a pro Khalistan lobby from nowhere, when none exists back in India, has been allowed to run riot over years!

Why? It is only the Canadians who can raise the question and also look for answers. They can find them, too, only if they are honest. When the entire issue has died down, back in Punjab, nobody even has it on mind, an unholy commitment in the name of 'freedom of expression' to a Sikh nation has kept it alive! Nobody in India that anyone knows of, has a separate state in mind; only these self-styled believers do, it's festered in their own imagination, kept going for reasons best known only to them.

More importantly, as it comes out through media reports, such communities overseas have been a convenient cover for trading in drugs, weapons, mafia operations that have now crept into body politic and also geo-politics of the region. All in the name of so called 'freedom of expression'. They have found support from countries hostile to India or who cannot see an India Rising!

Has it been an easy stick to beat India over recent years? And should India keep paying obeisance in perpetuity? These have been blatant attacks on India's sovereignty carried out from Canadian soil! And, there has been literally no expression of concern. Some of these recent attacks on our consulates, tearing down our Indian flag, threats written on posters against Indian diplomats are indeed most deplorable and cannot be condoned. In fact, India has shown extreme patience and respect.

Whoever is responsible for the Nijjar killing, only the Heavens know best, but India has been called out as a possible suspect. This incident should give India the opportunity to say enough is enough. Not just in Canada but also in the UK and in Australia. Such hostile acts against our sovereignty cannot be tolerated when conducted on foreign soil in the name of freedom of expression. These must stop. Either these should stop,

**Whoever is responsible for the Nijjar killing, only the Heavens know best, but India has been called out as a possible suspect. This incident should give India the opportunity to say enough is enough. Not just in Canada but also in the UK and in Australia. These must stop. Either these should stop, or we must reserve our rights to consider them acts of war!**

or we should we start looking upon them as acts of war?

Therefore, it is most appropriate that Minister Jaishankar, in his usual understated and moderated tone, has warned that "political convenience cannot dictate responses to terrorism, extremism and violence". He has further said that "respect for territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs cannot be exercises in cherry picking". Extremely poignant expressions, very pointed to such acts of aggression and violence being allowed to be carried out in countries that promote 'freedom of expression'. Should such become reciprocal, what else would be an open war?


Indian authorities say no details have yet been shared. What is worse? What has been Trudeau's act like? A cop says he has found the thief, called the thief

out, and then he asks the thief to cooperate to allow the cop to nail the thief. Looks like a kid's game, does it not?

What next? It appears good reason is playing along sidewise, as well. The statement from the Canadian Army chief that let politics be left to governments to decide, there is no change in the ground to cooperation in the Indo-Pacific military cooperation. Trudeau's further statements that he does not intend to provoke, is another good lead to follow. That he wants good relations with India has also followed next, all good to relieve the tensions that indeed must be rolled back.

India would like to see some step back in such expressions of support for freedom of expression. These must be stopped, and seen in the light that India and every free world citizen would, as acts of treason against another country, not acceptable on the soil of friendly countries.

EAM Jaishankar's statement that "days when a few nations set the agenda are over" is most timely again.

So, hopefully we will go back in time, trace back these irritants; the challenge in the present situation is also an opportunity to set things right, going into the future, when the global order is being re-calibrated. With recent alliances such as Quad, common concerns in the Indo-Pacific region and much else, the West needs to respect Indian concerns more than they have in the past. 



That this was not an ordinary murder over local issues or money or a gang land hit, became clear when no confirmed leads were thrown up as to the identity of either the assailants or the ownership of the getaway car that could lead the police to the perpetrators of the crime. It became increasingly clear that this was a sophisticated sanctioned “hit” undertaken with non-local assassins whose “footprints” could not be easily traced.

The question then arises that if this was a sanctioned hit then who ordered it?

## The Indian angle

Following Nijjar’s killing, the CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) then began hunting around for motives and increasingly they were being led to infer that India was behind this hit. It appears there is suspicion in CSIS circles that India was behind the deaths of Khalistani terrorists Harvinder Singh Rinda and Harmeet Singh, aka ‘Happy PhD’, both in Lahore, Pakistan over the last two years. The Canadian agencies were helped in arriving at this inference in no small measure by their political bosses who were being fed the angle that the Nijjar hit was also a hit sanctioned and executed by Indian agents in Canada. This got covered in the local press in Canada.

India could well be active in matters pertaining to the Indian diaspora in Canada. A CSIS report in 2017 warned that Indian agents in Vancouver and Toronto planned to target Khalistanis and apparently recommended that RAW’s Canadian ops be disrupted for national security reasons. However, the Canadian government blocked CSIS’s recommendation due to “political sensitivity”, according to a confidential Canadian foreign interference review. It is logical that despite this CSIS continued to monitor what it believed to be RAW’s ops in Canada.

According to what is available on the internet in the public domain, CSIS apparently narrowed down two Indian diplomats who were extremely active intelligence officers under diplomatic cover. During their tenure, both these officers worked closely with Chandra Arya, a Liberal Party MP for Nepean, Ontario. Arya had earlier this year sponsored a petition calling on the Canadian government to reassess its Foreign Agent Registry plan in what appears to be an unusual public show of opposition from within the Liberal party caucus to their own government’s position. The Canadian government argues the registry would increase transparency around illegitimate foreign state influence activities. Registries can require individuals to formally register with the government they are trying to influence to make such dealings more transparent, with the possibility of fines or even prison time for failing to comply. Both Australia and the United

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States have such programs in place.

The question does arise that why is Liberal MP Chandra Arya opposing the establishment of this Registry? Any answer is best known to Arya and the reader can draw his own inference. However, Arya’s opposition to the establishment of this Registry and his association with the two Indian “diplomats” has very likely been construed by Canadian intelligence to be a possible attempt to breach national security and used as extended “evidence” to blame these diplomats for almost all the turbulence within Canada’s Indian origin population. A far cry, but this is one possible reason for the confusion.

*The argument that RAW was the local mastermind of all these activities including the Nijjar execution purportedly ordered from New Delhi was reportedly pushed before Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau by Jagmeet Singh Dhaliwal aka Jimmy Dhaliwal, the leader of the Canadian National Democratic Party (NDP).*

## Jimmy Dhaliwal and his NDP

Jimmy Dhaliwal was elected leader of the NDP in the leadership election on 1 October 2017, having won on the first ballot with 53.8 per cent of the vote. In his first interview right after he won the party leadership, Dhaliwal expressed doubts on the findings of the 18-month long inquiry led by former Canadian Supreme Court justice John Major into the Air India Kanishka 1985 bombing which left 329 people dead — 268 of them Canadians. The inquiry pointed to Talwinder Singh Parmar as the chief terrorist behind the bombing. In the same interview and many subsequent ones, Singh was unwilling to denounce extremists amidst Canadian Sikhs who pay homage to Parmar as a martyr. In 2013, during UPA-2, Dhaliwal was denied a visa to India for raising the issue of the 1984

anti-Sikh riots following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

In a December 2017 interview with Bloomberg, Dhaliwal declared that he would not rule out working with the Conservatives to topple a federal government led by Trudeau if the NDP held the balance of power in a minority parliament.

The 2021 Canadian federal election to the 44th Canadian Parliament was held on 20 September 2021. The Justin Trudeau led Liberals won the most seats at 160. Though this fell short of the 170 seats needed for a majority in the House of Commons, they formed a minority government. Jimmy Dhaliwal's NDP won 25 seats, holding a vital balance of power. Six months into the first session of the 44th Canadian Parliament on 22 March 2022 it was announced that the NDP would henceforth support Justin Trudeau's minority government with confidence and supply measures i.e., they would support the minority government in motions of confidence and appropriation votes.

## The China Angle: interference in Canadian politics

In 2022 and 2023, Canadian media reports alleged that China had made attempts to interfere in both elections and threatened Canadian politicians. In late 2022, the *Global News* television network reported on a suspected attempt by China to infiltrate the Canadian Parliament by funding a network of candidates to run in the 2019 Canadian federal election. In early 2023, *The Globe and Mail* newspaper published a series of articles reporting that CSIS, in several classified documents, advised Trudeau that both China's MSS and UFWD (United Front Work Department) had employed disinformation campaigns and undisclosed donations to support preferred candidates during the 2021 Canadian federal election, with the aim of ensuring that the Liberals would win again, but only with a minority. This was a very serious allegation and its consequence was to enable Dhaliwal's NDP to support and influence Trudeau's minority government.

Canada's Conservative Party demanded a public inquiry into what it called failures by the Trudeau government to warn parliamentarians of China's activities, notify parliamentarians whom China had targeted, and further protect Canadian democratic procedures. In May 2023, the Canadian government expelled Chinese diplomat Zhao Wei, accused of intimidating a Canadian politician.

On the same day that Canada expelled Zhao Wei, the *Globe and Mail* reported that



**In 2022 and 2023, Canadian media reports alleged that China had made attempts to interfere in both elections and threatened Canadian politicians. In late 2022, the *Global News* television network reported on a suspected attempt by China to infiltrate the Canadian Parliament by funding a network of candidates to run in the 2019 Canadian federal election.**

Canada is seeking membership in the AUKUS defence pact to counter the rising threat from China. The Department of Global Affairs and the Privy Council Office are both reported to be in negotiations to include Canada in the pact.

Trudeau has tasked Inter-Governmental Affairs Minister Dominic Le Blanc with negotiating with opposition parties to discuss the possibility of a public inquiry on the issue of

foreign interference in Canadian elections. In September 2023, Trudeau also commissioned Québec Justice Marie-Josée Hogue to preside over the *Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions*. Her mandate includes investigating foreign interference from not only China, but also from other states deemed hostile to Canada, such as Russia.

Earlier this year in May, the House of Commons passed a non-binding motion calling on the government to expel Chinese diplomats involved in political interference. The motion also called on the government to establish a public inquiry and a Foreign Agent Registry, and to force the closure of unofficial "Chinese police stations operating in Canada." In November 2022, Canada summoned the Chinese ambassador Cong Peiwu and issued a "cease and desist" warning concerning these stations. In March 2023, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) announced investigations into two such police stations in Quebec.

## Canada's further moves against China

On 1 December 2018, the chief financial officer of Huawei and deputy chair Meng Wenzhou was arrested in Vancouver at an extradition request by US authorities on suspicion of violating US sanctions. Trudeau said that the federal government was aware of the intended arrest but was not involved in the process, but the Chinese government protested the arrest made by Canadian authorities. The arrest had ramifications for the bilateral ties of both countries.

On 10 December 2018, former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and Canadian consultant linked with North Korea Michael Spavor were detained in Beijing by the MSS. A senior adviser in Hong Kong for the International Crisis Group, a conflict resolution thinktank based in Brussels, Kovrig had worked for the Canadian diplomatic service in Beijing and Hong Kong until 2016.

It appeared that Kovrig and Spavor's detention (referred to in the media as the arrest of the two Michaels) was in retaliation for Canada's holding of Meng Wenzhou based on a US arrest warrant and an instance of hostage diplomacy. On 9 December 2018, China had warned the Canadian ambassador John McCallum of severe consequences unless Meng was released.

On 12 December 2018, the Communist Party-run newspaper *Global Times* warned that "if Canada extradites Meng to the U.S., China's revenge will be far worse than detaining a Canadian." On 3 June 2020 Bell Canada rejected Huawei in favour of Ericsson to supply its 5G Network. The US and Australian governments had already rejected Huawei because they were concerned that it was too closely connected to the intelligence services of China.

The editorial board of the *National Post* went so far as to observe that Huawei CEO Ren Zhengfei was a former PLA officer and current Chinese Communist Party member, and laws "force Chinese companies to support, assist and co-operate with the state intelligence work... It would be folly to give the authoritarian regime even the potential of building a back door into networks that drive our cars, host high-level cabinet meetings and transmit government and corporate secrets." In May 2022, the Canadian government banned Huawei and ZTE from the country's 5G network.

## The Retaliation Theory and the attack on G20

Was China plotting revenge against Trudeau? Were the Chinese unhappy with the success of the G20 Summit in New Delhi and the growing clout of India among the global comity of nations? Was China looking for an opportunity to collectively target the US and India in order to spoil the G20 and undermine the increasing momentum in the QUAD. Were they getting alarmed at talk that the US was examining the possibility of leasing two nuclear attack submarines and B-1 bombers to India.

What better way than to make their Canadian nemesis the patsy? Trudeau presented himself as an excellent target! How much was China in the plot? Again, a lead but then who can tell?



**In 2020, Nijjar was declared a terrorist by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and his name was on the wanted list that the then-Punjab Chief Minister Amrinder Singh gave to Trudeau, when he visited India.**

## ISI in the Plan: Always Ready to Jump in where India is Involved

In order to execute such a complex false flag operation, one must first establish a pattern. For this and much more, did MSS rope in the ISI?

It appears that the ISI was also looking for an opportunity to settle scores with RAW because of the killings in February 2023 of Aijaz Ahmad Ahangar in the Kunar Province of Afghanistan and Bashir Ahmad Peer in Rawalpindi. These killings were in all probability executed by former members of the Abdul Ghani led pre-Taliban Afghan governments security service called NDS. These assassins are part of the displaced NDS diaspora spread all over Central Asia.

Both Ahangar and Peer, who had joined militancy in early 1990s and had lived in Afghanistan and Pakistan for nearly 30 years, were over 50 years old and had a high profile in terrorist ranks. Both had been designated as individual terrorists by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) respectively on 5 January 2023, and 4 October 2022. The MHA used its powers under clause (e) of sub section (1) of section 35 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. Peer was a member of Hizbul Mujaheddin responsible for launching fresh terrorists into Kashmir. Ahangar was the architect of a March 2020 suicide bombing by Kasargod-born Muhammad Muhsin, who killed a security guard and 24 Sikh worshippers at the Gurdwara Kart-e Parwan in Kabul.

## The false flag operation

Under this theory, the ISI would have selected Paramjit Singh Panjwar as the first victim of this false flag operation. Panjwar was an expendable ISI asset who had outlived his usefulness. Panjwar was heading the Khalistan Commando Force-Panjwar group and was designated as a terrorist by India under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in July 2020. Panjwar was shot dead on 6 May 2023 in Lahore by gunmen. Panjwar's guard was also injured and succumbed later. The assassins tasked were in all probability the same non-ideological ex-NDS Afghans



who it can be argued may have had some dotted lines linking them to RAW from an earlier time.

The choice of the Panjwar hit was thus an extension of a pattern that now attempted to craftily weave RAW into this transforming mosaic.

The next task was to select a pro-Khalistani target in Canada whose assassination had the potential to create a significant geo-political furor. The target selected was Harjit Singh Nijjar. He was initially associated with the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and later became chief of the Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF). Nijjar was also involved in a toxic war for control of well-funded Sikh religious institutions in Canada, waged through increasingly powerful criminal networks.

The war had pitched millionaire businessman and former Kanishka blast terrorist-turned-PM Modi supporter Ripudaman Malik against Nijjar. In 2022, just months before Malik's mafia-style execution by hitmen, Nijjar had publicly called Malik a traitor and demanded he be taught a lesson. Former partners and business associates also believed themselves aggrieved by Malik's conduct of his businesses, the Khalsa Credit Union, the Satnam Education Trust, and Papillon Imports. Malik ran the import and export business of the designer clothing brand Papillon. He also owned the Khalsa Credit Union with assets over Canadian \$110 million, a banking and investment venture aimed at serving the Sikh community of British Columbia. He ran Khalsa Schools in Surrey and Abbotsford under his Satnam Educational Society. It was alleged but never proven that Nijjar was linked to Malik's murder.

In 2020, Nijjar was declared a terrorist by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and his name was on the wanted list that the then-Punjab Chief Minister Amrinder Singh gave to Trudeau, when he visited India.

## Conclusions

Who benefited from the Nijjar hit? Neither India nor the US nor Canada. A post-G20 poll reveals that Trudeau's popularity remains at 31% while his conservative opponent Pierre Poilievre's popularity rating has increased to 40%.

Thanks to the immature rantings of mainstream print and television in India, popular sentiment is being turned against the US. The open talk of Five Eyes is disconcerting but no facts have come out yet in public domain.

**There is a view that Dhaliwal had persuaded Trudeau to go public with his allegations against India during the G20 summit in New Delhi. If Trudeau had done so, there would have been no unanimous declaration and G20 Summit would have collapsed and its success and effectiveness cast in doubt!**

A new narrative that Hindus are under threat in Canada has started trending. Khalistan protests have started rocking key cities in Canada.

While Trudeau has first called out India, he is subsequently asking India to cooperate. Other Western allies are saying they want India to cooperate. There is a view that Dhaliwal had persuaded Trudeau to go public with his allegations against India during the G20 summit in New Delhi. If Trudeau had done so, there would have been no unanimous declaration and G20 Summit would have collapsed and its success and effectiveness cast in doubt! This would have given a sense of victory to those not too happy with its ongoing success. In which circumstances, did

Biden arm twist a petulant Trudeau to keep silent till he reached home.

Though G20 was saved, a big slur has come onto the Indo-Canadian relationship. This relationship enabled India to become a nuclear power. CIRUS (Canada India Reactor Utility Services) was a nuclear research reactor supplied by Canada to India in 1954. It used heavy water (deuterium oxide) supplied by the US. It was the second nuclear reactor to be built in India.

Since there were no IAEA safeguards in those days, CIRUS produced some of India's initial weapons grade plutonium stockpile, as well as the plutonium for India's 1974 Pokhran nuclear test.

Canada indirectly helped us become a stable nuclear power, and with the huge Indian diaspora, it is quite sad to see the mainstream TV channels, some more vehemently than others, demonising that country. Canada is an old friend and deserves better, even if it at present it is being run by an unsure leader under pressure of his own domestic compulsions. **□**



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# THE G20 SUCCESS India Did India Proud!

**Despite dire predictions and odds right till the day of the G20 Summit on 9th September, India was able to produce a 100 per cent consensus at the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration on the first day of the Summit itself. Agreement among all participating countries was achieved not only on the substantive issues of development and growth which are the primary remit of the G20 but also on the highly divisive subject of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.**



by ASHOK SAJJANHAR

Coming as it did, so suddenly and unexpectedly, the Leaders' Declaration gave a huge boost to India's standing and prestige in the global community. This announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi came at the beginning of the second Session on "One Family." At the beginning of the first Session in the morning on 9th September, PM Modi had announced the induction and welcomed the African Union as the 21st member of the G20.

The flawless and impeccable manner in which these two historic decisions were reached and announced was greeted with a sense of awe, admiration and relief by the G20 member countries and the world. Events of 9th

September which were arrived at after months of painstaking toil and sweat irretrievably pushed India to the global center stage. This singular achievement can be seen as the victory of 'Team India' led decisively and resolutely by PM Modi, comprising principally of External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Sherpa Amitabh Kant and many others.

## The Setting

India got the Presidency of the G20 on 1st December, 2022 at a very tumultuous time for the world.

The world has been passing through a particularly difficult time for the last few years. The world had scarcely been able to get over the ill-effects of the Covid-19 pandemic that it was jolted by the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict that started in February, 2022. While the pandemic resulted in immense hardships around the world, particularly among the developing countries, on account of supply chain disruptions, damage to the health, economies and social structures of



countries, the Russia-Ukraine war led to shortages of food, fertilizers, energy, increase in debt, rise in inflation etc. These crises devastated the world, particularly the developing countries. India was able to deal effectively with the challenges thrown up by both these crises. For this reason, as also the fact that India's economy has been growing at an impressive pace since the last several years, and because it continues to be the fastest growing major economy in the world, the world had high hopes that India would be able to deal resolutely with the challenges that the Presidency of the G20 presented.

India is perhaps the only country in the world that straddles the North-South divide as well as, more importantly, the East-West divide between Russia and China on the one side and the United States and the West on the other. It was however thought that getting an agreement on the Russia-Ukraine conflict would be quite impossible given the very strong and extreme positions held by the two sides.

The G20 Summit came at a time when the global multilateral organizations were found unable and incapable of dealing with the challenges of the world. The UN Security Council was seen to be totally ineffective in dealing with the twin challenges of Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war that the world has been facing. Under these circumstances and with the highly polarized and entrenched positions of the two sides on the Ukraine conflict, it was considered unthinkable that India will be able to stitch together a compromise between the two highly extreme and divergent positions.

## The Summit

India was however able to achieve the impossible by crafting a formulation which all the concerned protagonists could live with. Apparently all the countries realized that this was possibly the best result that they could achieve. One of the important reasons for this was because all countries wanted India's G20 Presidency to be a success. This is definitely true of the US and other members of the G7. They would not have wanted to embarrass or besmirch India's image with a failed G20 Presidency. This is on account of India's growing profile in world affairs and because India has carved out very friendly and positive relations with the West. The emerging economies of Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, Mexico, Türkiye and some others who helped India to craft the final text were also keen to take the ownership of the G20 and ensure that it achieved a successful conclusion. Russia was quite satisfied with the Text as it did not mention "Russia" by name and many of the Bali formulations which referred to "deploring in

**India is perhaps the only country in the world that straddles the North-South divide as well as, more importantly, the East-West divide between Russia and China on the one side and the United States and the West on the other.**

strongest terms Russia's aggression against Ukraine" or demand for "Russia's complete and unconditional withdrawal from the Ukrainian territory" did not find a mention in the Declaration.

The developed countries also wanted a "successful G20." This is the only global forum which brings together the G7 countries and the emerging economies of India, Indonesia, Brazil, South Africa and several others, along with Russia and China. If the G20 had not been able to arrive at a consensus final document it would, according to the German Ambassador in India, signaled the "death of the G20." The G7 was hence willing to make compromises to ensure an agreed text. Although they had to give up on references to Russia's aggression of Ukraine that had appeared in the Bali text, they took solace in the fact that reference to the Bali Declaration and also to the UN Resolutions was made in the New Delhi text. The issue of Russia's aggression against Ukraine is categorically and fully mentioned in all these documents. They also got satisfaction that there was no reference to the sanctions imposed by the Western nations on Russia. In the final analysis, the G7 acted in a statesmanlike manner by accepting the best that was possible under the circumstances and ensuring the success of India's G20 Presidency. If there had been



no agreed text at the end of the day, it would have been the first time in 18 Summits that G20 would not have been able to arrive at a Final Declaration. And this could have spelt the death knell for the Organization.

In addition to getting an agreement amongst all the countries on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the final Declaration treads some ambitious new ground by getting far-reaching formulations on some of the most vexatious, current issues like food scarcity, growing debt burden of developing countries, reform of the Multilateral Development Banks, putting the Sustainable Development Goals on track, accelerating global economic growth and also on some of the long standing challenges confronting the global community like climate change, terrorism, women led development and others.

One of the most significant outcomes of the Summit was the launch of the Biofuels Alliance by PM Modi and Presidents Joe Biden and Lula. A total of 19 countries and 12 international organizations joined the alliance, including both G20 members and non-member countries. India, Brazil and the US are the founding members of the alliance. PM Modi said that the launch of the Global Biofuels Alliance marks a watershed moment in the global quest towards sustainability and clean energy. The alliance is being positioned as a global forum to help boost demand and technology transfer for the production of biofuels and enhance trade. The three founding members of the alliance contribute about 85% to the global production and 81% to consumption of ethanol.

A game-changing initiative launched on the sidelines of the Summit was the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) which would connect India with Europe through UAE, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Jordan and other intervening countries through a string of sea and rail links. The IMEC is designed to increase efficiencies, reduce costs, enhance economic unity, generate jobs, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. The cross-border shipping and railways corridor will reduce logistics costs as well as boost trade in goods and services between the UAE, Saudi Arabia, India and Europe. The project offers India the opportunity to create green hydrogen and green ammonia hubs near the coasts and supply the commodities via shipping and rail network

**A game-changing initiative launched on the sidelines of the Summit was the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) which would connect India with Europe through UAE, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Jordan and other intervening countries through a string of sea and rail links.**







to the Middle East and eventually to Europe. Analysts project that the corridor will make India's export deliverables more efficient and cost-effective thereby adding to their competitiveness. The Project has been dubbed as the Spice Route as spices and ivory from India to the Arab world and Europe were transported along this route for thousands of years till the route was replaced by the maritime connection around the Cape of Good Hope in the 16th century. In addition to the economic and connectivity benefits of the project, it also has far-reaching geo-strategic implications. China has been rapidly expanding its footprint in the Middle East through its initiative in resolving the dispute between Saudi Arabia and Iran, as well as by its recent deep economic inroads in its ties with Iran, Saudi Arabia and other regional states. This project will send out a clear and unambiguous signal that US continues to be economically and strategically engaged with this region and in collaboration with the participating states of India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, EU, Germany, France, Italy, Israel and others will ensure that China is not able to dominate the region.

## Conclusion

The G20 Summit represented the coming out party for India. It was the culmination of the steady but sure progress that India has been registering over the last decade in developing and expanding its economy as also in strengthening its outreach and its relations with countries across the board including the G7, emerging market economies, developing nations and others. By organizing the Voice of the Global South Summit in January, 2023 at the beginning of its G20 Presidency and ensuring that the concerns of these countries are fully reflected in the final G20 document, India has emerged as a powerful and vigorous advocate of the concerns of the Global South. India's spirited espousal of the cause of the developing countries and the exemplary manner in which PM Modi piloted the proposal for induction of the African Union as the 21st member of the G20 grouping added enormously to India's diplomatic heft and stature in the world.

While assuming the Presidency of the G20 in Bali, Indonesia in November, 2022, PM Modi had declared that India's Presidency will

be "inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive." The final results of the Summit testify that this ambition has been fully realized.

India under the bold and decisive leadership of PM Modi is undoubtedly the foremost winner of the successful G20 Summit. Some of the others who came out with flying colors from the deliberations would include the G20 as an organization, the G20 process, multilateralism, the Global South and the African Union. Both Russia and the G7 have claimed victory from the G20 Summit for entirely different reasons.

The success of the G20 Summit has sent out a strong message that it is not only imperative but also possible for the world to come together to resolve the most pressing challenges that afflict it. It is essential to build on this success to ensure peace, stability, security and economic prosperity in the world. **DI**



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# ONOE: A Reform that Needs more Reflection, Data and Debate

**One Nation, One Election would risk reducing local elected bodies to mere representatives of central leadership.**



by ASHOK LAVASA

**T**HE RECENTLY CONCLUDED special session of Parliament was “special” for what it achieved, and what it did not. If the universally applauded Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam Bill was labelled “a post-dated cheque, One Nation One Election could be a cheque that wasn’t presented. Apprehension was strong that the cheque had already been written as the September 2 notification on the subject stated that in national interest it is desirable to have simultaneous elections in the country and a committee headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind was tasked not simply to “examine the issue” but “to make recommendations for holding simultaneous elections in the country”.

**It is estimated that about Rs 50,000 crore is spent by political parties/candidates informally during elections. There is no indication that money informally spent in buying votes is being targeted through the so-called re-forms. Isn't that the main malaise?**

The notification cites three reasons why the surfeit of elections in India (held almost every year and within a year too at different times) is not desirable: massive expenditure incurred by the government and other stakeholders, diversion of security forces and other electoral officers from their primary duties for prolonged periods; disruption in development work on account of prolonged application of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). Each reason seems strong and merits transparent scrutiny by the Committee.

As per published data, the total expenditure incurred on the conduct of the 2014 general elections was a little less than Rs 4,000 crore, which went up to about Rs 9,000 crore in 2019. That is an average of about Rs 100 per voter, as the size of the electorate in 2019 was about 91 crore. Even if the cost of conducting separate elections is considered to be double the amount spent in the Lok Sabha polls, it would still mean Rs 200 per voter in five years. That translates to spending about 10 paise per voter per day for the normal duration of the elected Houses at the state and central level. I am sure the average person spends more on mobile calls per day.

If one takes into account the expenditure by political parties - a total of Rs 2994.16 crore during the Lok Sabha 2019 elections - it would add about 2 or 3 paise per voter. It is also estimated that about Rs 50,000 crore is spent by political parties/candidates informally during elections. There is no indication that money informally spent in buying votes is being targeted through the so-called re-forms. Isn't that the main malaise?

So far, there has been no analysis on total public expenditure incurred on the conduct of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections separately or together and the expected savings in the event of simultaneous polls. It might seem reasonable to presume that some administrative cost could be saved but in the absence of any data, this is at best, an instinctive surmise that cannot form a sufficient basis for taking a decision that has significant implications.

The same is true of the argument of diversion from duty. The conduct of elections does involve central and state security forces as well as other government staff called upon to do election duty in addition to their normal duties. Here again there is no statistical study to show the number of days taken up in election duties when elections to State Assembly and Parliament are held simultaneously or separately. It can be assumed that staff is moved for about 60 days during one election cycle and for every state this is done two times in five years because elections are held separately. That this is done at the cost of their normal duties is not disputed but to what extent this is detrimental or undesirable is a matter of debate because elections are undoubtedly essential duty

**The recently concluded special session of Parliament was “special” for what it achieved, and what it did not.**



for security forces. It is also true that many civilian officials consider it a privilege to do poll duty. Our system is built on using the services of full-time public officials for occasional activities such as census and elections, which are considered national duty and for which it would be counterproductive to have a permanent cadre. The Constitution, in fact, even provides for appointing regional election commissioners only for the duration of the elections.

The third rationale of disruption of development work is also not supported by data. A careful reading of the MCC would show that only a certain category of public expenditure is prohibited when the MCC is in force with a view to denying the ruling party an unfair advantage by spending public resources. The MCC doesn't curtail expenditure on ongoing schemes, routine government expenditure or any kind of emergency spending.

In the absence of credible data, the three reasons cited in the notification seem impressionistic.

The notification states that elections to the House of the People and Legislative assemblies were "mostly held simultaneously from 1951-52 to 1967 after which this cycle got broken". This simultaneity for 15 years was without any specific provision in the Constitution to this effect. The founders of Indian democracy did not think it necessary to straitjacket the conduct of elections as it may have been neither desirable nor possible to envisage the vicissitudes of politics. The political dynamism at a given time would determine the fate of an elected government and the exigencies of that situation were to be dealt with by the EC within the framework of the Constitution and related laws. Prescribing anything beyond that would have meant getting into the operational mechanics of the election process. Laying down that an election cannot be held before the five-year term to ensure simultaneity would amount to proscribing the liberty to express lack of confidence in an elected government or resign en masse from the ruling party. Imposing such limits on free political behaviour would muzzle democratic functioning of political parties which are central to any democracy.

In a federal polity such as India, elections in any state concern the voters and political leaders of that state and do not preoccupy the voters of other states. How do elections in Nagaland affect the administrative functioning in Tamil Nadu or how do elections in Haryana concern the voters in Kerala? Nor for that matter should the election in any state affect the functioning of the central government. However, if party leadership is obsessed with campaigning in every state and would not like local leadership to manage state-level campaigns, it would see every election as affecting its functioning; it is the centralisation of politics in India that has not let local democratic institutions flourish. Simultaneous elections would further diminish the focus

**Simultaneous elections would further diminish the focus on elected local bodies and turn them into nondescript representatives of their central leadership rather than effective representatives of local voters.**

on elected local bodies and turn them into nondescript representatives of their central leadership rather than effective representatives of local voters.

In a country where normal functioning of the system is disrupted if there is heavy rainfall or because of hazardous air quality, where educational institutions are closed due to heat waves or a G20 meeting, where agitations persist for months leading to total paralysis of normal life, there are more immediate and pressing issues of governance to be addressed than expending energy in issues such as simultaneous polls, that too without adequate data and sufficient debate. There are far more effective ways to bring about greater transparency in election related expenditure than chasing the mechanical scheduling of elections. Yes, there might be a need to bring about more managerial efficiency in conducting elections but that might not need onerous constitutional amendments.

A nation that does not tire of a surfeit of inane IPL matches need not be presented as suffering from the exhaustion of exercising its democratic right. **D**

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# The Security Environment And India's Defence Preparedness

The recently concluded G20 Summit at New Delhi brought many major militaries together. With robust domestic defence industrial capabilities, the group's members included most of the world's top twenty arms exporters. Defence remains a vital ingredient of a nation's Comprehensive National Power (CNP), apropos, the Summit also reflected the emergence of India as one of the world's leading military powers. Defence however, was discussed on the sidelines, in bilateral talks. The Delhi declaration stated that in line with the UN Charter all states must refrain from the threat, or use of force to seek territorial acquisition against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any nation state. The carefully drafted Delhi Declaration went further to say; "Today's era must not be of war".



S-400 air defence system

by MAJ GEN JAGATBIR SINGH, VSM (Retd) and  
MAJ GEN VK SINGH, VSM (Retd)

## The Security Environment

China's drive to establish its predominance in the Asia-Pacific, expanding naval fleet and nuclear arsenal, its advances in space, cyber and missile technologies, and threats to its neighbourhood is causing concern on multiple fronts. China is focussed at catching up militarily with USA, but it is axiomatic that India, because of its sheer proximity, cannot look the other way. Between India and China, asymmetries exist in almost all spheres; however purely in military terms China is far ahead. China is unlikely to fight a battle of attrition with India. China will initially concentrate on non-contact warfare and weaken India's war waging capability in all spheres of military, economic and political space before committing its troops to contact warfare.

On the other hand, Pakistan, which has often been seen to be a failing state has continued in its present form and is unlikely to fail despite its serious internal issues. Irrespective, its military modernisation has kept pace due to the economic aid and military equipment it has received from China.

Pakistan is one enemy who will leave no stone unturned to score on India. Therefore, it would be prudent to keep an equal watch over the Western adversary, instead of concentrating totally on the Northern one. To continue to consider both countries separately, as two fronts, with the hope of tackling them one at a time, would be a fundamental mistake. The rhetoric of, we will fight on one front and manage the other diplomatically/politically must change, as no one can guarantee it. Similarly, it will tantamount to military imprudence, if our planning is based on moving troops from one theatre to another. Our troops need to be fixed and dedicated to specific fronts, as all theatres will be simul-



K-9 VAJRA Self Propelled Tracked



M777 Ultra  
Lightweight Howitzer  
Artillery Guns  
from BAE Systems  
assembled in India.



Sukhoi 30MKI fighter jet

taneously active in case of war. In case some theatre is dormant, then that would be by design. **We must consider both China and Pakistan as one front, one enemy.** Therefore, to counter such threat we need a strong defensive posture on all fronts. Hence, the need to build up our military capability expeditiously.

To believe that there will be no war, or war can be averted is a disastrous fallacy. In our own lifetime, how many conflicts have we witnessed and are currently witnessing? There were many believers that Russia would never attack Ukraine. **The only way that you can avoid war, is to prepare for it.** The fact is that man has always fought man. To fight better, man has been in the quest to make better weapons. From sticks and stones, to swords and spears, to chariots and elephants, to gunpowder and cannons and artillery, to matchlocks and rifles, to battleships, to tanks, to submarines, to fighter aircraft and missiles, and then to nuclear power. In today's context from perception warfare, to cyber warfare, to space warfare, to drone warfare, the quest is never ending.

Our military resolve has been demonstrated during Uri, Balakot, Doklam and Galwan. However, our resolve needs to be backed by a strong deterrence of our Armed Forces in terms of their capabilities, training, doctrines, equipment, technology, manufacturing, and military cooperation with other nations. Such a **deterrence will always be far cheaper than the cost of war.**

In full understanding and knowledge of this predicament, the Indian establishment has started taking steps in the right direction, more than ever before. Some of the ongoing initiatives are discussed below.

## India Equipping Itself Across all Verticals

In order to meet the challenges posed by the environment, the Indian Defence Forces are suitably equipping themselves with upgradations and modernization of existing weapon systems, induction of new technologies as well as purchase of new weapons systems. New procurement is also necessary in order to fill the voids created by the

**To believe that there will be no war, or war can be averted is a disastrous fallacy. There were many believers that Russia would never attack Ukraine. The only way that you can avoid war, is to prepare for it. The fact is that man has always fought man.**

phasing out of obsolete inventory. The intent is to furnish the military with world-class equipment and training, a testament to the nation's unyielding spirit to overcome any challenge.

**Ground Forces.** The Army has recently invited proposals for guns, missiles, drones, counter-drone systems, loiter munition, communication and optical systems, specialist vehicles, engineering equipment and alternate energy resources based on compressed timelines. In mid-September the Defence Acquisition Committee (DAC), in order to enhance protection, mobility, attack capability and increase survivability of mechanised forces, accorded the approval for procurement of Light Armoured Multipurpose Vehicles (LAMV) and Integrated Surveillance and Targeting System (ISAT-S). Some of the other projects are given below:

**Artillery.** The IA is in the process of converting Artillery regiments to a mix of 155mm/39 calibre, 155mm/45 calibre, and 155mm/52 calibre gun profile. India is focusing on long-range firepower and precision-strike capabilities.

As a significant step towards enhancing the artillery's shoot and scoot capabilities, the procurement of approximately 300, 155mm/52 calibre, indigenous advanced towed artillery gun systems (ATAGS) and 300 mounted gun systems (MGS) has already commenced. Additionally, the IA is acquiring another 100, K-9

# On the Sidelines of G-20

**Indo-US.** The commencement of negotiations for a commercial agreement between GE Aerospace and HAL to manufacture GE F-414 jet engines in India was announced.

Both countries recommitted to advancing India's emergence as a hub for the maintenance and repair of forward-deployed U.S. Navy assets and other aircraft and vessels.

During their bilateral meet, Prime Minister Modi and President Biden reaffirmed their commitment to deepen and diversify the India-US Defence Partnership. President Biden welcomed the order of 31 General Atomics MQ-9B (16 Sky Guardian and 15 Sea Guardian) from USA.

**France & India.** During their meeting at the G20 summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron expressed their commitment to enhancing the defence cooperation between India and France. In July, India had given approval for the purchase of the naval variant Rafale jets from France, as well as for the procurement of three French-designed Scorpene class submarines.

**Indo-Japan.** Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan said that he saw India as an "indispensable" partner in the Indo-Pacific and Japan is keen to develop deeper defence cooperation to ensure maritime security in the region.

He emphasized the importance of joint exercises to ensure the Indo-Pacific will be a region that values freedom and rule of law. As regards the new Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy, he said "India is an indispensable partner to realise FOIP."

**India-Nigeria.** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had discussions with President Tinubu of Nigeria, regarding defence deals worth over \$1 billion dollars. Nigeria showed interest in LCA Tejas, and Armoured Personnel Carriers.



C-295 transport aircraft

Vajra self-propelled tracked guns, through the joint venture between L&T and South Korean Hanwha Defence. In another initiative, under the Sharang project the OFB is upgrading 130mm M46 towed artillery pieces to 155mm/45-calibre standard.

India also plans to induct more regiments of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, whose range has been extended to 450 Km. The Army is also set to receive the latest 500 Km range, Pralay ballistic missiles. A complete revamp of the surveillance and target acquisition regiments is underway to arm the units with the latest equipment, including remotely piloted vehicles and swarm drones.

**Air Defence.** The Russian Ambassador to India, Denis Alipov's announced last month that the "S-400s will be delivered on time". India and Russia signed a contract in October 2018 for delivery of five sets of S-400 system, with a command post and two batteries of eight launchers each. Russia has so far delivered three sets. The remaining two are to be delivered by the end of 2023. The highly mobile and automated S-400, can track 100 - 300 targets simultaneously, and can be used to protect vital areas during war.

**AK-203 Assault Rifle.** Addressing the urgent requirement to replace the INSAS rifle, the Korwa Rifle Factory in Amethi has been upgraded with a modern production line, where the latest version of the Kalashnikov rifles is to be manufactured. The rifles are being manufactured with a complete ToT clause. Over a period, the factory will deliver over 7,00,000 rifles. The manufacturing will be done by the Indo Russian Rifles Private Limited, Joint Venture between Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Ltd and Russian Rosoboronexport.

**Indian Air Force.** In the air, both technology and numbers matter. China is way ahead in both. Pakistan is steadily building up its Air Force, having placed an order for 162, J 17 and 36, J 10CE fighter aircraft from China, it's strength will increase to 32 squadrons. Thereby, in numbers near parity would have been achieved by Pakistan. There is no doubt that the Rafael is hard to match, but numbers need to increase.

To assess the true capability of any Air Force one must look at Air Defence, AWACS, Air to Air refuelling capability, Helicopters, Ground defence, Airfield infrastructure, Airlift capability, logistical and supply chains, modification and testing facilities and training levels: All these attributes come together for an air force to become a balanced and effective force. Each of these attributes need to be independently audited

**A former Defence Secretary while highlighting the changes in policies stated, that his efforts were to reduce the procurement periods from an average of five to six years to two to three years. In such an uncertain and hostile environment, is three years acceptable?**



Aircraft carrier INS Vikrant

to ensure that it does not become a weak link in the system. India is in the process of upgrading systematically in all disciplines.

Apart from the ongoing induction of the Rafale fighters, the induction of the MRCA and modernization of its transport fleet which has seen recent inductions of the C-17, C-130, Chinooks and now C-295.

On 15 September 2023 the Defence Ministry cleared procurement of various weapons systems and platforms including Dhruvastra short range air-to-surface missile and 12 Su-30 MKI fighter jets. The avionics upgrade of Dornier aircraft was also given Acceptance of Necessity (AoN). The IAF is looking for domestic manufacturers to upgrade Israeli Heron with more capabilities including weaponised payloads.

Designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), 'Prachand', India's first indigenous multi-role, light combat helicopter (LCH) was inducted into the IAF in October 2022.

The IAF on 13 Sep 23 took the delivery of its first C-295 transport aircraft from Airbus Defence and Space, at Seville in Spain. C-295 is a new generation, twin-turboprop, tactical transport aircraft. The aircraft has a flight endurance of up to 11-13 hours with a range of 5,630 Km. The aircraft can carry up to nine tonnes of payload or 71 troops or 45 paratroopers at a cruise speed of 260 knots.

India had contracted (₹21,935-crore project) for 56, C 295s in Sep 2021. The first 16 aircraft are to be delivered in fly-away condition over four years from the date of contract. The remaining 40 aircraft will be manufactured by Tata Advanced Systems in India under an industrial partnership with Airbus.

On 16 September the DAC cleared the acquisition of 12 Su-30MKI fighter jets for the IAF. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, will manufacture the fighters in India. All raw material needed for the Su-30MKI, will come from Russia. The jets will include several avionics and communication instruments of Indian origin and they will be integrated with domestically produced weapon systems.

**Indian Navy.** With the increased Chinese footprint in the Indian Ocean, it is imperative that the Indian Navy strengthen its capabilities at sea. IN needs urgent upgradation from Aircraft Carrier(s) to naval helicopters. India's first indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant was commissioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Cochin Shipyard Limited in September 2022. It has a crew of around 1,600 officers and sailors and an Air Wing consisting of thirty assorted aircraft.

Indian Naval Air Squadron 325, operating the indigenously built advanced light helicopter Mk-III, was recently commissioned into the IN. The helicopters can undertake maritime reconnaissance as well as carry out search and rescue at extended ranges while operating from ships, both by day and night.

Another two frontline warships, 'Surat' a Stealth-Guided Missile Destroyer, and 'Udaygiri' a Stealth Frigate were launched at Mazagon Docks in May 23.

Adding a new dimension to the Indo-US strategic partnership,

US Navy Ship, Charles Drew visited L&T's Shipyard at Kattupalli, Chennai in August for undertaking repairs and allied services. This was the first ever repair of a US Navy ship in India.

## Conclusion

Having identified the collusive threat from China and Pakistan, in any future conflict with one, the other will be involved. The extent of involvement may vary depending on the prevailing circumstances. Therefore, India needs to immediately carry out modernisation of its Defence Forces to meet the challenge. The status quo must change. Undoubtedly, the current disposition has taken long overdue steps to improve our defence preparedness, however, some of our procedures are detrimental to the cause. A former Defence Secretary while highlighting the changes in policies stated, that his efforts were to reduce the procurement periods from an average of five to six years to two to three years. In such an uncertain and hostile environment, is three years acceptable? **D**

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Maj Gen VK Singh, VSM was commissioned into The Scinde Horse in Dec 1983. The officer has commanded an Independent Recce Sqn in the desert sector, and has the distinction of being the first Armoured

Corps Officer to command an Assam Rifles Battalion in Counter Insurgency Operations in Manipur and Nagaland, as well as the first General Cadre Officer to command a Strategic Forces Brigade. He then commanded 12 Infantry Division (RAPID) in Western Sector. The General is a fourth generation army officer.



Major General Jagatbir Singh was commissioned into 18 Cavalry in December 1981. During his 38 years of service in the Army he has held various command, staff and instructional appointments and served in varied

terrains in the country. He has served in a United Nations Peace Keeping Mission as a Military Observer in Iraq and Kuwait. He has been an instructor to Indian Military Academy and the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington. He is a prolific writer in defence & national security and adept at public speaking.

# Of What Best Drives *Samaaj*, how Best Private Initiatives Can Drive Social Change

Rohini Nilekani in conversation with Sunil Kant Munjal, at the recently held AIMA Golden Jubilee Convention, a rare event when two luminaries in philanthropy, share their insights in the Art of Giving. An important 'read' to ensure we are all ready to 'give' back to the society to which we owe our own being.



**SUNIL:** So, let me start with you as a person, because you have been in many ways, a very public person and in also many ways a very private person. You're a prolific author, you run amazing initiatives on the philanthropic side. I was trying to figure out what is it that drives you? I was reading about your grandfather the other day who got driven by Mahatma Gandhi's message and actually set up his first *ashram*, I believe, and he worked closely with Kasturba Gandhi to focus also on sanitation and education. Is that part of your driver? Is it some of it genetic that drives you?

**ROHINI:** I don't know if the genes pass such things on, but culture certainly does. So, in my family, we were always, in those days when I was young in the 60s, the term simple living and high thinking was something that, of course this was pre liberalisation, so everyone had to do simple living anyway, but the high thinking part we took rather seriously and my grandfather's legacy was very much held to us as a positive example of how you should live your life. So, I was very inspired definitely by that.

**SUNIL:** I understand your grandson, Tanush was the inspiration for a couple of your books.

**ROHINI:** Oh yes, and for a lot of my work because what is the world we are going to leave for the grandchildren and the great grandchildren. That's something I think the minute you become a grandparent, I think today that's the first thing you think about.

**SUNIL:** Yeah, it kind of tends to change our behaviour and also in some ways how you look at the world back again to your writing. You've

been writing books and some wonderful stuff. I've managed to read some of them. However, lots and lots of people are very happy and comfortable. Just reading off, little bit off a screen, off the net on WhatsApp messages and all and the like. Do you think the habit and culture of reading is actually going away? Do you believe it's something we need to hold and protect?

**ROHINI:** Actually, I don't think it's going away. I think reading is absolutely critical. Wherever I go, I tell young mothers, I tell grandmothers the first gift to a child should be a book. Actually, when the mother has a child in a womb, she should start reading to him or her. Reading is absolutely critical to put yourself on the path of self-learning and there is no path more empowering than the self-learning path. I don't think people are reading less. If you look at the sale of books worldwide, if you look at Pratham books, which I co-founded in 2004 today has, we've created an open creative common platform called Story Weaver, and today it has more than 26 million reads, more than 55,000 stories in 340 languages contributed from all over the world. So, people are



reading, children are reading and parents are helping them to read. A reading nation is a thinking nation. A thinking nation is a nation that is going to innovate and progress.

**SUNIL:** That is fantastic by the way. So, since Nandan is here as well, I am going to ask you a question about Infosys. And also, Nandan always said that he was an accidental entrepreneur. As you said, you are an accidental philanthropist. Many people said what actually made Infosys was not just these founders, but it was these strong, powerful, purposeful women behind these men. In each of their cases, something significant was done either a big sacrifice or to support the spouses to help build this company. I read somewhere that Sudha Murti gave Narayan Murti a loan and you did some such similar thing. So how were those days for you when the early days of the struggle of setting up a new enterprise of Infosys was the norm? Was the day in and day out for you?

**ROHINI:** This was 1981. In 1980, they took the decision. 1981 was when Infosys was set up. It was also the year Nandan and I got married. So, two big things happened in our life together. I tell you a moment is journey. Both were like roller coasters. The idea of Infosys dominated our lives. It was much bigger than anything else we wanted to do or could do in our personal lives. We saw the dedication of the founders and we supported them. I used to be a chauffeur. I used to be a cook. We used to have young engineers staying with us and I used to worry about them like a mother. We were young, we were free, carefree, we could afford to take the risks. Of course, Nandan and others worked extremely hard 24 by seven. They weren't really there, but I wouldn't call it a sacrifice. It was a great learning journey and by God's grace, Infosys was successful. But even if it hadn't been, we would've done the same thing and backed our spouses in exactly the same way.

**SUNIL:** So, you wrote this very interesting book about Samaaj, Sarkaar, Bazaar. Clearly three great influences on our lives, on policymaking, on action, on what actually happens. The Covid pandemic that we went through recently was a wonderful example of the ability to work together but doesn't

“In those days when I was young in the 60s, the term simple living and high thinking was something that, of course this was pre liberalisation, so everyone had to do simple living anyway, but the high thinking part we took rather seriously and my grandfather's legacy was very much held to us as a positive example of how you should live your life.”



happen often enough and doesn't seem to have a natural smoothness to its functioning. What do you think we ought to do to improve the rough edges in this relationship?

**ROHINI:** Yeah, thank you for that question. For me, this trifecta of Samaaj, Sarkaar, Bazaar is very important, but for me, Samaaj comes first and I do want to reiterate that to everybody. Delhi is a lot about the political space, the Sarkaar space, but I do believe that even if you're a CM, even if you're a CEO or anything else, you are part of the Samaaj first. You're a citizen first. So, every evening we do have to take out our other role hats and come back to being a human and a citizen first. So, how we are as citizens and what is the leadership? The kind of leaders that we want in the Bazaar and the Sarkaar are going to come from the Samaaj because Samaaj is the water in which we all swim. So, my attention in my work and my life has been very much how do we keep on improving our Samaaj?

How do we ourselves become better part of the Samaaj? But I agree completely that Samaaj, Sarkaar, Bazaar have to work together to achieve any societal goal at all. So, what we try to do in our work, and certainly EkStep Foundation is one example of it with Nandan and I and Shankar co-founded in 2015. We have to think how can we continuously reduce the friction to cooperate? And I think there are clearly ways to do that and we saw some of that in the pandemic when there's a higher goal that people subscribe to, everyone wants to cooperate to work towards it, and there are ways to do it. There are new technologies which can help everyone do their own part and do it with much less friction.

We also saw a very strong role for the state and we would go state government to state government to help make sure that children could get books in the libraries of government schools. So, the state had a role and the market, we encouraged the market because our books were free publishers. We wanted to improve access to books through the entire publishing industry. And if I may say so, we did have a significant impact on the bazaar of children's publishing as well. That's one example. The other one quickly is EkStep where the tech team that Nandan and Shankar set up helped the union government to set up its national teacher platform called Diksha. And now Diksha, the government has encouraged private education sector players to participate in it. And billions of learning transactions happen on that platform every month. It is kind of the basic public open infrastructure for learning in India.

**SUNIL:** You have been a very open philanthropist, you have been a local philanthropist, you have participated in multiple philanthropies, you also participated in the India philanthropy initiative. And this is rather unusual in India where a lot of people are not able, are not

The Gender lab, The Vidhi Center for Legal Policy



willing to share what they do in terms of charity or philanthropic initiatives. How come you are so vocal about this and would you encourage others to do the same?

**ROHINI:** Yeah, Sunil, you were part of IPI with me as well, and one of the things we realised is yes, sure, there's a culture in our country where you say the left hand should not know what the right hand is giving. And that's very wonderful because it means that you're not going to boast about your philanthropy, you're going to do it quietly. But at a time like this in India where so much wealth is accumulating in only few hands, to be very honest, unbelievable wealth, then you have to question what is the role of that wealth in a society like ours? Why would societies tolerate the accumulation of private wealth so rapidly and in such a degree if it was not showing itself to do good for society at large? And if we can't talk about this publicly and keep this question alive, I think we don't want a culture where the wealthy are not showing any responsibility for the progress of the whole nation.

So, we decided that we want to be completely transparent about our giving and it took us a while to again overcome that cultural barrier. But we joined the giving pledge and said at least 50%, hopefully in our lifetime of our wealth, we will give away. And I think the signalling is very important and I think every wealthy person in this country should find their own way of clearly and transparently signaling their own philanthropy.

**SUNIL:** That's wonderful. You've also said that in the Indian philanthropists need to be a little bit more audacious. Why do you think so?

**ROHINI:** Well, look at you, maybe I am turning, see I was a journalist. I always turn around and ask some questions myself. Why do you do Serendipity, the Arts festival and it's so great. Tell us why you do, what motivates you to do something. Most people in the country, there's enough data to education help or charitable giving when they give. Why are you doing something so bold and different?

**SUNIL:** So, my belief is for any nation state to be considered successful, there are four pillars that need to be in place. One is a growing economy, so the people can live a prosperous, safe and prosperous life. Second is the ability to defend yourself. Third is to be able to play beyond your own borders, so be a part of geopolitics. And the fourth is to have a strong cultural underpinning. On the first three, India is doing exceedingly well. On the last one we have slipped and we have slipped continuously for the last five centuries. So, I had this conversa-

“1981 was when Infosys was set up. It was also the year Nandan and I got married. So, two big things happened in our life together. I tell you a moment is journey. Both were like roller coasters. The idea of Infosys dominated our lives. It was much bigger than anything else we wanted to do or could do in our personal lives.”

tion along with some friends of mine that we have changed the very model of how the arts in India were practiced or taught. Originally the big patrons were the royalty. They did not segregate theatre or music or dance or crafts. So, both the teaching and the practice of the arts was done collectively and was available and accessible to everybody. That has changed today, arts have become an exclusive domain of a very few. Our attempt was to democratize the access to the arts and to bring back the actual Indian methodology of looking at arts as complete, it's actually about complete life almost in the sense of speaking, because we also look at food as an art form.

**ROHINI:** There is truly so much to be done! Philanthropists need to take on a little bit more risky philanthropy. When I say risky, I don't mean politically risky as much as risky in terms of that you may not necessarily see the benefits accruing very, very quickly. You need patient capital for a long time. You need to be able to trust civil society organizations to do what they do best because they know how to work in their context. Open up, go beyond your fence and work in areas that are very, for example, mental health and so many others. I think this is the time for Indian philanthropy to

challenge old ideas and just innovate rapidly.

**SUNIL:** I also think we need to understand the distinction between donors, philanthropists, and social entrepreneurs because each one has a role to play and each one is critical to the needs. But interestingly what we find is that every generation appears to have a slightly different approach to philanthropy itself. So how would your daughter's Janhavi's approach, for example, differ from yours in philanthropy?

**ROHINI:** So Janhavi came back with a PhD from Harvard and I thought she'll do some post-doctoral research and some archaic thing, but she suddenly switched lanes and decided that she wants to push her new-found passion because when she was pregnant, she did a lot of research for doing respectful birthing in India. So, she started doing a lot of research about what happens to women when they're giving birth, and I'm sorry to say she believes we do things too little too

late to give them a very decent, respectful and joyful birthing experience. So, she set up both a nonprofit and a for-profit to do that. She's put in some of her money, she's managed to convince her parents to put in some of their philanthropic capital and she is doing very well with Aastrika Foundation. My son is part of my board and he has several ideas about how to give forward. Both of them are solidly with us on the fact that we have to give forward as much as effectively and as fast as we can.

**SUNIL:** So for you, the exposure that you had, you travelled the world, you meet leaders around the world in business, in politics and society. Has your own view changed over the period of time that your exposure has increased towards society and towards philanthropy?

**ROHINI:** Yes. I think we are at a critical juncture where people really, really need to understand the importance of civil society and democracies. Even people in the corporate sector, of course, people in government, they're doing whatever they can to take this country forward, but business cannot go below a certain line. You cannot reach those without paying capacity. No matter how hard it is, cannot go to every door. It cannot set up such a large establishment. Who is there between the people who are left behind, the people whose aspirations are to be in this room. Very often it is civil society organisations who represent them and make their case wherever it needs to be made. And civil society organisations right now need help. I'm happy that foreign donations are coming down. The government believes Indian money should go up, and this is the time for people like all of us in this room to support whichever area you are passionate in, to support civil society organisations. And that kind of passion of intent, that hard work, that moral leadership is something I think, whether you're in government or in the corporate sector, you can learn. And philanthropy, I have learned that definitely India has now a chance to show the whole world a new model of philanthropy.

**SUNIL:** I think it's a wonderful inspiring message because there is potential for each one of us to do something whether we do it around ourselves. We often forget how blessed and fortunate we are to be able to make decisions, choices, and say no to things. There



are not many people in the world who can do this. So, people who are cleaning our floors did not have this as a light ambition saying, oh, when I grow up I'm going to clean Rohini's home. Now that person does not have a choice. Can we allow the children to be able to make choices? So, if we can start literally from within your home, that is a very easy but a very powerful thing to do.

**ROHINI:** And we have seen, I'm sure there are many people who can give examples in this room where they have helped to educate the children of people who work with them. In one generation, have we not seen such a rapid transformation where somebody was working as a maid, her daughter or son is now studying medicine or engineering or even becoming an entrepreneur? Of course, we can do it. This is what I mean by the role of Samaaj. If you want to create a better Samaaj, then you have to start with yourself.

**SUNIL:** And we often don't realise how much of this is due to opportunity access of to opportunity. We run a school actually, we run multiple schools and one of them in Ludhiana was set up specifically and specially to encourage children of industrial workers to come in and study. When we started, the principal had a problem because some children came who were four years old, eight years old, and 14 years old and had never been to school. They didn't know how to handle them. Now for the last 10, maybe 15 years, every year in Punjab, in the top 10 in the entire state, there are at least two or three kids from this very school, one school.

And they've gone on to join IITs and become doctors and all kinds of things. And it just shows you is not as if any one of us is born smarter. It is about opportunity.

A large part of the philanthropy is to expand the opportunity pool.

**ROHINI:** What do you think the corporate sector can do better to do this, build a better Samaaj, create more equity of opportunity? How can corporate sector, especially today when India needs to grow at 7-8% scorching pace that we need to grow to get all the remaining people to the level where they want to be, how are we going to do that with the risks of climate change, with all the other risks that we have in terms of global supply chains? What should corporate India do differently? Especially because you have a philanthropic mindset.

**SUNIL:** I can share what we do. What we were tempted to do is in all of our foundations and we run separate foundations for every activity. So, people who join the companies usually end up retiring from there, but



they don't actually retire when they come close to retirement. They would usually say, can I join this school or this hospital or this college or this other initiative. So, we've actually got some of the best talent available in the country running our philanthropic initiatives. We've also put in the same processes in these as we have in our companies. We've also put in ERPs in the foundations. So that's what I meant by when I said we are using our knowledge of the way we run our businesses. We have transmitted that knowledge into these foundations. We've also set up things like KRAS goals for them to monitor. And we actively encourage people making mistakes. What I mean by making mistakes is we tell them to experiment all the time to try and do things quicker, better, faster, easier, cheaper, lower wastage, et cetera.

And to do that, if you have to experiment, it's absolutely fine.

And if you stumble. So, what we do is in a town hall we call up people and anyone who has done something special gets called up and gets a pat on the back and somebody who tried but failed gets the exact same recognition.

**ROHINI:** That's wonderful. Actually, in the non-profit sector every year now we have a failures conference. Maybe corporate India should have a failures conference every year, where you are able to share in a very safe space what you learned from any failure that you might have had. And we find that idea has started picking up in other places as well.

**SUNIL:** Another issue, is corporate philanthropy a strategic tool for business? So, there's another interesting question. It says, do you think philanthropy is being misused by many to get political patronage?

**ROHINI:** I don't think so. To get political patronage, I don't think you can get, but philanthropy can be misused certainly to get certain kinds of power. Let's be very clear. Money comes with power using money comes with power. And that's why to me, it's very important that philanthropists always keep a mirror in front of themselves to understand that their power should be used only for the larger public interest. If you don't do that, yes, you can go wrong.

**SUNIL:** So, this question says there are very few philanthropists working for elder care where the need is increasing rapidly. Any thoughts or suggestions on this?

**ROHINI:** No, definitely Sunil, we have to start thinking about this because India is going to age very rapidly in 30 years. We need a lot more philanthropy for thinking through the implications of an ageing India. The HelpAge and other organisations started almost 40 years ago

“Philanthropists need to take on a little bit more risky philanthropy. When I say risky, I don't mean politically risky as much as risky in terms of that you may not necessarily see the benefits accruing very, very quickly. You need patient capital for a long time.”


to think about it. But I agree with you, this is one area which is quite neglected. There's some innovation happening. There are young leaders who have started civil society organisations that are thinking differently about ageing. I do hope more philanthropy will come in.

**SUNIL:** So, while on young philanthropists, is there any advice you have for the next generation of philanthropists, people who are not yet earning but will be in the coming years?

**ROHINI:** Many young entrepreneurs ask me that. And the best thing, best news is they are already asking that even before they've made their first billion. They say, if you make hundreds of millions of dollars, you're still all right. The minute you make a billion dollars, you try to change the world and hopefully

for the better, but not guaranteed to do so. So, they want to know, what should I do first? I think the first thing to do is don't wait. Don't wait until you become too old and too rich to really do anything. Start early.

Some of the wonderful young people I know who are entrepreneurs have already joined the founder's pledge, which says that they will give some 10% of when they sell out or

they come into their first money, they'll commit in advance. They're committing that they will give 10% of that away. And there are many such models that have come out which are saying, don't wait. You owe your success to faith, destiny, and luck. And you must share that forward. And so, I would say don't wait. 

## ABOUT

Rohini Nilekani is the Chairperson of Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies and Co-founder and Director of EkStep, a non-profit education platform. Her work has been exceptional in philanthropy across social sectors, and is an influencer when it comes to giving to charities.

Sunil Kant Munjal is an institution builder, a social entrepreneur, an angel investor, and a thought leader. He has been joint managing director of Hero Motocorp and is currently Chairman of Hero Enterprise. Munjal actively oversees higher education, healthcare & capacity building projects managed by various family trusts. He is Founder, Serendipity Arts Foundation, a unique social project that promotes and incubates fine and performing arts

# Aroon Purie Gets Lifetime Achievement Award from AIMA

AIMA awarded notable contributors RC Bhargava, Rohini Nilekani and Aroon Purie in their respective fields. Amitabh Kant was the chief guest and gave away the awards. For reasons of space we are sharing below only the acceptance speech of Aroon Purie, Editor, India Today Group on the subject of Indian media and their role in Indian democracy and society.



Photograph shows the recipients with the chief guest, the incoming and immediate past president of AIMA and its secretary general, Rekha Sethi.

## *In his acceptance speech, Aroon Purie said:*

...Delighted because you've given a media person an award because these days media is the best whipping boy for everybody. We are the ones who create riots. We're the ones who create all the chaos in society. We are responsible for all the ills in society. Most often, the messenger is shot. But I'm not saying we are perfect. Bad apples exist in every profession. Are all the businessmen honest? Are all politicians honest? Excuse me. But are all bureaucrats honest? No, there are always bad apples in any industry and you can't condemn them just because of that.

And let me tell you, readers and viewers are very smart. They know where propaganda ends and real journalism begins. But a free press is essential for India. It's essential for our democracy, especially when our democracy is not functioning so well. As you can see, more debates are held on news channels than held in Parliament, and that's a sad thing to say. Think whatever it is, whatever the fault is.


Would you be better off without the press? Just think about that for a moment.

I believe journalism is a noble profession for it carries a social responsibility just like doctors and teachers. There must be a certain code of conduct, although it is like a business and a medical profession is too, but it still has a social responsibility. In journalism, seeking the truth as best as you can and presenting it objectively. That's the aim. Today this is even more important in today's environment where there is an epidemic of fake news, which is going to get further aggravated by AI. Maybe Nandan can solve that problem, but we'll wait for that. And the truth is in danger of becoming an endangered species. And there's a tsunami of digital information. And of course, there is the WhatsApp University, which everybody, lots of people get their unverified information from.

It is therefore imperative that journalism has to step up, and do

“In journalism, seeking the truth as best as you can and presenting it objectively. That's the aim. Today this is even more important in today's environment where there is an epidemic of fake news, which is going to get further aggravated by AI.”

its job, honestly, and it's required for India's democracy to survive.

I must also say that this award goes to all those talented people who have worked with me in these last 48 years, and those who continue to work. My role has been that of a gardener. All these talented people come and bloom in my garden and make me look good. So, this is the reason why I am getting this award. And lastly, my long-suffering family who have lived with somebody for 48 years on a 24-hour news cycle. News is like time. It does not stop. It just keeps flowing and you have to be in it all the time. So, I'm really delighted that you have recognized somebody in the media. Thank you so much. 

# Pushing the PM's Mandate; Modi has the Status to lead the Global South

As the Indian Sherpa, he had the mandate of the Prime Minister to achieve consensus, represent the concerns of the Global South, and to bring inclusiveness and gender equality to the G20 agenda.



by AMITABH KANT

As I got into the job, I realised that most countries actually do their G20 in one city or they do it in two cities. Indonesia did it in two cities, and they thought they were being very ambitious. But then the Prime Minister said that I want G20 meetings to be held in every state of India. And he said, then we figured out that he wanted it to be done in over 60 districts of India. So we ended up doing 220 meetings in all states and 60 districts of India.

And then he called a meeting of the chief ministers and governors. And then he said that use opportunity to transform these districts, improve drainage, sewage, solid waste roads, everything. So from the first meeting, which we did in Udaipur, the Sherpa first meeting till all the 220 meetings, and we did this in Lakshadweep, we did this in Ladakh, we did it in Kashmir, everywhere. We used this as an opportunity to transform the districts and the cities where we were doing it. And then the prime minister said that use this opportunity to promote Indian artisans and push the one district one product. So all local crafts were used as gifts. We also used this opportunity to promote millets. That was prime minister's vision, that this is an opportunity. This was also the year of the UN: the millets.

The Prime Minister's second directive was that this has to be very inclusive, this has to be very decisive, this has to be very ambitious and also action oriented. And then he said that, I don't want a divided G20, I want a consensus based G20. And therefore, the first thing that he did was to have a meeting of the Global South. So, 125 leaders from the Global South participated in a virtual meeting.

And from that meeting, the priorities emerged. One thing was very

clear that we will speak the voice of the Global South. We will speak the voice of the developing and the emerging countries. And this was very important because this year, if you look at the IMF and World Bank, both say 80% of the global growth is coming from emerging markets. And in the next two decades, 80%, two third to about 75 to 80% of the growth will actually come from emerging markets. And therefore, it was very important to position ourselves as far as the requirements of the developing world was concerned.

When India took over the presidency, there were several challenges. 200 million people had gone below poverty line because of Covid. A

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hundred million people had lost their jobs. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, instead of progressing had regressed, only 12 of the 169 SDG goals were on track. And it was very important to push on that. And there was a huge challenge of climate action and climate finance.

There was a challenge of multilateral institutions because they were all designed for the post World War II period. They were designed in the post Britain period when the crisis of climate action did not exist, when the issue of sustainable development goals did not exist. And therefore, redesigning and reformulating the multilateral institutions was very important. And then we looked at technological developments. How do you use technology to leapfrog? So, technological development and what India has done in DPI in the digital public infrastructure became very important.

If you look around the world, we in India all have identity, we all have bank accounts, which are linked to our Aadhar number and our mobile number. We do about 11x more digital fast payments in the world than America and Europe do. We do 4x more than China, but 4 billion people in the world do not have digital identity. 3 billion people do not even have a bank account. 133 countries do not have a fast payment. So, it became a very big priority to evangelize this and then tell the world that this is the model to follow. It's not the big tech model of what USA has done, where transformation has taken place because of Amazon, Microsoft or Google or Apple or in China because of Tencent and Alibaba. But a completely new model, which is open source, open API, which is interoperable, is the model to be followed for the world.

And then we had this big challenge of what the Prime Minister had said is to push for women-led development. And that became a very key priority.

All this we managed to do. We've also managed to create a more inclusive world with what the Prime Minister's vision was to get Africa as one of the members. And this was important because if you look at Africa today, six of the fastest 12 growing countries in the world today are from Africa. And it was 55 countries come on board of G20 if you make African Union a member. And that's what India has been able to do. So it's been a pathbreaking initiative.

So what India's ended up doing is that actually we've had this particular G20, if you look at Indonesia presidency, they had 50 outcomes. If you look at Italy, there are 33 outcomes. But India has pushed the envelope and has 112 outcomes. But the most important thing is that what has never happened before is that we've come out with all outcomes and on all our paragraphs there is a hundred percent consensus.

There is not a single para which has a bracket or a reservation.

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And that has really demonstrated India's great ability to take developing countries, emerging markets that developed G7 countries, Russia, China, all on board, everyone on board, and bringing consensus to the table. India has demonstrated its great ability to drive multilateralism. India has demonstrated its great ability to even bring consensus to an issue like Russia, Ukraine paras where United Nations and United Nations Security Council had failed. But we've been able to bring consensus on that in our document. I mean, this couple of paras on the Russia, Ukraine crisis actually took us about close to 16 drafts. It took us about 250

hours of negotiation. It took us 9 days of nonstop negotiation, nonstop. We locked up all these different negotiators 60 km away so that media could not get a whiff of what we were doing.

We ensured that in the room there was no telephone, but we managed it. At the end of it all, we managed it because India has achieved, we just pushed the limits and took it to a level of brinkmanship where India

could achieve success. We could do this for two reasons. One is that India has acquired a very elevated status as far as its growth is concerned. It's the fifth largest economy. And secondly, I think as a Sherpa, I can say that the Prime Minister's own stature and standing as a leader was very significant in this. And his status in standing really helped us to negotiate.

As negotiators, we could be bold. A Sherpa can only be as good as his leader, and therefore, I could be bold. I could be gutsy. I could be courageous. And I took it to brinkmanship only because I had the full backing of my leader and I had a bold, gutsy leader who could lead, and therefore we achieved success. So, I think it's been a real honour for me to be the Prime Minister's G20 Sherpa. It's a unique experience, which I have had in driving this consensus. And I really think it's been a great pleasure working for the country in achieving consensus and bringing glory to our country. **DI**

## ABOUT

Amitabh Kant is presently India's Sherpa to G20 group, during a year when India holds its presidency. Kant is formerly a secretary in the Government of India, former CEO of Niti Ayog, and creator of globally acclaimed campaigns like 'Incredible India' for the Ministry of Tourism.

# The Future of Business, the Next Decade!

Moderator Pranjal Sharma, Economic Analyst, Advisor and Author shared the platform with T V Narendran, Managing Director, Tata Steel Ltd and Ronnie Screwvala, co-founder and Chairperson, upGrad, Indian Entrepreneur and Film Producer. We bring you excerpts of this very enlightening conversation.



**Pranjal:** The next decade of entrepreneurship and business leadership is always fascinating, but I think we are also in such a fast-changing world that sometimes we have to talk about the next 10 minutes of changes because technology is making a huge difference. This conversation is with two very experienced business leaders, T V Narendran Managing Director, Tata Steel Limited, and Ronnie Screwvala, Co-founder and Chairperson of upGrad, also a serial entrepreneur, film producer.

Ronnie you've always been an entrepreneur, I think just out of school or college entrepreneurship 30 years ago and entrepreneurship today. What are the key shifts you see?

**Ronnie:** Well, a couple of fundamental ones. I think when I decided at that stage to become an entrepreneur, the general concept at that time was if you didn't land yourself a good job, you turn to entrepreneurship. I think that mindset has changed. I think the fact that in the last five to seven years the government has actually evangelised this space, whether it's with Startup India or whatever else, I think it's brought the conversation to the dining room table in families. And the reason I say that is I think the biggest challenge when you want to be an entrepreneur, the risk and the fear of failure is actually to have the family support. Because without that ecosystem, your ability to succeed is a little restricted. And I think that is still work in progress.

I think the third part is also that in the workforce, and I think you will sort of endorse that more and more companies are looking for entrepreneurs. So, the very aspect of entrepreneurship being linked to even in large organisations where people are looking at professionals being owners and leaders need to be owners as I think made the shift.

I think the only curse and the benefit is this element of fundraising,

right? And I call it a curse. I think excess capital corrupts, even reasonably excess capital corrupts, and that actually takes the foundation of what people want to do. I think the beauty about India and the opportunities here is a sense of the right mix of frugality along with taking the right opportunity. And if you mix that up a little bit, which I think happens sometimes the aspiration for funding becomes the end result versus building a business or being an entrepreneur. But without that ecosystem you wouldn't have too many entrepreneurs. So, it's a mixed bag, but I think that one would be as much an opportunity and a curse.

**Pranjal:** But entrepreneurship, you've spoken about how you have seen the image and the interest around entrepreneurship for an individual, but entrepreneurship ecosystem in terms of ease of doing business, in terms of being able to create new business models, experiment with new ideas, do you see an excitement there which perhaps has evolved over the last couple of decades?

**Ronnie:** Yes, I think that's a positive. I mean, I don't want to sit here and give the statistics of whether we move from 145 ranking to 63 ranking in ease of doing business. What I do tell a lot of fellow entrepreneurs



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“Let me start by making a pitch for steel. There is 40 times more steel used than any other metal in the world. So, it is like we are a long, long way away from being obsolete for a very simple reason. It's 55 rupees a kilo, what do you get for 55 rupees a kilo? You don't get tomatoes, right? So, I think that's where it is.”

**T V Narendran**

is watch out. Sometimes being not too easy to do business has its flip side, because if it's too easy to do business, you get to be a very, very competitive field. America is a land of opportunity. The markets are there, but it's highly competitive. And I think nine out of 10 entrepreneurs from India would fail in an environment which didn't have a certain sense of moat. So I think the grass is not greener on the other side. I think it's good that we've progressed in that, but that sense kind of skills people to sort of move forward in spite of some of the challenges and difficulties. And I think therefore I would term it as a positive.

**Pranjal:** So, Narendran, the creation of steel or invention of steel has changed the world. But today, steel itself is at a very interesting inflexion point. And as you were referring to earlier, is steel going to be obsolete, will steel still be relevant in the next 10 years because you have a lot of discussion about composite materials, you have discussions about lightweighting, even for aeroplanes for example. Where is the industry now and what are the big rethink, which is going on in your company today?

**Narendran:** Thanks. So let me start by making a pitch for steel. There is 40 times more steel used than any other metal in the



world. So, it is like we are a long, long way away from being obsolete for a very simple reason. It's 55 rupees a kilo, what do you get for 55 rupees a kilo? You don't get tomatoes, right? So, I think that's where it is. So having said that, but there are problems to solve because steel accounts for 8% of the carbon footprint in the world because the traditional way of making steel is using coal; coal not just as an energy source but as a reductant to the process. So, you need to find different ways of making steel. The simpler way is to melt steel scrap because steel is the most recyclable metal because you can separate it easily using magnets, et cetera. So, there's a lot of work going on. On one is recycling steel. The concept of circularity is going to come in a much bigger way in the industry. We have traditionally been a linear value chain.

It is going to become a more circular value chain. Secondly, a lot of work is going on hydrogen. Hydrogen is a good substitute for coal. It acts as an energy source and a reductant. The good news is a lot of investments in technology to reinvent the way steel is made, which has traditionally been made in a similar way for the last hundred years. I think that's the opportunity, but the policy framework needs to be there. Governments need to support it. It's already happening in Europe quite a bit. Customers need to be willing to pay more for green steel. So there's a lot of excitement there.

The second thing is we are a process industry. We generate a lot of data. In today's day and age where technology and data is really going to be the new gold or the new oil, there's a lot of opportunity because we only capture a fraction of the data that we generate every day, and we only use a fraction of what we capture. So there's enormous opportunity to drive greater cost efficiencies, better stakeholder experience, better customer experience.

**Pranjal:** These changes are very fundamental changes because when you talk about a data-driven organisation, then the whole concept and the process of capturing data starts from the unit level and comes up, and then you have to change maybe the structures of the organisation. You have to change the hierarchy of the organisation, the way systems work, which means that your company is probably going through a huge reinvention internally. How much of that is a challenge for you, especially being a legacy company?

**Narendran:** Absolutely. I think it's a challenge and an opportunity. So, we've been on this journey for the last few years, so you need to spend millions of dollars, having the sensors in different parts of the organisation, different parts of the process. To capture the data you need to create the infrastructure to process it. You need to create the talent. That's a huge cost. But it's worth investing in it because that's how you differentiate yourself.

That's how you in what is seen as a commoditized industry, create your own space. So I think it's not something you can avoid. And for us, we've been at it for the last seven, eight years. We've been recognised



as what is called a lighthouse, which means you're ahead in the manufacturing industry on deploying digital technologies. So, we have been recognised for that and I think it's a great journey because it's also a great way for us to attract younger talent, get them excited. They're no longer excited about walking the shop floor. They want to see how to use data better.

**Pranjal:** So speaking of talent, and Ronnie, you are best place to speak about that. Today, there is a big debate whether the concept of degrees is even relevant. You enter a degree course and in three years when you exit, the whole world has changed and all that while we were just sitting in classrooms. So there is a lot of thought that should we do away with degrees, are they even relevant anymore? What is your view on this talent in the employer's perspective for the next decade?

**Ronnie:** So I think some sense of structured learning is very, very critical. And then nomenclature can evolve over a period of time. And I think even if you look at the classic sense of a management degree and a management degree was in HR and marketing; today it's on data analytics and business analytics. So that evolution is happening to a certain level. But I do believe that some sense of structured learning is important. The validity of that is the problem. So, I think the big challenge for us is not really whether a degree is relevant or not, it's the validity of it, which actually means that your concept of wanting to continue to learn and upgrade yourself every three to four years is becoming more.

**Pranjal:** Today, if a coder goes and says, I've been coding for 20 years and I've developed this fantastic software, a company can say that I already have a software to create more software. I don't need you anymore. So, everything that a person has done, even if that person is 30 or 40 in many ways is irrelevant. So how will you convince that person that structured learning is important?

**Ronnie:** I think the main question is when you're in some sense of formal education, you take for granted the learning of soft skills. And the reason I say that is because I think 50% of everyone getting ahead today is really about the soft skills, what they don't teach you in a structured learning. But I think you pick that up if you had none of that. And then if you just walk out into the world and say, I'm going to only learn on the job, you need to actually be very blessed with the aspect that you're going to be able to pick up that. So I'm a firm believer that you need that Basecamp, but today, seven out of 10, if you don't link that with employability, then the validity of that is going to be less and less.

**Pranjal:** Employability, Narendran. Has the concept and the definition changed? I also ask because today the difference between a white-collar worker and a blue-collar worker is disappearing. I am sure you have a lot of data scientists and computer engineers on the shop floor as you were mentioning earlier. In the coming years what will employability look like in the future?

**Narendran:** So traditionally in India, I think we've had a kind of

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focus on degrees more than vocational skills. I think we need to correct that quite a bit. If you see a lot of the developed world, if you look at Europe, you look at Australia, there's a lot of respect and dignity for vocational skills, which I think we need to inculcate more in India, need to start with the school system and take it on from there. Somebody once told me that the only two professions in India where you get paid more for skills than education is entertainment and sports. And even if I look at manufacturing, et cetera, when you hire an engineer, you would ask, which college are you from? But when you hire a welder or somebody to do some work in the plant, you're not necessarily looking at how that person was trained.

What is the certificate, what is the premium you would pay for a good skilling institute? So, I think that's going to change. Second thing is legacy industries like ours will always struggle to get the best of talent. We used to get the best of talent earlier. Now we have to make the best out of what we get. And I think there are great organisations, and more

recently we've all talked about ISRO, the kind of processes that they have to develop people and to really make them world-class scientists is something I think a lot of us in the private sector need to learn from.

**Pranjal:** So instead of an engineer, you might have a data scientist without an engineering background.

**Narendran:** Absolutely. So, there are two ways to look at it. You would have a data scientist, you would also try and make data scientists out of the people you have.

**Pranjal:** So, when somebody comes to upGrad, Ronnie, what is the biggest expectation they have? Will I get a job? Will I get a promotion?

**Ronnie:** First is actually they're stuck in their career. So, there's a certain sense of counselling. The question is am I a little burnt out or am I at a cross section? Second am I going to be outdated? So, what do I need to do to upgrade? So, a third of them, I think our people are looking to say, I'd want to be less irrelevant. And that happens now, not at an age group of 45, but even at 35. Even at 35 people having at the crossroad of saying, am I going to be irrelevant in three to four years? So that's one element. And then there's a second element that says, I want to turbocharge my career. And today I think it's no longer about organisation saying the bottom 15% are the question mark, I would say if you're not at the top 50 percentile of your company, you can't

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take your job for granted. So, when you look at that ratio that's moved from 85/15 to 50/50, I think the pressure on the younger generation is more.

**Pranjal:** But add here what Narendran said, it's also not about top and bottom anymore, Ronnie. It's also about completely new set of work opportunities emerging.

**Ronnie:** Which is why the 50/50 has come about because the relevance of where you need to be is being analysed, not just how well you've performed over the last three years in your specific job.

**Pranjal:** Do you see that happening in Tata Steel, a lot of lateral movement?

**Narendran:** Absolutely. I think we do that as a process of development. We move people. You could either move vertically, you could be a specialist if that's your passion, you could go vertically or you could move horizontally and you need to create those opportunities because honestly, if I look at it from the Indian system point of view, not everyone who's an engineer wanted to become an engineer. Not everyone who's a doctor wanted to become a doctor. So, you discover your own passions as you go out there and sometimes you make switches. I just met somebody out there who's a doctor who's in the civil services.

**Pranjal:** So, I'm going to switch gears here, not to make this a completely HR discussion. And there are very big shifts which are happening across the world. And some of, in my new book I have talked about are the forces of sustainability, emerging technology and social impact, having a huge \$25 trillion disruption of revenue models across the world. Sustainability is at the core and linked to it is social impact, which all three forces were acting separately, but suddenly they have come together, especially in the post covid world. Instances like in the UK where you worked with the government to have a fundamental transition of manufacturing from old technologies to green manufacturing. Is that going to be now the focus for nearly everybody in the manufacturing sector that make that transition as fast and as efficiently as possible?

**Narendran:** Yeah, absolutely. I think Europe in some sense is leading the way because of policy framework. The infrastructure which is being set up is supporting this transition. So, there's a cost of not transforming, but I think there's a lot to learn from that journey and we are doing it across other locations as well. I think the value pools will shift in this transition. What drove competitiveness will shift, because if I look at steel, typically you set up steel plants where there was coal and iron-ore. Now we would set up where there's energy available, cheap or hydrogen available cheap. Industry by itself cannot do this transition. So you need the industry to put in money. Governments will put in money, and customers also should be willing to put in money where the mouth is.

**Ronnie:** I just want to add now maybe I'm a little outside on this because I've been in sectors where this is not the centre stage for it because

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**Ronnie Screwvala**



we're in service. But just as an outside I would say we need to be careful about the fact that if it's too much of a push, I think people are going to set themselves high targets because that's what they need to articulate and then they're going to pull back because it's always 10 years later.

**Pranjal:** But the fascinating thing about if you talk about trends of the next decade is competition. And you referred to it earlier, but Ronnie is a great example of it. Competition for any sector and any company will come and can come from somebody who's not in the sector at all. You entered the education sector, Ronnie, and I'm sure you upset a lot of people and several other companies. Do you see that as a very significant shift that the medical variables we have, they came from tech sector. So the medical devices industry is competing with a bunch of people who have no experience or legacy in healthcare. How much of that is going to disrupt business models?

**Ronnie:** So, I would look at competition in two ways because I think I've come from non legacy businesses and whether it's been in media or now in education. Because of the simple reason that there are no precedents there and actually you are market making. So I think my entire career and life has been one where one has looked at how to market make, and therefore you do need a certain sense of competition because I've seen you cannot open a market or a sector with one or two players. It doesn't happen. The credibility actually goes down. The trust is not there. The awareness is not there and you need to walk the extra mile all the time. So, competitiveness in a certain sense is very good. The second part is today I think everyone overestimates again, your total addressable market and who's your competition? I think people are missing that. The real competition is going to come from the smaller players as you have mentioned.

So, I may have a large educational distinct, but somebody will just focus on data science and build a hundred crore business

while we are trying to make this into a thousand crore business. So, I think for greenfield things, which is what the new economies are today, we should not be unwelcome about competition because the big challenge is to open the market for which you need multiple players, multiple noises, multiple credibility in a competitive field. India is a price sensitive market in the first place. I mean there's no running away from that. If you can get your moat, I don't think competition is going to be able to do that. If you know your business segregation, you can actually make it a very different element.

**Pranjal:** In an earlier world, we would all go to a clinic and the clinic would have these certain devices, check your body parameters. Most of that is now on your watch. You put your thumb on a screen of a phone and you get your blood pressure, et cetera. So, the companies that were manufacturing that have to reinvent themselves. So, Narendran, do you feel that same because I asked you this in the beginning, 55 rupees a kilo of steel is still very worth it. But what if somebody comes up with a composite material, which is 30 rupees, a kilo? What do you do then?

**Narendran:** So, I think the value pools will keep shifting and you need to really look at raise a value pool and where are the opportunities, right? So, talking of composites. So, Tata Steel is also hedging its bet on other materials. So, we are into fibre reinforce polymers, we are into composites, ceramics, so on and so forth. So, there the whole hypothesis about leveraging the relationships that you have in customer segments to be agnostic to materials to say that, okay, I sell steel to somebody, but I know what are the materials that they need and where is it that we can bring value. So, it's looking at can we shift from capital intensive to more knowledge intensive materials? That's an opportunity. Secondly, you have relationships with customers and you can see that how else can you unlock value? How can you provide solutions? So, I think value keeps shifting.

**Pranjal:** And which is a big deal for, I mean it's more than a hundred year old company. For them to completely leave their legacy and become a technology, energy technology company is a huge shift.

**Ronnie:** But see, I think there will be the Nokias and there will be the Blackberries that didn't reinvent themselves and maybe a Xerox here and there. But to your question on the testing part, and therefore people to reinvent, I think you have to look at it with a cup half empty and see what the opportunities are there. Because now more and more people are testing and aware of everything they want to do, which means the entire market has opened up. Because the more you test, the more you're hyper, the more you're hyper. You want to get more tests. And actually those medical facilities and those medical companies have grown in market share because everyone has now become more aware. If a hundred million people were aware, a billion people are now aware. So, 900 million people are monitoring themselves without going once

in 10 years to a doctor. So, I think we have to look at the cup half full and half empty, and there's opportunity there.

**Pranjal:** 10 years later, where do you see Tata Steel?

**Narendran:** So, I think there are two things. One is like Ronnie said, there's growth. I mean, if I look at the Indian steel industry, we are the second largest in the world, but China is eight times larger than us. That's the opportunity, particularly given that the focus is on infrastructure. So, there is a need for us to grow in what we are good at or what we've been doing for a hundred years, but we also need to plant seeds for the future. We are also into recycling. We are constantly planting seeds.

**Pranjal:** Typically, people from 50 to 75 age group feel that especially CEOs would say that they live by the tyranny of the quarterly results. I have to focus on my quarterly results. How many business leaders are thinking about the next 5 years, forget about a decade.

**Narendran:** I think you have to balance the short term and the long term. If you don't focus on the short term, you anyways don't have a long term. Particularly for organizations like ours which are multi-generational you really need to think of what you are leaving behind for the next generation.

**Pranjal:** You think there is an upGrad required for CEOs and CXOs?

**Ronnie:** Five years back, if I was interviewing candidates, I would look for people who can solve problems. I think today I'm looking for people who can spot problems before they can solve them, because actually the people who can spot problems and avoid them are more priceless than the people who can solve problems. So I think the world is getting tighter.

**Pranjal:** Do you agree?

**Narendran:** Absolutely. And I think there's a lot to learn from the younger demographic in our organisations. And I think leaders need to create opportunities to engage with them. Because for instance, when we were early in the digital transformation, we did a lot of reverse mentoring. So, where people below 30 were mentoring the leaders who were over 50.

**Ronnie:** I would recommend every CEO has a Chief of Staff at 25 years, 28 years, and 32 years. And build those three different ones with three different perspectives in life. And one could be more leaning on technology, one is more consumer, one is more product because you need a little bit of depth. And I think that the office today needs to be defined even at the corner office in a very different way.

**Pranjal:** I heard that L&T has a set of executive assistants across all businesses, and there's one for each, about 80 people who are doing this. So it's interesting that some of the conglomerates and CEOs are looking at that, one of course to keep track of what's going on, but create the new generation leaders as well.

**Ronnie:** Because you're not looking for gossip, you're not looking at somebody to go out and check. You're looking for insights. I think today more than ever, the value of having insights is 10 times more important than what it was before. And to have somebody with a completely neutral perspective giving you insights, which your normal executive team may or may not volunteer to give. And even if it's an open culture, they may not look at it that way. I think it's quite disruptive.

**Pranjal:** If I were to request of you to give us three big shifts that we have to prepare for business in the next decade, not just Indian, because I think one of the big trends that we have not addressed perhaps, is that a lot of Indian companies, mid-level Indian companies have very global ambitions. So, it's not about business in India, but business from India.

**Ronnie:** Well, before I start with that, I think I would caveat that all the three big shifts will actually shift. If you start here 18 months from now in the first place, and we don't believe in that, then that's a problem because it has to get, revalidated would be my first caveat before I said that. But if you look at the present buzzword of say, artificial

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## T V Narendran

intelligence, I mean to me, besides the fact that there is a little bit of over hype in the context, but it is in my opinion, a GDP changing factor. I think countries can go up and down in GDP if you can take this one. And I think India's got a huge opportunity because if the AI sector is going to be a 15-\$20 trillion industry in the next 10 years, that's a combination of the top, some of the top economies in the world.

So, I think that's a massive opportunity. Second, I think is the consumer. I think less and less, I'm finding people being more in touch with being the consumer because there's a certain legacy with how you interpret the consumer. But I think that's changing so rapidly. We are more concerned about technology and artificial intelligence than actually what the consumer is changing, what the wallet share of the consumer is changing. And if you can keep a track on that, and maybe in the service sector it's different in the steel sector will be different because that's much more a different institutional consumption. But in very best sectors, if you can follow wallet share and you can follow the consumer and especially the younger demographic, you're going to be able to look at that in a very different manner and not get intimidated by technology. That would be the second and third one. Yeah, I am in a sector where I think lifelong learning is here to stay, and I think the sooner we accept it, the sooner we think there's an urgency for it and not a casual need for it. **Di**

### ABOUT

Ronnie Screwvala, co-founder and Chairperson, upGrad, Indian Entrepreneur and Film Producer.

T V Narendran is currently the global CEO and Managing Director of Tata Steel, one of the largest steel producers in the world. He is the current President of Confederation of Indian Industry.

# The Making of Maruti and the Evolving Business of Building Cars in India

**R C Bhargava, chairman, Maruti is conversation with Sumit Chaturvedi, Senior Business Editor, ET Now, discuss the dynamics of India's auto industry, as the country's biggest automaker shifts into new gears with the advent of electric cars, starting from the first Maruti car that gave birth to a billion dreams.**



**SUMIT:** Let's begin by talking about Maruti Suzuki, which is not just a household name in India, it is the epitome of manufacturing success of the country. First, I would like you to throw some light on how a small car Maruti gave birth to a billion dreams, how it all started?

**BHARGAVA:** I think most people are aware of the history of Maruti, though I would imagine some of the younger generation now may have forgotten how Maruti came into existence. The decision to manufacture cars in the public sector was taken at a time when socialism and socialistic planning was at a height and private cars were not a product which was encouraged by anyone. The reason Maruti got actually created was because Sanjay Gandhi, who was planning to make a small car, hadn't succeeded for a decade, unfortunately died in an air crash and Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi decided that his ambition to make a small car should not be allowed to die with him even though cars were not part of the socialist planning system. And that's why she and the government decided to create a public sector company to manufacture cars against all policies at that time. And then Suzuki became the partner.

**Sumit:** So, India is now world's third largest car market, third largest car market. The majority of the cars in India are still being made by you and challenges are not new for you, challenges you have always witnessed. What according to you is the next wave of challenge that you are ready to stand or ready to face?

**BHARGAVA:** India is now the biggest growing market in the

world. There is no other country in the world of any size which has the potential of growth in the car market, which India has, whether it is the United States, whether it's Europe, whether it's Japan, whether it's China. All these countries have now become saturated in terms of their ability to absorb more cars. Their production is a replacement kind of situation. India is the only country which has still a lot of distance to go before the market becomes saturated.

**Sumit:** Let's shift focus to manufacturing sector, a large part of it is contributed by you. You are what Make in India stands for! 20% of overall GDP is contributed by the manufacturing sector, but according to you what is happening now in the manufacturing sector?

**Bhargava:** As the Prime Minister pointed out in 2014, if we are to solve our problems or poverty, if we are to create enough employment for the large numbers of young people who are joining the workforce and if we are going to have greater equity in our society, all of this would only be possible if our manufacturing sector grows faster and

“There is no other country in the world of any size which has the potential of growth in the car market, which India has, whether it is US, Europe, Japan or China. Their production is a replacement kind of situation. India is the only country which has still a lot of distance to go before the market becomes saturated.”



we reach at least 25% of GDP through the manufacturing sector.

To get to this point, the centre over the last 9-10 years now has been making a series of reforms and improvements in the environment. The ease of doing business as you know, used to be somewhere 140-150 at one time. We have come down to 62. A lot of tax reforms have happened. GST has come, tax rates have come down. More than a thousand old acts have been abolished and this whole series of reforms have happened - all designed to make it easier to do business in India, easier to be more competitive in manufacturing.

Unfortunately, the results are not yet apparent. Manufacturing growth continues and the reason I think is that the bulk of the interaction of manufacturers, entrepreneurs is with the state government and in state governments, the bureaucracy, the entire administration is still not changed in the states in the way the central government has changed. There are lots of delays, time is not a factor which is valued highly by most people in the states and the attitude of administration is very much similar to what it used to be in the license and control days that the job of the bureaucracy, the job of the civil servant is to control rather than facilitate. That change has not happened.

I think along with that, the entrepreneurs also are largely maintaining a mindset and practices which were developed during the license and control 'Raj' because in those days, private sector was not in a position to grow or in any way innovate because the license laid down every condition of their functioning. We are all aware of the growth of black money in the country. We are all aware of what black money growth meant in terms of ostentatious consumption. Now if you look around, I doubt if any one of us here will be able to say that ostentatious consumption has

gone down in India. If at all it has happened, it has happened in the opposite direction that people now like to show how much they can spend on a grandchild's birthday or some such event and the race is that, oh, that guy spent 20 crores. So as long as the system continues where entrepreneurs, businessmen are more concerned about showing off their personal wealth and generating personal incomes and are not so much focused on growing their companies, I'm afraid the growth rates will not go up.

But just give the example of Maruti. Maruti grew at a time when all the conditions were unfavourable. Whatever Mr. Modi has done to make easier to do business now, were not there in that time. Many of the other facilities today were not available then. Like, communications and computers which were not around in the 80s and 90s.

We started exporting cars in 1990, a few years after we started. We could still do that. Today with all the ease which is available in this country, why our entrepreneurs not able to grow faster?

**Sumit:** After Covid, we were adopting this one (China) plus one policy. We were hopeful that companies will come to India looking at India as an alternate base for manufacturing. You think it's on track?

**Bhargava:** See companies are moving out of China. That's a fact. I think there's a great awareness amongst a lot of companies all over the world that the need to de-risk their supply chains and total dependence on one country is not a good idea, but they don't think that the only option they have is India. If you look at what's happening, a lot of the people who are moving out of China have gone to Vietnam. Now, it's something which we should think about. Why is it that people are preferring to go to Vietnam and not come to India? Still, are things not happening in India the way they should have? And that's where I think the whole atmosphere of management and the kind of assistance and time which is taken is something which we need to look at.

Things are changing. It's not that nobody's coming into India. You look at what Apple is doing and other companies are doing. Foxconn has come in here. It's not happening on a large enough scale. Manufacturing growth in India is still about 5% a year. We need to get up to 12% a year. That's the kind of change which is needed.

**Sumit:** Moving forward and shifting focus to future challenges, Reinventing Maruti. Now government is more focused on safety. Technology is changing every week, month, year. What about these future challenges? How is Maruti Suzuki planning tackle those challenges?

**Bhargava:** Safety is something which we cannot compromise on and especially if you look at the numbers. India in 2021 had over 153,000 deaths from road accidents. It has been going up. It has been going up despite all the new regulations which have come in to make vehicles



“Still, are things not happening in India the way they should have? And that’s where I think the whole atmosphere of management and the kind of assistance and time which is taken is something which we need to look at.”

safer. We had no regulations till 2010, almost till 2000. 2010 we got into BS 4. We therefore have to continue to do what the government is doing, more and more standards to prevent deaths happening. But at the same time, we cannot get safety on the roads unless a number of other things happen. The process of teaching people how to drive and testing people before they get licenses.

It’s very, very easy to get a license. There is no real testing of the knowledge of the driver on how to drive or what are the safety regulations. After that there is a question of enforcing the laws relating to driving and safety. There again, I think people who should know better, people who drive in very expensive swanky cars, even they are not very conscious about the need for observing what are well accepted standards of driving. Again, we are one of the few countries in the world which does not have a mandatory fitness certification for cars.

A lot of accidents happen on the road because of a failure or one or the other safety system of a car. We do have a system for safety certification of commercial vehicles, but like a driving license, it’s very easy to get a certification of fitness for a commercial vehicle. Also, without the vehicle actually being tested for



fitness. And unfortunately, that is going to remain until the state governments again decide that they are going to give greater priority to safety.

The two-wheeler segment, which we talked about a little while ago with summary contributes to about 60% of the fuel consumption in the country. It carries more people on two-wheelers that carried per commuting than in cars. There’s no safety system there at all. The maximum number of road deaths I mentioned 153,000. The last figure that I know of, over 60% of those consist of two-wheeler drivers and pedestrians.

**Sumit:** These are the long-term challenges, but in short-term challenge, is demand slow-down a fear and challenge. It is happening in two-wheeler sectors, especially in scooters. But in the car market in the near-term challenge demand slow down. Is it a concern today?

**Bhargava:** Demand for cars has been, over the last 10-12 years, being going up and down. If I look at the car demand from 2010 onwards, from 2010 till about 2014, the market was absolutely stagnant. That happened at a time when we had the effect of the 2008 financial crisis and the government policy, which made the difference between petrol and diesel much larger than it used to be. It’s come back to normal again. Then we had four or five years of reasonable growth, something like 7-8% growth.

Then BS 6 came along. The first year of BS 6, the car market dropped by 18%. The moment that year was ending, COVID came along and so we had two years of no growth because of Covid. Along with Covid we had then the shortage of semiconductors, which again retarded production. The result was that the first year, that’s ’22 and ’23, the year which had just ended was the first year when production and sales of cars in India actually crossed the level of ’18 and ’19. So again, four years of lost sale. Now for the future, consider the expensive nature of all the changes which we are talking about, which most companies will have to comply with. The result of that is the projections of growth for the next 8-10 years is still about 5% a year. And that is assuming that again, no unexpected event happens in India or outside India, which will have an impact on the growth of cars.

**Sumit:** We know that Indian government is discouraging now production of the diesel engines and diesel cars. You took this call in 2019 when you said you will be stopping diesel car production in phases. But on behalf of industry, would it be easy for the industry to shift from diesel manufacturing capabilities?

**Bhargava:** See, the government is not saying do not manufacture diesel. Government is saying that we have to achieve our carbon neutrality norms and the safe norms as you know are being enforced in the country. Diesel cars are very, very difficult in terms of their technology in meeting the safe norms which are already there and which are coming. The costs become exorbitantly high. The reason Maruti and some other companies



have given up diesel production is because of the cost factor. If you want to comply with the norms which exist for carbon neutrality, you will not be able to sell the car at a price which anybody will buy.

**Sumit:** You were late entrants in electric, you have announced that now you'll be coming with six models in next few years. What about the overall electric car journey?

**Bhargava:** Actually, it is not quite correct that we were late. I think if you remember, we were the first to say that we are converting the Wagon R into an electric Wagon R. That conversion work actually took place, but then we found that the cost of the electric car was so high that it would not be a viable proposition and that is why we gave up and said that now let us look at developing a bigger model of a car because the lower car segment of the cars was not such that could be converted to electric and still remain affordable for customers. The market for bigger cars is now becoming reasonably sized. I think by the time we come into the market with electric cars, there would be the possibility of reasonable volumes being sold.

We are coming with six models because by the time we are talking of these electric vehicles until 2030, the domestic market will be somewhere close to 6.5 to 7 million cars. Now if we are to keep 45 to 50% of that market, you can't do it by having one or two models. You need to have a large number of models to get the kind of volumes that you want to have. And 6 models, we feel, is the minimum which we require. Even with six models by 2030, only about 15 to 20% of our sales will be electric vehicles.

**Sumit:** And are the hybrid cars and CNG cars going to fill up the vacuum created by diesel vehicles?

**Bhargava:** The hybrid cars, if you look at their carbon footprint, and if you look at the electricity, which is generated today in India by burning coal, actually the carbon footprint of the hybrid car today with 75% electric energy coming from coal is better than the carbon footprint of an electric car because remember, while the electric car is clean where it operates, it is using electricity which is generated by burning coal. It's not a clean car.

A hybrid car does not require that electricity, generates its own from the momentum of the car. And that position will hold till such time as about almost 50% of our energy comes from green energy sources. Then they will come on par. So, a hybrid car is going to remain very much a part of the transition to clean energy. CNG is a better product than petrol and for smaller cars and cheaper cars where electric cars become very expensive and there are other issues why electric cars are not suitable for people who don't have parking places, who don't have nowhere to charge the car. CNG is a better option because if you use petrol, you have the highest carbon footprint. If you use CNG, you come down much lower. So, remember it is not zero or a hundred. We have to go through a transition process to reach zero, but that will take a much longer term. We have till 2070 and we have to find other technologies because we cannot generate electricity 100% from clean sources. Green hydrogen, high fuel sales is one option. Biogas is another option. These

“We are looking at a mix of fuel technologies in India to get to zero carbon neutrality, and this will include EVs, it will include hybrids, it includes ethanol, includes CNG, includes CBG. I personally see a big future for compressed biogas in India.”

are some totally clean options. Ethanol is another option. These are all hundred percent renewable clean sources. We have to maybe move towards these rather than electric cars in the longer term.

**Sumit:** When you partnered with Toyota though the Suzuki and Toyota Global Partnership, it's in India also Maruti and Toyota, the Rebadging happening. Are you open to more partnerships, do you think industry-wide, these partnerships should benefit more and more companies and players?

**Bhargava:** The partnership is between Suzuki, Japan and Toyota, Japan. There's no partnership in India between Toyota and Suzuki or Maruti. If Suzuki has a partnership with Toyota, I don't think there's need for any partnership with anybody else because Toyota is the number one in the world and it has access and the capability of developing any kind of technology which any other company has.

**Sumit:** How do you plan to achieve the targets in sustainability and carbon neutrality?

**Bhargava:** As I mentioned, we are looking at a mix of fuel technologies in India to get to zero carbon neutrality, and this will include EVs, it will include hybrids, it includes ethanol, includes CNG, includes CBG. I personally see a big future for compressed biogas in India. Use of animal waste is carbon negative. Similarly, this whole problem of burning of the paddy husk could be ably reduced if not eliminated, if that same paddy husk was used to generate biogas. Actually, the best fuel for biogas is paddy husk. There are logistical issues involved, but I think that we should make the effort to give biogas high priority. **DI**



## ABOUT

Ravindra Chandra Bhargava is the former C.E.O and current chairman of Maruti Suzuki, the largest automobile manufacturer in India, having joined the company after serving twenty-five years as an Indian Administrative Service officer. He is a recipient of the prestigious Padma Bhushan.

# Aviation will Ride the Economic Boom; India is Ready to Become the Big Aviation Hub in Our Region

**What does this mean? It means we will organise a lot more jobs with one aircraft creating 100 new jobs, 600 related jobs, and these are ballpark numbers, but it shows to some extent what it would do for the larger economy. Today, in India we have around 750 aircraft on a population of 1.4 billion. Today, in China with a similar population, it has around 3500 aircraft.**



by **PIETER ELBERS**

I can see a lot of positive dynamics and a lot of positive elements for the Indian economy. And clearly there's an incredible strong correlation between the development of the industry, the development of the country, and the aviation industry itself.

I come from a country where we were serving 150 destinations from a city of 1 million people. Today we are not serving that number out of India, so just imagine what is the potential for India going forward.

So, looking at the number of young people in the country, what that would mean for aviation speaks a lot of the potential. And if we look actually at a different number, it is even more surprising. Today, in India we have around 750 aircraft on a population of 1.4 billion. Today, in China with a similar population, it is around 3500 aircraft. Admittedly, the landmass in China is bigger than the landmass in India, but still it speaks of the level to which India is underserved in terms of aviation.

So, when India recently in fact dominated the Air Show in Paris, I jokingly mentioned to some people, it appeared to be an Indian Air Show taking place in Paris. With the order of both Air India and Indigo creating a clear focus was on which is the next frontier when it comes to aviation.

And what does it mean? It means we will organize a lot more jobs - one aircraft, a hundred jobs, 600 related jobs, and these are ballpark numbers, but it shows to some extent what it would do for the larger economy. And there's more than just jobs.

Aviation is a force for growth. There are some international studies and recently Minister of Transportation has also repeated that, each dollar invested in aviation or each rupee invested in aviation will return 3.1 to the larger economy. And that in itself underlines the importance for aviation.

And that's probably why the Indian government has placed so much importance on expanding the aviation sector in policies, in infrastructure and importantly envisioned going forward for the country. And there's no reason why India should not have its own set of aviation hubs. A country of the size of India, needs and deserves to have carriers of a world size and airports of a world size, because 65% of the world population today lives in the range of five to six hours flying from India.

If you just look at that number, 65% of the world population today in the range of five to six hours flying from India, and the sheer range we can operate out of Delhi and Chennai, totally different cities and totally different ranges, speaks a lot of the potential of India and importantly for the consumers to make sure that they can go pretty much



anywhere in the world connecting in India itself.

And with that, we have the ambition to become a global aviation hub and a strong collaboration within that aviation system because all the strong hubs in other parts of the world, and we don't have to look too far to see some very effective and very successful examples outside India, be it in Singapore, albeit in the Middle East, require a very strong deep collaboration between all the stakeholders - airports, airlines, the government, but also, whatever can be done in terms of manufacturing, India can and will develop its own manufacturing bases.

And already we see examples of some great companies working in the high-tech aerospace. And with that, if we collaborate with strong support of the government in terms of policies with airports being expanded, airports transforming, new airports being built, all the top 20 cities in the world, no, I should phrase it differently, a significant part of the top 20 cities in the world in terms of population have a dual airport system and soon we will have in India too - a new airport in Delhi and a new airport in Mumbai. And recently, the second airport in Goa opened and even that airport demonstrated that it did not have any negative effects, any downsides for the existing airport. It just shows the potential which is there.

And Indigo has transformed actually the face of Indian aviation with its simple, three customer promises - on-time performance, affordable, FAEs, hassle free and purchase service. And more recently, I would say an unparalleled network, a network which is spanning the nation, 3000 km from north to south and 3000 km from east to west, resulting in a network of some 500 different routes, a hundred international and a little over 400 domestic routes.

And each and every time we open up a new flight into a new city, we see an economic spinoff. What does it mean for international hotels? What does it mean for welcoming foreigners to transfer? What does it mean for Indian business people going from one place to the other in the country? So just the potential and the opportunity to further build on that number of routes is there. And today we take pride in being the seventh largest airline in the world in terms of daily departures. In 17 years, that is an incredible achievement. Last year, we welcomed 86 million customers on board our flights, and today, this year we expect to reach a hundred million. And on a good day today, thank you, on a good day today we welcomed 3 lakh customers on a single day, on our flights.

And that may look like a lot of people, but I guess we're all aware of the number of travelers by train - 8 billion a year. So can you imagine this inspirational travel and aspirational travel for people travelling from Bihar to Chennai or from Delhi to Mumbai, suddenly two hours on a flight. So that aspiration to travel will continue to grow and therefore, and it is important for us to keep ahead also on the sustainability part and having the world's youngest fleet for airlines operating more than a hundred aircraft, it means we will also have the lowest CO2 emissions of the airlines in the world with larger fleets than a hundred aircraft. And yet we continue to collaborate in the sector, optimise routes, less weight, even looking at sustainable aviation fuel.


And there were some journalists there asking, is it not too much? Can India handle all that growth? And just look back to the initial numbers, where I mentioned the number of people actually flying

“Aviation is a force for growth. There are some international studies and recently Minister of Transportation has also repeated that, each dollar invested in aviation or each rupee invested in aviation will return 3.1 to the larger economy.”

the number of planes per population and the opportunity to further build on it. But that means we'll have a steady flow of aircraft, almost a thousand aircraft on order between today and middle of the next decade, which means we will be welcoming an aircraft pretty much each and every week. So think about what does it mean in terms of training, in terms of development, in terms of pilot hiring, in terms of cabin crew, in terms of mechanics, in terms of management. So that's an incredible journey we're embarking upon.

And with that, Indigo expects to be double of today's size by the end of the decade. And that will bring us really from a domestic carrier into more of a global aviation giant, which again, if you're the third largest economy in the world, soon, if you're the largest country in the world in terms of population, you should have an airline system and airlines which are reflection of that population and of that economy.

There again, being in India with such a young population, such an ambitious population, and such a well-educated population, I believe we are in an incredibly good spot to take up that challenge. And when it comes to digital, probably even more, the whole world comes to India for digitization. So why couldn't we not be ourselves a leader in that digital part? So, we have clearly a very strong ambition to invest in that.

Today we operate 32 international destinations and 81 domestic points. So, it just speaks of the potential we still have to further build. Especially, the international part, cargo and loyalty as new pillars of growth and of course our new ventures, whatever we are going to do, in sync with the entire ecosystem, we are doing that together with our partners. 

## ABOUT

Pieter Elbers is a Dutch airline executive who is presently the CEO of IndiGo, since 2022. He had been president and CEO of the Netherlands' flag carrier airline, KLM, from 2014 until his appointment as CEO of IndiGo.

# Bringing Back India's Maritime Glory to our Present Times

## A STITCHED SHIP TO SAIL TO SOUTH EAST ASIA

Culture Ministry is collaborating with Indian Navy to bring back a stitched ship, of which building has started in Goa. Set for a maiden voyage in 2025, the project will explore the original routes of times gone by. Sanjeev Sanyal, Member, PM Economic Advisory Council, is an active historian who is behind this pilot project. We caught up with him, in a brief conversation, to understand the nuances of re-creating history.



In conversation with **NAVIN BERRY**

**W**hat's the big idea behind this? What is its significance? The idea is to build an ancient Indian ship and explore the original routes that sailed. To the extent possible, the ancient techniques will be retained so that we can understand exactly how maritime links were maintained in ancient times. I had collected a lot of material about the history of ancient maritime links for my book *Ocean of Churn*. Am now using it to design the ship.

“The idea is to build an ancient Indian ship and explore the original routes that sailed. To the extent possible, the ancient techniques will be retained so that we can understand exactly how maritime links were maintained in ancient times.”

*What is stitching a boat mean?*

India has a very long maritime history going back to the Bronze Age. This ship will replicate a ship from circa 4th century AD as depicted in a painting in Ajanta. Other inputs, including ancient texts, carvings and descriptions by foreign travellers. An interesting aspect of ancient Indian ship technology was that the vessels were “stitched together” rather than nailed. This technique was used for thousands of years but went into decline after the Europeans came to dominate the Indian Ocean.

*Why now this project?*

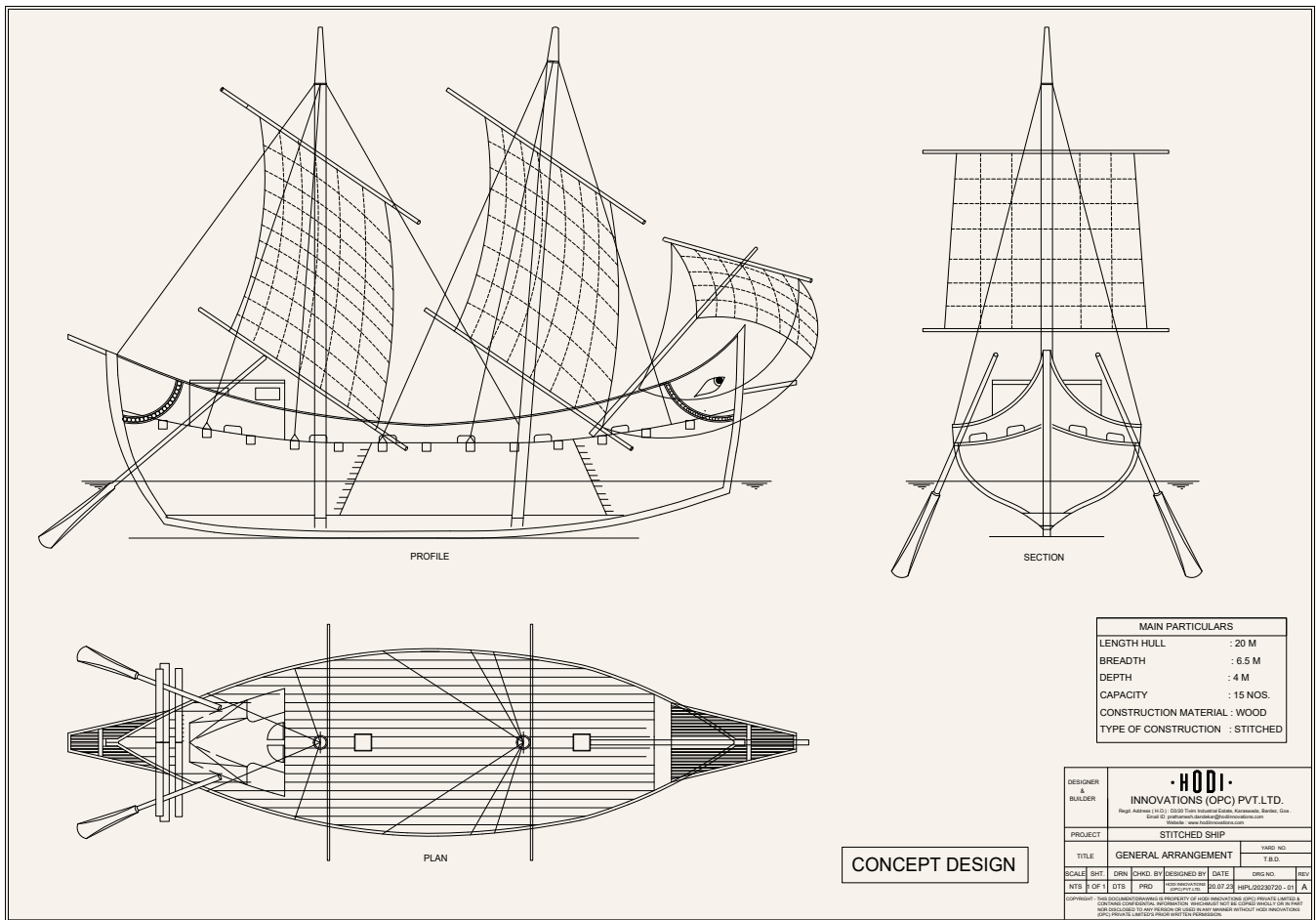
The technique is alive with very few remaining shipbuilders who make small boats and it may go extinct soon. Hence, this ship is a way to record the technique for posterity.

*How much of this effort enjoys the seal of our Navy? Who are the other collaborators?*

The stitched ship is being built through the collaboration of Union Ministry of Culture and the Indian Navy. Of course, I will be closely involved in the design, building and eventual voyage. The Navy will also help sail it and sailors will have to specially trained for managing an ancient ship. This is no easy task as we do not quite know the sailing characteristics of a stitched ship. It will be all learning on the job.

*Is there a broader outreach behind this initiative?*

The idea is to sail this ship from Odisha, India



to South East Asia and create goodwill visits along the way. We will be also documenting both the construction and voyage. Many history and sailing enthusiasts have expressed keen interest. We hope to display it in the new Maritime Museum in Lothal after the voyages are done.

**What is the present status of the project?**

The construction started in mid-September 2023 in Goa and will take 18 months. Then there will be 6 months of sailing along the coast for testing.

**When is the scheduled sail?**



We hope to be ready in second half of 2025.

**Will it be one time or become an ongoing new adventure?**

As a project it is a one-time experiment. Of course, the idea is to trigger continued interest in India's maritime history. Others may take up other projects.

**How has the PM responded?**

He was very happy to hear about it and has given us enthusiastic support. We would not have been able to put together such a project without his support.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Sanjeev Sanyal is a member of Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council. He has worked on several editions of the Economic Survey of the Ministry of Finance. He has authored several books, including 'Revolutionaries', that was recently released by Home Minister Amit Shah.

## SENIOR CITIZENS

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# SENIOR CITIZENS NEED A BETTER DEAL IN LIFE!



**Jaya Bachan, MP and veteran film star, raised a very important issue in Parliament, on the well-being and care needed for senior citizens. She said and we quote her.**

“Senior citizens of India are not eligible for medical insurance after 70 years, they do not get loan on EMI. Their driving license is not issued. They are not given any work, hence they depend on others for survival. They have paid all the taxes, insurance premiums up to the age of retirement, which is 60-65. Now even after becoming senior citizens, they have to pay all the taxes. There is no scheme for them in India. 50% discount on railways/air travel, has also been discontinued. The other side of the picture is that senior citizens in politics, like MLA, MP, or Minister, are given every possible benefit and they also get pensions.

I fail to understand why all others (except some Government employees) are denied the same facilities. Imagine, if the children are not caring about them, where will they go?

Seniors have the power to change the government, don't ignore them. They have the life long experience to change Governments. Don't consider them weak! So many schemes are required for the benefits of seniors. The government spends a lot of money on welfare schemes, but never realizes similar schemes are also required, if not more, around senior citizens. On the contrary, the income of senior citizens is decreasing due to reduction in interest rates of banks. If some of them are getting a meagre pension to support the family and self, it is also subject to income tax.

So senior citizens should be considered for some benefits:

- All citizens above 60 must be given pension.
- Everybody must be given pension as per status
- Concession in railway, bus & air travel.
- Insurance should be must for all up to the last breath and premium must be paid by the Government.
- Court cases of senior citizens must be given priority for early decision.
- Senior citizens homes in every city with all facilities should be set up.
- Govt should amend the rule of scrapping 10 -15 years old used cars. This rule should be applied only for commercial vehicles. Our cars are purchased on loan and our usage is only 40 to 50000 km in 10 yrs. Our cars are as good as new ones. If our cars are scrapped, then we must be given new cars.

Let's hope that this government, which is sincere all the time and talks of "Sab ka saath, sab ka vikas" will do some good for the betterment of those who have contributed towards nation building and are now past their prime."

It's an issue that concerns seniors and their families just as much! The nation must protect and make senior living an experience worthy of a caring society. It would affect different people differently; interest rates and taxes could be the first step that the government can initiate. Easy health care is another. It is basically an issue of making life as comfortable as our society can afford. **Di**

# INDIA'S BAMBOO INDUSTRY AN EFFECTIVE ECO-SYSTEM AWAITS A SECOND COMING!



India also happens to be the world's second largest cultivator of bamboo after China, with 136 species and 23 genera spread over a staggering 13.96 million hectares. And yet, the Indian Bamboo industry has far from actualised its true potential, with a mere 2.19% share in the global bamboo trade and commerce (as per the INBAR Report of 2019).

A commodity like bamboo, with such extensive potential, unfortunately lies in the shadows of an ecosystem that could benefit from it and yet, does not know how. We believe collaborative coordination amongst different public and private sector stakeholders is the only way to ensure that the potential is fully harnessed. And by extension, to ensure significant strides are made towards the development of the nation.

by MUKESH GULATI and SANJEEV KARPE

## An Overview

**THE GROSS ANNUAL OUTPUT OF THE BAMBOO SECTOR AND THE BAMBOO SUB-SECTORS THAT HOLD MOST SCOPE FOR GROWTH**

The Gross annual output in the bamboo sector is currently estimated to be ₹12,507 cr. which is much lesser than the figures of ₹25,000 cr. often quoted in some of the public speeches and documents available.

The scope for increase in the economic





**The bamboo subsectors that hold big scope for monetary growth are engineered bamboo, Bamboo Artefacts & Utility Products (High End), Round Bamboo Furniture (High End), Bamboo Construction (High End), and bamboo as a biomass fuel with applications as coal replacement, producer/CNG gas and liquid fuel.**

This translates into 6.9 times of the current level bamboo biomass, thus necessitating the land requirement at 17.22 lac acres 10 years later. This computation is based on the assumption of 20 tons of bamboo biomass p.a. per acre. If the entire biomass is estimated to be available at ₹3,500 per ton, this amounts to ₹12,061 Cr. directly going to the 11.48 lac farmers at an average of ₹1.05 lac per acre.

However, many farmers can add value to the harvested bamboo by undertaking primary processing activities including seasoning and treatment of bamboo for higher value realisation. Besides, there is also scope to increase the biomass production from 20 Tons to 40 Tons p.a. per acre if scientific methods of plantation & harvesting are used.

value of output is to reach ₹52,246 Cr. (4.2 times), in 10 years 'time frame as per this scoping study document.

The bamboo subsectors that hold big scope for monetary growth are engineered bamboo, Bamboo Artefacts & Utility Products (High End), Round Bamboo Furniture (High End), Bamboo Construction (High End), and bamboo as a biomass fuel with applications as coal replacement, producer/CNG gas and liquid fuel.

The farm-based plantation will increase because of the high demand generation for raw bamboo in the above-mentioned applications.

### **EMPLOYMENT NUMBERS AND STATUS WITHIN THE BAMBOO SECTOR**

The total full-time equivalent employment is estimated to be 10.3 lacs of which almost 75.5% comes from the low value-added craft sector to produce mainly the woven basketry related products, mostly in the tribal & north-eastern regions of India.

This figure is also much smaller compared to the 3-5 million persons that are said to be dependent on bamboo sector, a large number among them on part-time basis. The full-time equivalent employment levels can grow from the current level of 10.3 lac persons to 30.37 lac full time equivalent persons (2.95times), thus generating additional 20.07 lac jobs.

Of this, the direct business applications will generate 8.59 lac additional jobs to become 18.89 lac jobs, while the indirect employment generation at the farmers level will be another 11.48 lacs. The current level of employment at the farmers level is relatively small at about 3000 as per the estimations made.

### **OPTIMISING PLANTATION AND HARVESTING TO GROW EMPLOYMENT AT FARMER LEVEL**

The growth of employment at farmer levels is directly related to the growth in production of bamboo products & their markets as per the details given above. The gross biomass from bamboo is currently at the level of about 49.99 lactones p.a. that must grow to 344.6 lactones p.a. and the entire increase is assumed to come from the private plantation and not from the govt. forestland.

## **Recommendations for the Bamboo Sector**

Based on the findings of the exercise undertaken by the FMC under the EU funded project; a set of 25 cross sectoral recommendations were collated along with timelines.

Private stakeholders, non-profits, and small-businesses have also begun to lean into the bamboo industry for producing products like toothbrushes, baskets, furniture, flooring, and even construction. It is here that the case for bamboo's potential begins to build!

An illustrative list of recommendations from the 35 industry specialists who have put their heart in unpacking and analysing ways for the Indian bamboo sector to reach the apex of its potential within the next 10 years has been made.

Owing to how deeply rooted bamboo is in indigenous communities and culture; inherently as a material, bamboo is sustainable and exceedingly versatile. It is no surprise thus, that the specialists working on this report have fervent faith in its potential, and collectively believe that bamboo can be the key ingredient to achieving India's commitment of net zero GHG emissions by 2070.



**WHY THIS FAITH IN BAMBOO?  
WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE FOR THIS  
SUPPOSED POTENTIAL?**

This report has, at multiple points, emphasised the fact that bamboo makes for a sustainable and more economical alternative to produce daily items and goods. If this shift were to be successfully made, we also know that it would open doors to employment and economic growth for multiple stakeholders across the value chain. This leaves space for a huge question mark. Why are we yet to see this shift (to bamboo) made in full swing?

Having said that, we also know that the Indian Government and multiple private organizations/stakeholders have, in their own capacities, attempted to make this shift.

For instance, under the Forest Rights Act, the Government allocated significant portions of forest land to forest dwellers along with rights on the non-timber forest produce (NTFP) of these regions. While evidencing the Government's positive approach to indigenous products, this provision has also created multiple opportunities for tribal forest dwellers, SCs, STs, and the rural poor to become active stakeholders in afforestation drives. This in turn, translates into creating green livelihoods and green em-

**Owing to a clearly problematic management system on the supply chain front; private sector companies lack confidence in the bamboo sector and are hesitant to invest in it. This sets off a vicious cycle wherein a lack of funding prevents the sector from developing on its challenges.**

ployment for the individuals in these communities (through bamboo plantations). The positive contribution this makes to the nation's GDP, has not gone unnoticed. That the current contributions of the bamboo industry have been recognised as promising, and that it has been considered worthy of time, resources, thought, and investment; and, in spite of whole-hearted attempts, the failure to begin optimising the potential of the bamboo industry is possibly due to roadblocks, challenges, or lack of clarity and information on part of stakeholders.

Private stakeholders, non-profits, and small-businesses have also begun to lean into the bamboo industry for producing products like toothbrushes, baskets, furniture, flooring, and even construction.

**LARGELY, THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THIS REPORT  
FALL INTO 4 CATEGORIES:**

Suggestions to increase privatized production of bamboo; Upskilling supply chain actors and primary units, along with increasing their exposure and improving systems; Directing and inspiring funding (whether governmental or privatised) towards the bamboo industry, and improving systems and awareness in order to increase the quotidian use of bamboo products and materials.

Currently, India heavily relies on forest bamboo to fulfill its bamboo supply requirements.

However, the existing state of forest management is inadequate which underscores the importance of effectively managing bamboo stocks.

In a recent development, the government reclassified bamboo as a grass, which has substantially improved its availability.

Nonetheless, for this 10 Year Growth Plan to truly be a success, it is crucial to establish a daily bamboo selling system at forest bamboo depots

along with promoting bamboo cultivation on private land.

Presently, the Indian bamboo industry predominantly comprises Own Account Enterprises (OAEs) who have limited exposure to scientific tools, techniques, and skills. Often, they also lack innovative



tools such as molds (which need to be developed), scientific dyeing and treatment practices, or proper finishing methods. To further exacerbate limitations; both OAEs and other value chain actors, including architects and designers, often have minimal awareness of market opportunities for contemporary bamboo products. Furthermore, they also lack the necessary skills to produce goods for national and international markets.

There is however, more to the story. Owing to a clearly problematic management system on the supply chain front; private sector companies lack confidence in the bamboo sector and are hesitant to invest in it. This sets off a vicious cycle wherein a lack of funding prevents the sector from developing on its challenges.

### WHERE DO WE BEGIN ADDRESSING THESE CHALLENGES?

One, it is crucial to support and promote entrepreneurship along with production organizations as public goods. Two, the technology required for contemporary products and markets must also undergo innovation, stabilization, and acceptance from Funding Institutions (FIs). The third factor here is to create supportive policy frameworks, including initiatives like Public Procurement which will play a vital role in achieving the Growth Plan's vision and promoting sustainable consumption.


Given the need for extensive collaboration among various stakeholders in the bamboo value chain, including policymakers, BDSPs (Business Development Service Providers), technology institutions, training institutions, and governmental and non-governmental development organizations; it is important to establish a self-sustaining forum. This forum would facilitate knowledge sharing, both existing and new, to drive the sector forward.

With these factors, future possibilities, and the bamboo sector's scope in mind, this 10 Year Growth Plan offers recommendations to fast-track the growth of the bamboo sector over the next decade.

Within the ambit of the 4 categories mentioned above; the recommendations of this report span across multiple industries and would be relevant to a variety of individuals and organisations involved in the bamboo sector.

**Forging appropriate market linkages using the Cluster Development Methodology will help not only towards doubling rural incomes but will also pave the way for a vibrant rural economy. This in turn, will lead to an increase in the nation's GDP and a significant reduction of the trade deficit.**

From reforestation of appropriate bio species of bamboo that hold commercial potential, to scientific and sustainable harvesting, value chain development, and supply chain management – these recommendations are extensive but well researched.

Forging appropriate market linkages using the Cluster Development Methodology is also a factor that is highlighted. This will help not only towards doubling rural incomes but will also pave the way for a vibrant rural economy. This in turn, will lead to an increase in the nation's GDP and a significant reduction of the trade deficit. 

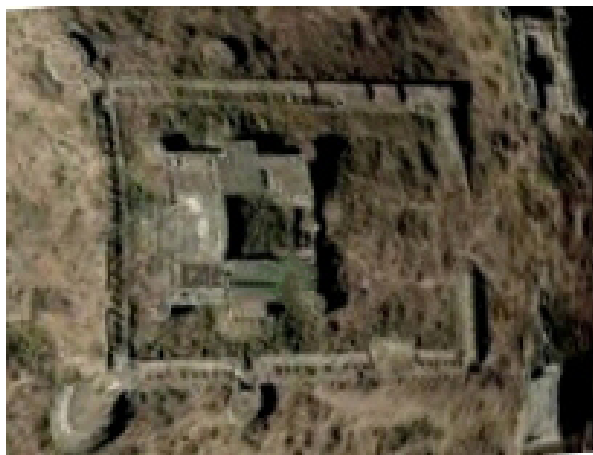
### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mukesh Gulati as the Executive Director, FMC, was the Senior Advisor and later the Project Director in the EU-funded project.

Sanjeev Karpe, an entrepreneur in the construction & furniture was the Technical Expert, under the EU project. He worked as a guide, facilitator, and advisor to the project.

# From a *khandar*

## THE REVITALIZATION OF TIJARA RUINS F



2003

Kitchen gardens surround the Mardana Mahal on 3 sides

The STP plant has been sunk into the rocks

A bottling plant helps serve pure desert water

An in-house poultry is a breakfast delight

The Prem-Rog garden of trees hopelessly in love !

The large, sunken pool with a conference hall below accessed by a lift

A c with with



The technical service wing housed by the outer ramparts, receives machinery, diesel etc.

A parking which doubles as a helipad, is built by the three entrance gates

Neemrana built this arduous hill ro to access the Tijara Fort-Palace

# to a Majestic Fort

FROM 2003-2023

courtyard  
in royal palms  
in the Rani Mahal

The seven-tiered hanging gardens created on the rocks over 3 long years

The ramparts now have the Aath Baag, a Zen “Garden of Eights”

A Japani Baag has been sunk into the courtyard below

Antariksh Mahal atop the Hawa Mahal revitalizes urban travellers



2023

ad

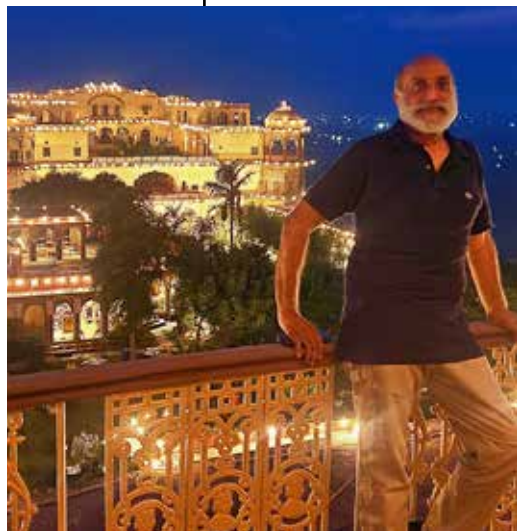
## A TALE OF GENIUS AND WIZARDRY

**In just two decades, what was once simply ruins of a few hundred years, this hilltop has been turned into an awe-inspiring experience, giving you the feel as it has always existed since times immemorial! However, it has been built from scratch and imagination, innovation based upon whatever research revealed, an enviable venue for holidays, corporate events and meetings and memorable weddings.**

“**W**ithout any existing original plans, the onus of completing and finishing a ruin was both challenging and rewarding. The needs of an early 19th century fort-palace were very different from what we need today, especially for the changed end-use of a building initially built for security and the heavy footprint of a royal lifestyle with an entourage. Today, it is the services in a large heritage hotel that must occupy a lot of space and these have been put underground or tucked away in distant corners. To tackle the whole thing together – as corporates and architects often do – is to magnify a problem which is already larger than life. While I have a broad, overall plan, I work in that direction, in great detail, seeing it from two viewpoints : one, the guest experience and two , the facility for our staff to serve so many people in such a sprawled out area. Common sense is of course the predominant guiding

instinct, but a contemporised aesthetic within the broad idiom of Rajasthani architecture, in which I have worked for 40 years now, comes almost intuitively to me. When people stand in the newer sections and think that they were old, that is the only compliment that someone who is revitalising a ruin should accept. The fact that people are mesmerised with their first sight of Neemrana or Kesroli –and now Tijara just on arrival, is a tribute to our continuously alive civilisation. I would have loved to see the faces of the same people had they arrived when I did and only the stark ruin full of bats, civet cats and snakes ruled the place. In Neemrana the ruin was used as an open toilet as villagers walked up with the lotus. We’ve come a long, long way!” **DI**

– Aman Nath in an exclusive conversation



# THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIAN HERITAGE AS TOURISM ASSETS

by NAVIN BERRY

The new buzzwords in travel and tourism are 'experiential' and luxury. Elements are meant to be stitched together into a single holistic experience, each appealing to our senses, each one of them. Some could be opulent, others could be essays in simplicity. These could be engagements with local communities, going back into nostalgia over a bygone era, music festivals, even the experience of attending a literary festival. Where, the setting is just right, invoking the creative spirit.

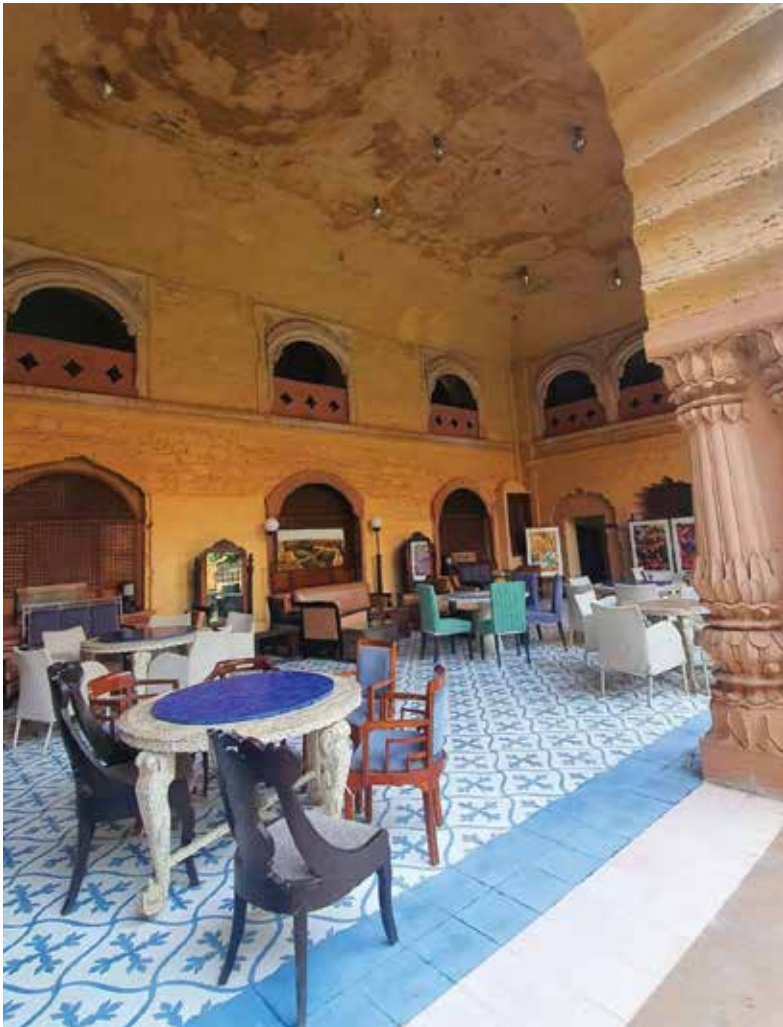
Such unique experiences are the backbone of heritage hotels, each one of them so unique! No two experiences among heritage properties are the same. If attention to personal detail is a pre-requisite, a royal lineage of service and hospitality can have no equal. If a holistic ap-

proach is required it is there in each of these experiences!

Within India, every destination is vying to create such opportunities, some are creating simply out of nowhere, one of them could be around a 500-year-old tree! Beyond the tree much is imagination, and also generic. It may not be so unique to the location. If you are looking for a grand totality of unique features, these are best provided around heritage experiences – each is a total product, coming down generations, with a history composed of its many parts. It has its own story, a strong narrative that often has travelled over centuries! Where else on earth can you find a few hundreds of such century old stories? This is the power of Indian heritage, represented through such hotels built around forts and palaces, truly unique, truly Indian.

Given the lust for such experiential travel, fast dawning upon Indian travellers as well, especially in the post-covid era, this is the time for a true Renaissance of Indian heritage through experiences at heritage properties!

The opportunity exists, loud and clear. As owners and custodians of independent stories, this effort is not so much as new creations but pressing the refresh button, bringing alive again what has been truly a unique history! This is also a massive challenge. The cost, the wherewithal, the time and effort. And yet there is also see the new age passion, untiring efforts, a new sense of pride as part of a national effort to revitalise all things Indian. In the 21st century, as modern-day

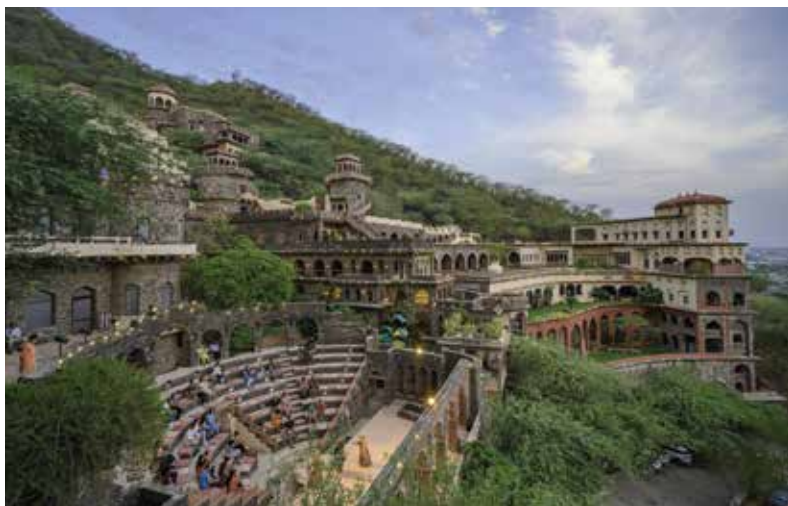
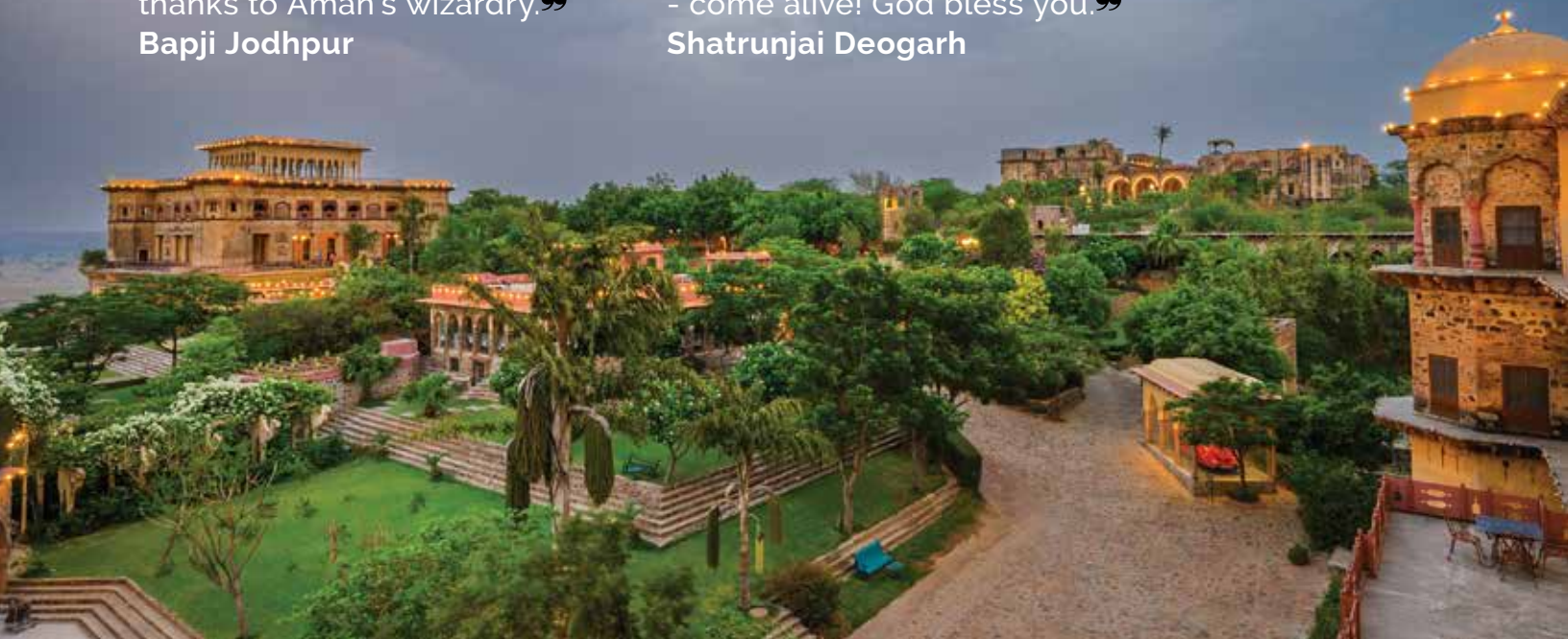


“Magnificent in every way, the restoration magical, hospitality full of warmth, convention inclusive and energising, great bonding! All thanks to Aman’s wizardry.”

**Bapji Jodhpur**

“The restoration and creativity, to me the roof to the floor the property transforms.. and tells me a story of a genius.. and I feel- phew I wish I had that talent and vision and guts.. u have made this fort Palace- a Mahal - come alive! God bless you.”

**Shatrunjai Deogarh**



testimonies to age old traditions.

Tourism alone can provide sustainability to such efforts! After the effort and the cost, where else can the revenues come from, where sustained incomes are needed as guarantees? Happily, many of the families, are also in various stages of passing on this legacy and passion onto the younger generations. They are live wired, more informed and aware than the outgoing generation or those before us. They are fired with the new imagination, especially as we knock on the doors of ‘Make in India’, ‘Made in India’ and ‘Start Up India’. All such programmes apply to this new era when money and effort can be used to nurture passions built around our heritage.

In a fast-developing digital age, communication has become easy, cost efficient and global in outreach. It is the best time to harness the new technology and build a new future. To stand on their own, proud

of the product and ability to deliver.

At a time when we are saying go vocal about local, such products should reach out to the world, each one of these must and can compete globally and must encompass international best practices.

What more befitting tribute can there be to the essence of such expressed belief that the Golden Age, a Second Renaissance, is here! Than to spend a weekend at Tijara Fort and Palace, not any ‘ancestral home’ of Aman Nath, the builder of such experiences, along with his late friend and partner, Francis Wacziarg. His passion and creativity are most visible in these walls, many of them imagined around that mound of flat ground, atop the hill in the long-forgotten landscape, a three hours’ drive from South Delhi. **DI**



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Navin Berry, Editor, Destination India, over five decades has edited publications like CityScan, India

Debates and Travel Trends Today. He is the founder of SATTE, India’s first inbound tourism mart, biggest in Asia.

# THE WAY FORWARD FOR HERITAGE TOURISM



At the IHHA convention inaugural session

**Heritage tourism is presently at an interesting phase of development, when it should become more inclusive, community driven and technologically savvy. In this presentation made at the recently held Indian Heritage Hotels Association at Tijara Fort & Palace, some 200 delegates gathered to deliberate on trends in their business.**

by **BAPJI JODHPUR**

**"I**t is a unique opportunity in time and history of our country, to transform and take heritage tourism in India to the next level. The impetus on sustainability and technology enhancement will pave the way to the growth of its heritage tourism sector globally and lead the nation to a prosperous future.

The future vision for heritage tourism is exciting and full of aspirations. As we look ahead, we can envision a world where heritage tourism not only preserves and celebrates our rich history and culture of a region but also contributes to sustainable development, promotes

inclusivity, and leverages advanced technology for immersive and educational experiences.

Sustainable Preservation is one of the impetuses of our heritage movement. Heritage sites and landmarks must be preserved in a sustainable manner, utilizing eco-friendly construction and appropriate restoration techniques. Conservation efforts will not only prioritize man-made heritage but will strive to protect our natural habitats and ecosystems, promoting a balance between tourism and environmental conservation.

Another aspiration is Inclusivity and Accessibility. Our goal must be to become more inclusive, ensuring that people of all abilities, backgrounds, and ages can enjoy and learn from these destinations. This will involve improved accessibility infrastructure, audio guides and signage in multiple languages & aids for the disabled.

Cultural Exchange is an important aspect for the future of heritage tourism, whereby we foster cultural exchange and understanding between visitors and local communities. Interactive programs, cultural festivals, and community-led tours will encourage meaningful interactions and mutual respect.

Advanced technology like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) will offer immersive experiences at heritage sites.



Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar receiving a citation.





A most regal setting for a heritage conference.

Visitors can virtually step back in time, explore historical events, and witness the evolution of a place through interactive digital exhibits. As such Digital Immersion should be availed to the maximum that we can.

We can aspire to play a vital role in education, offering tailored programs for schools and universities. These programs will blend traditional and digital learning methods to engage students in the history, art and culture of a region.

Indigenous heritage and traditional knowledge will be learned, respected and preserved. Local communities will be actively involved in shaping the narratives around their heritage, ensuring that it is accurately represented. This will boost local economies by creating jobs and income opportunities for residents. Sustainable tourism practices will be encouraged to prevent an overdose of tourism and its negative impacts and carrying capacity should be observed and respected. Our environmental conservation efforts must include reforestation, waste reduction, and sustainable transportation options, to minimize its ecological footprint.


Local cuisine will play a central role with visitors enjoying authentic dishes and culinary experiences. This can also support local farmers and food producers & be an added activity for the visitors to partake in learning local culinary skills.

Integrated heritage routes will connect multiple sites and regions, encouraging tourists to explore beyond the well-known landmarks. This will lead to a more even distribution of visitors and reduce congestion at popular sites.

I believe that governments and international organizations will use heritage tourism as a means of cultural diplomacy, promoting cross-border cooperation and understanding through shared heritage appreciation.

In this future vision, heritage tourism will not only serve as a means of respecting our past but also as a catalyst for a more sustain-

“Cultural Exchange is an important aspect for the future of heritage tourism, whereby we foster cultural exchange and understanding between visitors and local communities.”

able, inclusive, and culturally rich world. By embracing these aspirations, we can create a future where heritage habitats are both protected and enjoyed by generations to come.” 



#### ABOUT

As the former royal of Jodhpur, Gaj Singh ji is chairman, Emeritus, of the Indian Heritage Hotels Association of India.

His premium fort in Jodhpur, a leading heritage hotel property, Umaid Bhawan Palace, is run by Taj Group.

# ROBUST GROWTH AHEAD FOR INDIAN AVIATION

**ECONOMY SIZE AND DEMOGRAPHICS INDICATE STRONG TAILWINDS**



by VIRENDRA JAIN & DEEPAK JAIN

## Market Overview

The Indian economy is characterized by rapid urbanization, a burgeoning middle-class, and a young demography. The share of middle-class households is expected to rise from 31% in FY21 to 47% in FY31. More than one-third of the 1.4 billion population lives in urban centers, and around two-thirds is between 15 and 64 years old. All these factors add up to an optimal environment for growth of consumer aspirations that cultivates a high propensity to travel. Air is the only mode of transport that commands an aspirational value and is therefore set to be the biggest beneficiary of the India growth story.

Air travel penetration in India, at 0.1 trips per capita (vs. 0.5 trips per capita in China) still has phenomenal room for growth<sup>2</sup>. This indicates a long runway for expansion of the air travel market. The growth in air travel strongly correlates with a nation's per capita GDP. Between 1990 and 2022, India's per capita GDP rose 6x, while the air passengers carried surged 15x. India's per capita GDP will double from \$2,500 in FY23 to more than \$5,000 in FY31, setting the stage for a discretionary spending boom<sup>3</sup> along with an exponential rise in air traffic.

In recent years, the state policy towards aviation has substantiated the market's growth trajectory. The *Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik* (UDAN) Regional Connectivity Scheme has successfully delivered on its objective of ensuring afford-

able and sustainable air connectivity to smaller cities and towns. Privatization of the government-run Air India in 2022 was a milestone in Indian aviation history. The government's ambitious plan to privatize 25 airports by 2025 is an indication of its commitment towards deregulation of the aviation industry.

Airports Authority of India (AAI) and other airport developers have targeted a capital outlay of approximately ₹980 billion (\$12B) in airport infrastructure in the next five years<sup>4</sup>. This will mean expansion and modernization of terminals and strengthening of runways. The number of operational airports in the country has grown to 148 in 2023, double of that in 2013. Around 80 new airports are expected in the next five years. Twenty-one greenfield airports have been accorded in-principle approval (including Navi Mumbai, and Jewar NCR), 10 of which have been operationalized.

As of March 2023, 17 scheduled local airlines were operating in India with a total fleet size of 718 aircraft. On international routes, 74 foreign carriers operate flights to/from India. Indian airlines are on a buying spree with an order book of about 1,500 aircraft, expected to be delivered over the next 10 years. Tata Group—which owns Air India, Vistara, Air India Express, and AirAsia India—has ordered 470 aircraft, with an option to purchase an additional 370. IndiGo placed the single largest order in aviation history, of 500 aircraft to be delivered from 2030-35, in addition to 480 aircraft, by 2030. The newest entrant Akasa is also expected to place a triple digit order by end of the year in addition to the 72 aircrafts already ordered<sup>8</sup>.

There has been a consistent effort by policymakers, working in tandem with both the local airlines and the airports, to transform India into an aviation hub. As the center of gravity for global economy shifts to Asia, India's unique location can enable it to become the hub connecting EMEA and the Americas with the larger Asia-Pacific. Traditionally, foreign carriers have dominated the international traffic to/from India. These airlines are seeking additional seats primarily to exploit the sixth freedom traffic i.e., flying passengers beyond their country.

The Indian government, in a policy shift, has been encouraging local carriers to better utilize the Indian part of bilateral seat entitlements and ramp up global ambitions. The 2016 scrapping of the five-year requirement for airlines to commence international operations was a move in this direction. The uptick in wide-body planes in the Indian fleet also reflects the robust expansion plans of local carriers on international routes.

All these factors mean that the Indian air market

## Key Findings

1. The Indian air market i.e., domestic, and international, was estimated at ₹1,743 billion (\$21.8B) in FY23, surpassing the pre-pandemic levels of ₹1,502 billion (\$21.2B) in FY20. It is projected to rise to ₹2,824 billion (\$35.3B) by FY26, growing at a CAGR of 17.4% during FY23-FY26.
2. The domestic air gross booking value (GBV) stood at ₹781 billion (\$9.8B) in FY23, up 30% from ₹601 billion (\$8.5B) in FY20 and is expected to reach ₹1,156 billion (\$14.5B) by FY26, with a CAGR of 14% during FY23-FY26.
3. The international air GBV was estimated at ₹963 billion (\$12B) in FY23, up from ₹901 billion (\$12.7B) in FY20. It will grow at 20% CAGR for the next three fiscals, reaching ₹1,667 billion (\$20.8B) in FY26.
4. The online air market was estimated at ₹762 billion (\$9.5B) or 44% total air GBV in FY23. It is projected to reach ₹1,263 billion (\$15.8B) by FY26.
5. The domestic online market is highly penetrated at 67%, in stark contrast with the international segment at 25% in FY23.
6. Indirect channel (OTAs) is the dominant online distribution channel for air –with a market share of 81% of online domestic air GBV and 66% of online international air GBV in FY23.
7. The Indian OTA air market was valued at ₹583 billion (\$7.3B) in FY23 and is projected to grow at 20% CAGR during FY23-FY26, rising to ₹984 billion (\$12.3B).
8. The OTA air category is led by the pioneer, MakeMyTrip Group with a market share of 57% in OTA air GBV in FY23. Cleartrip came a distant second at 13.7% share, EaseMyTrip - neck-to-neck - at 13.4% share, followed by Yatra with 9.4% share.
9. India's total flown passenger stood at 192 million in FY23, just shy of pre-pandemic levels of 202m in FY20. The domestic passenger traffic at 137 million in FY23 has recovered almost fully to FY20 levels, whereas international passenger traffic is still trailing at 54 million, recording 90% recovery.
10. The low-cost carriers (LCCs), led by Indigo, dominate the domestic skies, flying 113 million (82%) of all domestic traffic in FY23. The aggressive pursuits by Tata Group could tilt the share in favor of full-service carriers (FSCs) to some degree. Together, Indigo and Tata Group airlines, flew every four in five domestic passengers.
11. India's international airlift has long since been overshadowed by foreign carriers – they enjoyed a 56% market share in all international airlift from India in FY23.
12. The only air segment to surpass its pre-pandemic level is the international traffic on local carriers – they flew 24 million passengers in FY23, with a market share of 44% (vs. 38% in FY20) in all international airlift from India.

growth will be spurred by massive domestic demand, flanked by a rapidly rising international segment.

## Total Flown Passengers

India was the fourth largest market globally in 2022 in terms of air passengers carried by local carriers, climbing from the 18th position in 2002. Within two decades, the total fleet operated by Indian carriers has grown 6x, while passengers flown (domestic and international) has multiplied 12x. This encapsulates the growth trajectory of the Indian air market which is also reflected in a steady rise in passenger load factors (LF) ranging from 60s in the 2000s to 70s in 2010s. LF higher than 80% has been the new normal for local carriers in recent times, peaking at 92% in May 2023, indicating robust growth in air travel demand.

India Air Market — Fleet Size, Flown Passengers (Px) and Load Factors*, FY2000-FY2023						
	FY2000	FY05	FY10	FY15	FY20	FY23
Total fleet size of local carriers (#)	119	184	383	409	710	718
Domestic flown px (millions)	13	19	45	70	141	137
International flown px by local carriers (millions)	3	5	12	17	23	24
International flown px (millions)	11	17	32	46	60	54
Domestic LF (%)	60%	65%	72%	79%	86%	82%**
International LF of local carriers (%)	73%	72%	71%	79%	81%	80%**

Source: Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Gov; Press Information Bureau (PIB)  
 \*DGCA defines passenger load factor as ratio of passenger kilometers performed to available seat kilometers  
 \*\*Provisional estimates basis calendar year 2022

## Domestic vs. International

India's total flown passengers reached 192 million in FY23, marginally below the pre-pandemic levels of 202 million. The domestic passenger traffic stood at 137 million in FY23 (vs. 141 million in FY20) whereas international passenger traffic was trailing at 54 million compared to 60 million in FY20. India is projected to see 350 million domestic and 160 million international flyers by FY30.

The pandemic induced a 70% YoY decline in the total passenger traffic in FY21, while international air passengers dipped by 85%. In FY23, local carriers surpassed pre-pandemic levels of international flown passengers by 5% (24m in FY23 vs. 23m in FY20), while their foreign counterparts fell short by 20%. This trend is reflective of the rising clout of local airlines on international routes vis-à-vis foreign airlines. The share of local airlines in international flown passengers rose from 38% in FY20 to a peak of 62% during pandemic, and has stabilized at 44% in FY23.

Share of Indian airlines in international flown passengers in the coming years has an upside potential due to a host of factors: deployment of twin-aisle airplanes by local carriers on international routes, government incentives to airlines expanding international operations and better utilization of bilateral flying rights. Local carriers are competing aggressively in the short-haul international routes. Their expansion into long-haul international routes is going to be vital for the growth of India's international air traffic.

Short-haul international routes connecting India with Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia, account for

roughly 80% of international flown passengers in FY23. The Middle East sees the highest international traffic to and from India; its share has risen marginally from 52% in FY20 to 58% in FY23. This is a consequence of the combined thrust by both local and foreign carriers on direct as well as medium- and long-haul connectivity through Middle Eastern hubs. Southeast Asia, despite its geographic vicinity to India, is still trailing behind pre-pandemic levels of 20%. Four-fifth of Indian international traffic being short-haul i.e., a flight duration of six hours or less, explains the clout of low-cost carriers (LCCs). As the flight duration increases, the role of full-service carriers (FSCs) becomes crucial.

### Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs) vs. Full-Service Carriers (FSCs)

On an aggregate level, the share of LCCs in total flown passengers (DOM and INT) in India grew from 69% in FY20 to 79% in FY23. The Indian domestic air market is dominated by low-cost carriers—LCCs flew 113 million (82%) of all domestic traffic in FY23. LCCs have increased their share in international traffic from 35% in FY20 to 41% in FY23, driven by the short-haul international segment.

IndiGo dominates the Indian skies—it flew 77 million passengers on domestic routes in FY23 (up from 68 million in FY20), and 8.5 million international passengers in FY23, (against seven million in FY20). Tata Group—comprising of Air India, Vistara (FSCs), Air India Express, AirAsia India (LCCs)—has the second largest combined share in Indian commercial aviation market. Between them, IndiGo and Tata Group, command 80% of the domestic market share. Tata Group flew 12 million international passengers in FY23, with a market share of 50% in international passengers carried by local carriers.

Airline	Flown Px (millions)		Market Share (%)	
	FY20	FY23	FY20	FY23
IndiGo (LCC)	68	77	48%	56%
Tata Group	33	33	23%	24%
Vistara Airlines (FSC)	8	13	6%	9%
Air India (FSC)	15	12	11%	9%
AirAsia India (LCC)	9	9	7%	7%
Go First (LCC)	15	11	11%	8%
SpiceJet (LCC)	22	11	16%	8%
Akasa Air (LCC)	-	2	-	1%
All Others	3	3	2%	2%
<b>Total Flown Px</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Gol

Go First, previously known as Go Air, had a market share of 8% in FY23 and the temporary halting of its operations in May '23 has led to constrained domestic capacity. SpiceJet, the other troubled local LCC, flew 11 million passengers on domestic routes and 1.9 million passengers on international routes in FY23. The supply crunch for crucial aircraft parts has been challenging and is the primary rea-

son behind the financial woes of many airlines, including SpiceJet and Go First. The 12-month-old domestic operator, Akasa Air has delivered a stellar performance flying 20 aircraft and gaining a market share of 5% by June 2023.

### India Total Air Market

Air is the largest among the four-travel categories (hotel, rail and intercity-bus), accounting for roughly half of the total Indian travel market in FY23.

The total Indian air gross booking value (GBV) was estimated at ₹1,743 billion (\$21.8B) in FY23, surpassing the ₹1,502 billion (\$21.2B) in FY20. The weakening of the rupee against the US dollar in the last three years by about 15% undermines GBV in dollar terms.

The domestic air GBV stood at ₹781 billion (\$9.8B) in FY23, up 30% from ₹601 billion (\$8.5B) in FY20. This growth is at the back of demand-driven high airfares, even though passenger count is trailing for the same period. The domestic segment will grow at a CAGR of 14% during FY23-FY26, reaching ₹1,156 billion (\$14.5B).

International air GBV was estimated at ₹963 billion (\$12B) in FY23, nominally rising from ₹901 billion (\$12.7B) in FY20, notwithstanding the lack of full recovery in international passenger traffic due to network and capacity issues. While international traffic accounted for 28% of the total flown passengers, it contributed 55% to the total air GBV in FY23, owed to higher average ticket price (ATP).

Fare hikes in air category have been the highest among all four travel categories, recording a double-digit growth in FY23 over FY20. Factors fueling the prevailing growth in ATPs include:

- Resilient demand-side:** The pent-up demand from leisure travelers, along with a staggered recovery in business travel have ensured flight booking volumes remain solid despite higher fares.
- Supply constraints:** The supply side is constrained by sluggish delivery of aircrafts and related spare parts. This, combined with market consolidation in the domestic airline industry, has resulted in higher airfares.
- Rise in fuel cost:** Crude oil prices climbed by 81% between January 2020 and April 2022 as a consequence of post-pandemic recovery in industrial demand and the war in Ukraine. This pushed up the cost of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) for airlines across the globe.

The sustained and incessant hike in ATPs calls for rationalization of fares, which is also sounded off by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. The price sensitivity of Indian flyers could lead to tapering of demand if fares remain elevated. The local carriers have enhanced operational efficiency to drive better yields through a variety of measures such as smart network planning and optimized dynamic pricing.

The recovery and growth in international segment are going to spearhead the total air market CAGR for the next three fiscals. The total air GBV is projected to rise to ₹2,824 billion (\$35.3B) by FY26, growing at a CAGR of 17.4% during FY23-FY26, making it the fastest growing travel category. In the same period, international air GBV will reach ₹1,667 billion (\$20.8B) by FY26, growing at 20.1% CAGR.

### India Online Air Market

The online air market was estimated at ₹762 billion (\$9.5B) in FY23. It is projected to reach ₹1,263 billion (\$15.8B) by

FY26, or 45% of the total air GBV. The online penetration peaked at 49% in FY21, because of a near-standstill in international demand.

The domestic online market is highly penetrated at 67%, in stark contrast with the international segment at 25% in FY23. The online penetration in domestic air market has shown a steady growth from 62% in FY20 and is projected to reach 71% by FY26. In the international segment this will rise to 26% in FY26. Here, the higher ticket-size and the complexity necessitates the expertise of traditional travel advisors.

## India OTA Air Market

The Indian online travel agency (OTA) air GBV stood at ₹583 billion (\$7.3B) in FY23, beating the FY20 levels by more than 30%. It is projected to grow at a robust CAGR of 19% during FY23-FY26, reaching ₹984 billion (\$12.3B).

OTAs remain the dominant online distribution channel for air. On the domestic segment, OTAs grossed ₹427 billion (\$5.3B), with a market share of 81% of online domestic air GBV while OTA air GBV in international segment amounted to ₹156 billion (\$2.0B), denoting 66% of online international air GBV in FY23. However, OTAs accounted for just one-third of the total air GBV in FY23, showcasing a massive runway for growth.

Barring Booking.com, the air category has been the mothership for most first generation OTAs world over, as it was the travel category that initiated consumers to move online. At the onset of the millennium, the air market in India got democratized with the advent of domestic LCCs such as Air Deccan, Kingfisher and IndiGo. This created a plethora of choices for consumers, necessitating the need for all airline information, such as routes, schedules, and price comparisons, to be available on a single window. Consequently, trailblazers in the Indian OTA space—Cleartrip, MakeMyTrip and Yatra—replicated the global OTA model, beginning with the air segment.

Flights continue to be the largest contributor to the GBV of most OTAs. Widespread access to the Internet and a well adopted digital payment mechanism, coupled with increasing connectivity to non-metro cities and rising purchasing power has brought in a vast number of first-time flyers into the market. Those traditionally traveling via ground transport are steadily upgrading to flights, representing a huge opportunity for OTAs.

Almost all Indian OTAs have varying degrees of B2B business, besides the consumer-direct B2C business in their GBV mix. The B2B business includes the travel agency business, the corporate travel business (both TMC and self-service/SBT model) as well as the content/API play. The share of B2B varies for different OTAs, depending on their strategic mandate. B2B drives volumes but is capital intensive and pre-requisites consistent liquidity.

There is a long tail of Indian OTAs, the biggest of which are traditional B2B travel aggregators and distributors with an online consumer-direct play. These B2B players generally have an enormous travel agent network that they enable through technology and content aggregation. They are especially significant in the international segment because of the complexity and need for personalization. Travel Boutique Online (TBO) is the largest B2B consolidator in India without any B2C interface, while

others such as Akbar Travels, Riya Travel, Via and Tripjack, offer B2C bookings.


While the last decade was all about pursuing topline growth at any cost, today it's also about building sustainable business with an eye on profitability. Ergo, the higher margin hotel category is a natural progression for OTAs once they have firmed up air offerings and get to a sizeable user base. The ground transportation category, namely rail and intercity bus promises a large user base for a high frequency, lower priced travel product. Beyond the verticalized travel play, Indian OTAs are also banking on ancillary revenue streams such as advertising and fintech. The advertising model essentially capitalizes on the existing user base at no additional cost.

The MakeMyTrip Group holds the commanding share (56.9%) of the OTA air GBV in FY23. Flipkart-backed Cleartrip follows with a 13.7% market share, and EaseMyTrip at 13.4% share. Yatra and ixigo Group have 9.4% and 3.2% share respectively. The global OTAs, Indian OTA long tail and the consumer business of the major B2B distributors make up the remainder.

## Conclusion

In light of the big-bang aircraft orders, high load factors and a healthy growth in both flown passengers and GBV, the Indian airline industry is set for stellar growth. The last three decades belonged to China. India is set to mirror a similar growth trajectory as air connectivity widens from tier-1 to tier-3 cities. The ever-increasing global Indian diaspora, broader economic boom, and growth of the Indian travel and tourism industry will pave the way for a resurging Indian air market.

The demographics dictate the growth outlook in most emerging markets. India is endowed with a young and aspirational population with rapidly increasing income levels. As existing traveler cohorts mature, resulting in a higher frequency and spend, the explosive growth will be propelled by millions of first-time air travelers. The journey of the Indian air travel market from 200 million to 500 million passengers and a fleet size of 700 to 1,500 planes will set the broad contours for growth in the next decade.

OTAs tend to do remarkably well in emerging markets because consumers are price-sensitive and value-conscious. High fragmentation in air, coupled with the near trebling of domestic and international air traffic, creates fertile ground for OTAs. The OTAs are notably credited for bringing the Indian air category online. With their technology and product prowess, they command the lion's share of the online air market and will continue to scale new highs as air penetration expands to the Indian hinterlands. 

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

VIDEC is a boutique consulting and advisory company with a singular domain focus in travel and hospitality. It offers commercial due diligence, industry and consumer research, thought leadership, and buy and sell side advisory services.

Virendra Jain is the co-founder and CEO at VIDEC. He is a serial entrepreneurial with over a decade long experience in Asia and Middle Eastern travel technology and innovation marketplace.

# TWELVE YEARS ON. INDIA IS HOSTING THE MEGA EVENT

## THE ICC ODI CRICKET WORLD CUP. WILL IT BE AN ENCORE?

The 2023 ODI World Cup is here! Sensational and salivating to even think about how India will put up a show as the host nation and have the Team that may be now touted as the favourite to lift the trophy at home again. Given Team India's recent stellar performances at the Asia Cup and vs Australia, these are some positives to take into the global event.



by SAMEER KACHRU

Come, Sunday November 19th 2023, we will have a deserved winner lift the coveted trophy at the glorious Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. What a scene that would make!

But, what's life without some prophecy, drama, suspense and of course opinions based on the analytical number crunching and the respective individual player's and team's winning form leading up to this much awaited global event. Bear in mind, due to so much cricket these days, almost all participating teams are carrying massive injuries coming into their world cup campaigns. It will be challenging to keep bodies and minds fully fit as each team travels the length and breadth of the Incredible Indian topography. From Dharamsala to Chennai, the ODI World Cup will have varied and demanding playing conditions for each team management. Only the fittest shall survive till the 48th game of the tournament to lift the coveted global trophy.



## INDIAN BATTERS VS LEFT-ARM PACERS IN ODIs SINCE 2021

PLAYER	INNS	RUNS	OUTS	AVG
SHUBMAN GILL	10	136	2	68.0
ROHIT SHARMA	12	137	6	22.8
VIRAT KOHLI	9	87	4	21.8
KL RAHUL	10	75	1	75.0
ISHAN KISHAN	7	51	0	-
SHREYAS IYER	8	64	0	-

KL Rahul in ODIs	
Position	Avg
Opener	43.6
No.3	25.7
No. 4	58.7
No. 5	53.0

As Indians, we wish this can be an encore fairy tale ending, just like we had in 2011. Back then it was all about Sachin Tendulkar and this time it's about bidding adieu to the two long serving batting goliaths of Indian cricket. Will Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, who shall surely not continue until the 2027 event, lift the cup for India this year?

## Does the Team in Blue have it in them to go all the way?

### *Rohit will have to lead from the front*

Well, Rohit Sharma as the Captain of the Indian Team knows how to lift trophies for sure. With the Mumbai Indians he's been there and done that many a times. But, this is something else on the International stage. India has only won the World Cup two times until now (1983 & 2011). Both times the Captains, Kapil Dev and MS Dhoni were lauded as they led from the front throughout the competition.

For all the die-hard Indian fans, let's first talk about the exciting facets to the Indian team that'll bring glee to each cricketing fans' soul. After which we will let a bit of logic take over and assess the leaks within the bucket that will also need to be plugged if we are to lift the cup.

### *What does the Indian ODI batting form look like?*

India has a new batting poster boy. A global #1 ODI batter in the ICC Rankings in the making. One that will stay right there too. He's a knight that is shining brighter by the day and in his armour, he seems invincible in the way he is batting currently.

Shubman Gill is scoring runs for fun at the moment at an average above 70. The pitch type, bowling attack, ground size, home or away con-

ditions, nothing matters. He's hit a purple patch that stands in great stead to cement his place.

Here's an interesting way to interpret the table above. Rohit Sharma is India's second highest run scorer, this with half the runs scored as opposed to Shubman Gill. Prodigy kid making it look 'for real'.

Virat Kohli, Ishan Kishen & KL Rahul taking care of the middle order will be the backbones for India. Do not discount them. Their numbers look dwarfed when compared to the leader of the pack, but their batting averages are envious at 55, 40 and 65 respectively.

### *The one to watch out for*

If Shreyas Iyer has his say on the campaign, India will get uplifted to an invincible state. The middle order will be like going through a brick wall. How his back does through this competition will determine that. The way he is striking the ball is super, just that consistent runs have illuded him, or so we think. If you really put it into perspective, he's not had a free run with the bat due to his injuries. Wishing to see him really come out there all guns blazing. If he can repeat the form shown while amassing the century performance vs Australia lately, India have a super star down the order.

### *The Finisher in KL Rahul*

Not too long ago he was being slayed by the media and the public for his performances. The minor slump got amplified as just kept getting injured throughout the international and IPL calendar. We almost forgot how Rahul had wowed us over the years. Have a look at KL Rahul batting down the order at Number 4 & 5 for India within the ODI format so far. How can we forget the mesmerizing 52 (38) he recently got at Indore vs Australia a few days ago. The finisher in KL Rahul is screaming aloud and suggesting where he should bat for India this world cup. And, oh yeah, do you really think he's been out of form?

### *What does the Indian ODI bowling form look like?*

Who would have guessed a year ago that you'd see a member of the "Kul-Cha" gang, and it would not be Chahal, but rather the



Chinaman in Kuldeep Yadav. Wow. Has he had an awesome year with the white ball or what. The numbers below do all the talking.

Kuldeep is delivering two wickets per game as an average in layman terms. Which is quite a thing if done consistently. Not languishing too far behind is the 'Miaan' from Hyderabad in Mohd. Siraj who's crushed Sri Lanka at home soil in the Asia Cup final. Count his devastating bowling out at your own peril. Add some more masala to the pace attack with the magic of Boom Boom Bumrah & Mohd Shami and you have a reasonably lethal spin and pace battery.

### The Reality Check on the 2023 Indian Team Contingent

But, before you get too excited with the bowling or batting, let's look at some key facts and numbers that will startle your thought process and put you into a neutral zone before you mentally already position India to be the eventual champs.

### Left is NOT Right for the Men in Blue as of now

Left Arm pacers are performing menacing devastation to Indian the top order batters. India will face the likes of Mitchell Starc, Shaheen Afridi, Trent Boult, Shoriful Islam, Jsh Little amongst so many others up front.

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli in particular have their work cut out as the cricketing world prepares to battle it out against Team India.

The woes continue against Left Arm Spinners as well who are licking their lips thinking about the chance to bowl on Indian soil where it grips and turns. Majority of the Indian batters are seen struggling against spin lately on Indian surfaces across formats.

However, it's worth noting that King Kohli since 2021 can be taken down by the likes of Shakib-Al-Hasan, Dunieth Wellalage or Nawaz. He will be tested on turning surfaces, especially when it's a slow worn-out track in the chase.

## Let's further look into some worrying numbers

### Is India way too TOP Heavy with the Bat?

Since 2020, India has been very top heavy with the Top 6 batters doing the job on a consistent basis. This is very much the same with teams such as Pakistan & South Africa lately as well.

While it is great to have the top order perform so well. The worrisome thing here is that over the previous few years India, Pakistan and SA are also most vulnerable and non-dependable teams as well for crunch matches. We have seen all these three teams crumble under pressure when the top order is dislodged very early in the game.

### Is India lacking Quality All Rounders?

We have the likes of Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel (most likely out injured for this entire ICC WC) & Shardul Thakur at our disposal.

Ravinder Jadeja is hailed to be one of the star All Rounders for India in this upcoming World Cup. But, he doesn't have a 50+ score since 2022. Yes, he just recently earned himself a 3 wicket haul against the Aussies at Indore last week, but that's not much of a consolation. Let's look at some of his batting numbers since the last 18 months in the ODI Format.

But let's just to a basic comparison to the current reigning World Cup champs England squad and their All Round Options:

Moeen Ali, Sam Curran, Liam Livingstone, Joe Root, Ben Stokes, Reece Topley, David Willey, Chris Woakes.

This is a worrisome issue for India as there will be times that the Indian bowling and batting attack will need depth and more than one back up plan on certain tracks.

### Contribution from top 6 vs bottom 5 in ODIs since 2020

@CricAspect

	Top 6	Bottom 5
Afghanistan	84%	16%
Australia	80%	20%
Bangladesh	85%	15%
England	79%	21%
India	86%	14%
Netherlands	82%	18%
New Zealand	80%	20%
Pakistan	86%	14%
South Africa	90%	10%
Sri Lanka	79%	21%





## THE TROUBLE CONTINUES!

VIRAT KOHLI AGAINST LEFT-ARM SPINNERS IN ODIs - SINCE 2021

INNINGS	11
RUNS	121
OUTS	9
AVG	13.44
SR	69.1

### *Is India ready to choose Form over Reputation?*

With the bat, the Team India management will have to give Strike Rates more prominence than just a regular 50 scored at run a ball on the Indian tracks at the top of the order. We must be logically brave to drop some big names during this campaign if we fail to score big on the Indian tracks that'll be on offer.

Similarly, with the ball Team India must look at current wicket taking form with spinners and the pacers alike. As a team, India does have backups. The Team in Blue must put country first over owing any player undue opportunity, be it with the bat or the ball.

### *Lastly, Not everything has to be RIGHT!*

Little of No variation in the Bowling is a major concern.

India has gone with NO Left arm Pace Bowler in their armoury. They could have included Chetan Sakariya, Kuldeep Sen, Arshdeep Singh, Moshin Khan or Khaleel Ahmed in the squad to have the variety. Interesting move. Can come back to hurt Team India.

Not to forget, we have yet again not included Yuzvendra Chahal, the Leggie. R. Ashwin despite his recent heroics against the Aussies can still a big gamble in comparison one feels. Chahal could've taken the ball away with his wily wrists against the right handers and varied speed very well on Indian tracks and been miserly too. This is a big miss yet again one feels. Is Team India repeating the mistake it has done before in the previous ICC Global events by shunning Chahal away? Time will tell.

*After all It's INDIA and the Team in Blue. There's got to be far more positives to this year's campaign. Of course, saved the Best for the Last! 🇮🇳*

## Why & How can Team India WIN this World Cup!

- Home Fans are going to be one of the biggest strengths for India within this event. India will bounce back strong and fast given the reverberating energy within the grounds.
- Advantage of Home Venues. India will decide the tracks they want to bat on in each venue against a specific opposition. That is hugely in favour of the home nation.
- The Batting has clicked lately like never before. The entire bench strength is also piling on the runs whenever they get the chance.
- India might not have a diverse bowling attack but they have the best bowling average this year (Against top 10 teams)

## India's Trump Cards

- KL Rahul & Shreyas Iyer have the game against spin in the middle order and that will be very important. They are smashing the ball outside of the stadia at will. Both their stability and then the finishing role could have a telling impact on this World Cup.
- Kuldeep's wicket taking ability will ensure India's control in the middle overs.
- Pace battery of Shami, Bumrah & Siraj is formidable. They take wickets in bulk.
- Hardik Pandya needs to come to the fore. We need him to be the main All Rounder this year and allow India to play the extra spinner on many tracks.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sam is an ex-cricketer having played for Singapore U23's and at a semi professional level in England in the

1990's. He is a cricket-preneur working on the online & offline space in partnership with stalwarts such as Mickey Arthur.

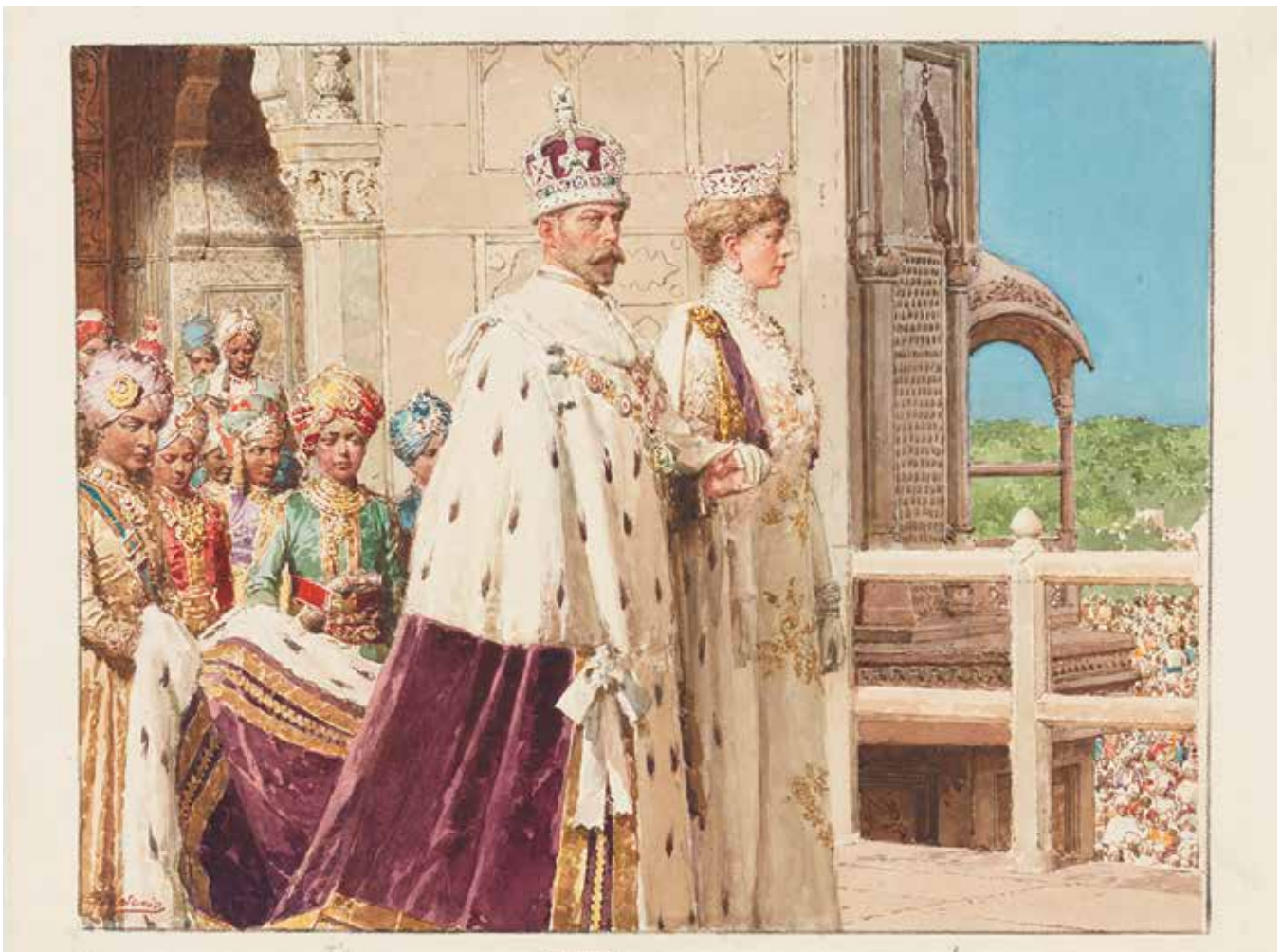
# RE-CREATING MEMORIES OF 'DELHI DURBAR'

by NAVIN BERRY

No more befitting chief guest than Gaj Singh II of Jodhpur – fondly known as Bajji – could have presided over the opening of an exhibition commemorating the three Delhi Durbars held during the Raj to emphasise the might of the Empire. Never mind that it was ironic that the ceremonial events were held in the old Mughal capital even though the Raj ruled the subcontinent from distant Calcutta (now Kolkata). Fittingly, the third and last Durbar announced the shifting of the capital to Delhi, laying the foundations for the vibrant city that is still getting over the euphoria of hosting the successful G20 meet in the capital.

**An exhibition chronicles the material cultures of the three historic Delhi Durbars, put together by Swapna Liddle and Rana Safvi, curated from the archives of Delhi Art Gallery (DAG), on view at their Janpath Studio in New Delhi.**

Gaj Singh flew in especially from Jodhpur for the event, but there was no dearth of celebrities in attendance—from Shashi Tharoor to



▲ A watercolour of King George V & Queen Mary at the Delhi Durbar of 1911 painted as they appear before their subjects on the terrace of the Red Fort dressed in their 'durbar robes.' They are accompanied by the young princes from different princely states serving as page boys.



THE IMPERIAL

▲ A chromolithograph of the 1903 Durbar on depicts the procession with its distinct order based on hierarchy the most important dignitaries rode on elephants, followed by carriages, horses and finally infantry. This popular print shows the procession passing in front of the Jama Masjid led by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon and his wife, Mary, seated on the first elephant.

Sunita Kohli, from Rajeev Sethi to Ram Rahman, Meera and Muzzafar Ali, Naresh Gujral and Yashodhara Dalmia. The French ambassador was there, as was the Norwegian – both of them new – and there was a smattering of royals: MK Ranjitsinh of Wankaner, Nawan Kazim Ali of Rampur, Aishwarya Katoch from Kangra, among them.

During the period of the Raj, the British held three great ceremonial durbars in Delhi. The first, in 1877, was staged to declare Queen Victoria as Empress of India. The second, in 1903, proclaimed the succession of her son King Edward VI as King Emperor. The third, in 1911, proclaimed King George V, and on this occasion both the King and his consort, Queen Mary, attended in person, marking the first time a ruling British monarch had visited India. The pomp and ceremony of these events were on a lavish scale, to display the majesty and power of the Raj, and the loyalty of eminent Indian subjects, including maharajas and nawabs of the princely states.

Curated by leading historians Swapna Liddle and Rana Safvi, it was drawn from the archives of DAG and included photographs of the

**Curated by leading historians Swapna Liddle and Rana Safvi, it was drawn from the archives of DAG and included photographs of the three durbars taken by prominent photographers of the day.**

three durbars taken by prominent photographers of the day, as well as objects relating to the durbars, from portraits and medals, to maps and official guidebooks, and to tickets and programmes, even a pair of royal chairs complete with footstools, used during the 1911 Durbar. Historians in the past have analysed the ideology of the Delhi durbars, but never before has such a collection of the material culture of these events been brought together for display.



Giles Tillotson, Ashish Anand with HH Maharaja Gaj Singh II and Kishore Singh.



Historians Swapna Liddle and Rana Safvi.

**During the period of the Raj, the British held three great ceremonial durbars in Delhi. The pomp and ceremony of these events were on a lavish scale, to display the majesty and power of the Raj, and the loyalty of eminent Indian subjects, including maharajas and nawabs of the princely states.**

The visual imagery of the durbars drew heavily on the heritage of the city: on Mughal courtly ceremony of the past—as the very name ‘durbar’ indicates—as well as the stately architecture of the Mughal and sultanate periods. Delhi had also, of course, been the scene of some of the bloodiest conflicts during the Uprising of 1857, and the first of the durbars was held in Delhi just twenty years later, partly as a gesture of reconciliation and healing. Consequently, the exhibition begins with a ‘darshan’ of the great monuments of the city, as seen in paintings, photographs and postcards of the time, and then includes images of Delhi in 1857, before proceeding to the three imperial durbars in turn.

The exhibition will be on view at DAG, Janpath, New Delhi, till 6 November 2023.

# TALKING GEOMETRY WITH SANJAY BHATTACHARYA




## An exclusive **DI REPORT**

“**F**rom the very beginning I have been attracted to realism, and throughout my career I have painted realistic paintings. In 2006 I did a series called “Tribute to Masters” in which I used the portraits of Salvador Dali and Rembrandt along with elements of their works. In these compositions I also included my own favorite elements.

Looking at Salvador Dali’s portrait, I was fascinated by his eyeballs popping out, and that was the inspiration behind the big black circles within my paintings. Apart from the circles, I also painted some geometric shapes.



Thereafter in 2012 I did another series called “Krishna” in which I used the silhouette of Krishna with the flute, and used those geometric patterns again. But in both these series, Dali, Rembrandt and Krishna were the highlights, and the geometric patterns were used as supportive elements.

In 2022 when I was preparing another solo exhibition, I looked back at these geometric patterns and I felt that our thought processes also have correlates in geometry, like when we are tensed, the tension can be represented by a line that goes upwards, and once it is over, the line comes down and finally returns to the starting point, creating a triangle. Sometimes when we concentrate, our thoughts converge into the smallest circle. Since I was getting such ideas, I was eager to create some compositions with only these geometric shapes. Through this process many unknown shapes also appeared on my canvas, infused with some colors that I formulated especially for this series.” 

◀ A solo exhibition of Sanjay Bhattacharya (second from left) at India Habitat Centre saw MP Maneka Gandhi and historian/hotelier Aman Nath with a battery of enthusiasts converge for the inauguration.

“Sometimes when we concentrate, our thoughts converge into the smallest circle. Since I was getting such ideas, I was eager to create some compositions with only these geometric shapes.”



## ABOUT SANJAY BHATTACHARYA

Sanjay Bhattacharya is an eminent painter and photographer. His works can be seen in important public and private collections in India and overseas.

# “MODI: FROM VISION TO REALITY”, EFFECTIVELY RECALLS THE PM’S CONTRIBUTIONS IN INDIA’S ALL-ROUND DEVELOPMENT



An exclusive DI REPORT

The capital witnessed a unique event where the book “MODI: From Vision to Reality” was released by India’s 14th President Ram Nath Kovind, in the presence of Haryana Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar. An articulate and eloquent moderator for the event was none other than leading lawyer Nalin Kohli, who is also BJP’s spokesperson. The book has been edited by R K Pachnanda, currently the chairman of Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission. An IPS officer, Pachnanda has served in premium organizations such as CBI, BSF, CRPF and was Director General, Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

It’s an interesting compilation from a wide cross section of luminaries, ranging from politics, diplomacy, civil service, and the defence forces. Subjects are wide ranging, like water security, economic reforms, being a responsible global power, special focus on Indo-ASEAN relationship and others.

In his introduction, Pachnanda says “it is the proactive policies of Prime Minister Modi on every front that have made India an example for the world to follow. So much so, that even President Biden remarked.....

**A new book, released by the former President Ram Kovind, brings together an interesting collection of views from an eminent list of people in public life. Edited by former police officer R K Pachnanda, the book has been published by Pentagon Press, prolific publishers who have an enviable record of coming out with a title every week.**


I thank you for your continuing commitment to make sure democracies deliver”. In his view, Modi has been the torch bearer of peace and development to, successfully, address matters like the Ukraine war, climate issues, global recession, food security, bridging the digital divide, global value chains, and international peace and stability...

Contributors to the book include Meenakshi Lekhi, MOS, External Affairs and Culture who has cited India’s phoenix like rise through tumultuous times, a policy of resolute actions, vaccine diplomacy and friends with neighbours, bringing peace and stability to J&K, among PM

Modi’s big contributions to increasing India’s stature among the comity of nations.

Former Home Secretary and CAG, Rajiv Mehrishi has recounted the economic reforms introduced by PM Modi since assuming office in 2014. One such reform he has cited is the introduction by law, of inflation targeting in the Monetary Policy. By this the government made it incumbent on RBI to target that inflation in the country be 4%, with a tolerance limit of plus/minus 2%. The Monetary Policy was now not left to the whims of any individual but a committee of six persons. Another landmark reform has been the introduction of the Indian Bankruptcy Code.

Nalin Kohli, in his contribution, highlights how India has targeted attracting global investments, ensuring a new India in the making. He has traced the policies of the government towards small and medium enterprises, infrastructure development especially roadways, rail and aviation as these are critical to improving connectivity that will impact growth.

Among others, eminent defence analyst Maroof Raza recalls defence initiatives in the region, effectively creating India as a reliable defence partner. 

# Hotelier K B Kachru Celebrates his Five Decade long Journey in Hospitality



by NAVIN BERRY

**A** hotelier with a conscience, with a true understanding of the nuts and bolts of what hospitality could be, then when he started in the business, and equally if not more importantly, as the rules of engagement evolved. He continued to keep himself abreast, if not ahead, of his times. A true professional, who worked as a team, inclusively with his network of media, friends in the industry, and his guests. He never had a harsh word for anyone, preferring a style of management that assured his colleagues he was always there to back them, no matter what they did. Working with him in difficult situations, and given the

job requirements in a public sector undertaking, where favours were expected and asked for, most unexpectedly.

ITDC is where he got his grounding, where he got chiselled with craft how to handle the most difficult situations. Keep your cool, understand the situation, and find solutions that work for everybody. KB perfected this art, in all humility and spirit of professionalism, never compromising with his primary duty to his profession, his company and to himself.

His recently released book, **The Life of a Hotelier**, is an essence of his experiences and his close encounters with the highest in government. How he survived, and when issues became too unwieldy, rather than succumbing to pressures, he chose to quit, keeping his honour intact.

The private sector assignments saw him bring Radisson Hotels to India; ironically, it was during his ITDC days that he first met the Radisson team. He set up an enviable chain of hotels, growing in confidence as over 100 owners trusted him completely. And, true to his profession-



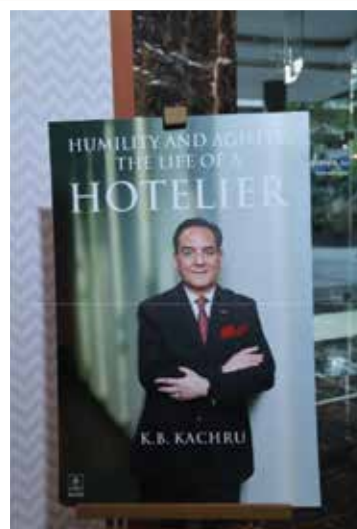
alism, he never let them down. In the process, he empowered his junior colleagues to take up positions across India and indeed around the globe. Many of them proved to be much sought after professionals, among the best globally.

His memoirs trace his journey, managing The Ashok as the youngest ever general manager, to heading the hotels division of ITDC, where work philosophy and discipline both needed a drastic change; his is a story of the rise of ITDC and then its subsequent fall, and interestingly how the private sector woke up to hospitality, especially the international chains. An absorbing tale of over fifty decades – through the eyes of a person committed to the industry.

KB is not hanging his boots anytime soon. He prefers to work for the industry and is available for any roles whereby he can ‘give back’ to hospitality and tourism.

A major interaction of the evening was a candid conversation between KB and noted journalist Vir Sanghvi, where insights into this journey were shared in great detail. How KB faced the trauma of then deputy PM deciding to allow anyone in a dhoti to walk into any ITDC hotel and be given a 50% discount on room and food bill! Without a written order! And how KB insisted on getting formal orders to give a green signal to his staff

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around the country, who would only listen to him and not anyone else. Or, when he was possibly being framed while staying at The Samrat, which was his declared official residence. The other highlight was serving the mighty at Hyderabad House, when catering to official government functions, and having to wade through the many tribulations of those in power. How his friends stood by him, notably his senior and mentor, Rajan Jetley who was at one time his MD at ITDC, and then moved on to Singapore. And where Rajan helped him set up a new job that marked a new beginning for him. Then his new friends at Radisson, who soon swore by him in all that they did in India.

At the book launch, India's Sherpa to G20, Amitabh Kant lavished fulsome praise of KB's contribution to the industry. Present on the occasion were friends and family and well-wishers, many of whom have been witness to his journey, some of them co-travellers! A memorable event, where Radisson New Delhi did the chain proud with an awesome spread of cuisines served with warmth and dedication. An evening to cherish, a book to savour! **DI**



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