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India, US 'fully committed' to trade agreement despite 100% tariff bill, says Commerce Secretary



India and the US continue to be committed to advancing their trade agreement despite a US bill that permits tariffs of up to 100 per cent, says India's Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal

AUGUST 13, 2026
NEW DELHI (TIP)

India and the US continue to be committed to advancing their trade agreement despite a US bill that permits tariffs of up to 100 per cent on the top five buyers of Russian goods passing via the US legislative process, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said on Thursday, August 13.

This is part of the ongoing US legislative process. We shouldn't comment on that, in my opinion. When questioned about the bill and its possible effects on India, Agrawal responded, "That's their internal process."

We regularly communicate with the US side on trade agreements. Additionally, both parties are dedicated to the agreement that we have reached, he said, adding that both parties are fully committed to proceeding in that manner.

PM Modi Lays Out Roadmap For 'Viksit Bharat' By 2047 On India's 80th Independence Day

INVOKES 'YUVA SHAKTI,' SELF-RELIANCE AND VANDE MATARAM AS INDIA LOOKS TOWARD THE CENTENARY OF INDEPENDENCE



Prime Minister Modi addresses the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Saturday, August 15 on the occasion of the 80th Independence Day of India

AUGUST 15, 2026
NEW DELHI (TIP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led India in celebrating its 80th Independence Day on Saturday, August 15, using his address from the historic ramparts of the Red Fort to set out an ambitious vision for transforming the country into a developed nation-Viksit Bharat-by 2047, when India completes 100 years of Independence.

The celebration, built around the twin themes of "150 Years of Vande Mataram" and "Yuva Shakti for Viksit Bharat@2047," combined the solemn remembrance of India's freedom struggle with a forward-looking emphasis on youth, economic strength, technological capability and national self-reliance.

It was Modi's 13th consecutive Independence Day address as Prime Minister, placing him alongside Jawaharlal Nehru as the only Indian prime ministers to have delivered at least 13 consecutive Independence Day speeches from the Red Fort.

CONTD ON PAGE 106

Trump Rallies For Blakeman, Celebrates Law Enforcement During LI Visit: 'Golden Age Of America Is Upon Us'

AUGUST 14, 2026
GARDEN CITY, NY (TIP)

President Donald J. Trump visited the David S. Mack Center for Training and Intelligence in Garden City on Friday, August 14, where he strongly campaigned for gubernatorial candidate and Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman and touted Nassau County's crime record as evidence that the Republican county executive should be New York's next governor.

Trump's appearance at Nassau County's police training facilities began as a celebration of law enforcement and the administration's newly released crime figures but quickly developed into a rally for Blakeman and other New York Republicans.



President Donald Trump speaks at the David Mack Center for Training and Intelligence, Friday, Aug. 14, 2026, in Garden City, N.Y.

Trump said a newly released FBI Uniform Crime Report showed the United States had experienced the single

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COMMENT

THE MANDATE BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE

**ON INDIA'S 80TH INDEPENDENCE DAY,
RESTORE THE LEGITIMATE RIGHT OF
THE VOTER**

As India celebrates its 80th Independence Day on August 15, there will be much to celebrate. The Tricolor will fly across the country and wherever Indians have made their homes around the world. There will be speeches about India's economic rise, technological achievements, democratic endurance and growing stature among nations.

Celebrate them all.

But Independence Day should also be an occasion for national introspection. And there is one question that has troubled me for years:

Who owns an electoral mandate-the politician, the political party, or the people?

The answer should be beyond dispute.

The mandate belongs to the people.

Yet Indian politics has repeatedly witnessed elected representatives changing political allegiance after elections-sometimes individually, sometimes in groups large enough to alter legislative majorities, topple governments or create new ones.

We call it defection, floor-crossing and, more disturbingly, horse-trading. Behind these expressions lies a fundamental democratic wrong: the people's verdict can effectively be altered without returning to the people. The BJP did not invent political defection. Congress and regional parties have benefited from it too. A democratic principle cannot depend upon which party gains from its violation. But Narendra Modi has been Prime Minister since 2014, and his government repeatedly speaks of clean governance, national renewal and India's democratic greatness. The opportunity to undertake meaningful reform therefore rests today with his government.

On India's 80th Independence Day, I would ask Prime Minister Modi to make one historic commitment:

Make an elected legislative mandate non-transferable between political parties without renewed electoral consent.

The principle is simple.

You are free to leave the political party to which you belong. You are free to join another party of your choice. But you are not free to carry with you the legislative seat that the electorate gave you under your former political affiliation. The moment you change that allegiance, the seat must fall vacant. If you wish to return to the legislature under your new political identity, return to the people and seek their mandate again.

This does not imprison anyone within a political party.

A legislator must remain free to think, dissent and change. A party may abandon its principles. Leadership may become unacceptable. Conscience may compel departure.

Then depart.

Join another party. Form another party. Campaign against your former colleagues.

Your conscience belongs to you. The electoral mandate does not.

A candidate normally seeks election bearing a party symbol, affiliation, platform and leadership. Some citizens vote primarily for the individual, others for the party, and many for both. No representative can therefore presume that citizens who elected Candidate A of Party X would automatically elect the same Candidate A of Party Y.

There is one democratic way to discover that.

Ask them again.

A representative has every right to reconsider political allegiance. The voter has an equal right to reconsider representation.

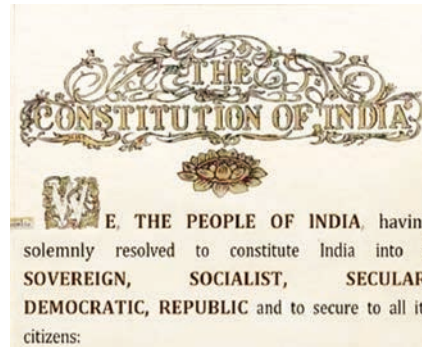
India enacted the anti-defection law in 1985 because political defections had become corrosive to parliamentary democracy. Yet decades later, political maneuvering involving defections, mergers, resignations and disputes over disqualification continues to test both the law and public confidence.

Why should political morality depend upon numbers?

If one legislator changes allegiance, return the mandate. If twenty change, return twenty mandates. If a large group wishes to move together, let them.

But let them face the people.

Numbers may change the arithmetic of a legislature. They must not be allowed to change the morality of a mandate.


BY INDRAJIT
SALUJA


There is another reason for reform.

Defections create circumstances in which elected representatives can acquire enormous transactional value. India has heard repeated allegations over the years-under governments of different parties-of money, ministerial positions, political favors and investigative pressure influencing political allegiance.

Not every allegation is proven. Not every defector is corrupt. Some undoubtedly act from conviction.

But democracy should not have to investigate every legislator's soul-or every alleged transaction-to protect itself.

Good law does not merely punish corruption after the damage is done. Good law removes, wherever possible, the opportunity and incentive for corruption to occur.

Make the mandate non-transferable, and the political marketplace immediately becomes less attractive.

A rival party may persuade a legislator to join it. That is political freedom.

But it should not acquire the legislator's seat in the bargain.

Instead, there will be an election.

And standing between the politician and political power will be the person who should never have been removed from the transaction: the voter.

That is why what India needs is more than another anti-defection provision.

It needs the restoration of the legitimate right of the voter.

The citizen's sovereignty does not expire when the votes are counted. If a representative fundamentally changes the political proposition upon which election was sought, the electorate must be permitted to judge that changed proposition. And the rule must bind everyone. BJP. Congress. Regional parties. Government. Opposition. Today's rulers and tomorrow's. A reform possesses moral authority only when those making the law are prepared to surrender advantages they themselves might otherwise enjoy. The highest proof of political principle is willingness to surrender an advantage that the existing system gives you.

That is why Prime Minister Modi has an opportunity on August 15.

From the Red Fort, let him tell India that his government will initiate the constitutional and legislative process necessary to establish one clear democratic principle:

No elected legislative mandate shall pass from one political party to another without renewed consent of the electorate.

Let there be no convenient arithmetic to defeat the principle.

No political engineering that converts one electoral verdict into another.

No transfer of the political meaning of a citizen's vote behind closed doors.

The principle can be stated simply:

Political allegiance is transferable. The people's mandate is not. And I would say to every elected representative in India:

You may change your convictions.

You may change your party.

You may change your political friends.

But you cannot change my vote.

Only I can do that.

If conscience tells you to leave your party, leave.

If another party better represents your convictions, join it.

But leave my mandate behind.

Return to me. Explain why you changed. Stand before me under your new political banner.

Ask me again.

If I agree with you, I will return you to the legislature. If I do not, democracy has given its answer.

That is not punishment for defection.

That is respect for the voter.

Freedom for the representative. Sovereignty for the voter.

Eighty years after Independence, India should guarantee both.

Restore the voter's legitimate right. Restore sanctity to the electoral mandate. And begin restoring political morality to Indian democracy.

That would indeed be an Independence Day gift worthy of the Republic.

HAPPY 80TH INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA. JAI HIND!

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MARCO RUBIO
Secretary of State
United States of America



MESSAGE

On behalf of the United States of America, I extend warm congratulations to the people of India on their Independence Day.

Thanks to the personal relationship between President Trump and Prime Minister Modi, the U.S.-India relationship continues to grow and is stronger than ever. From defense and energy security to critical minerals, artificial intelligence, space cooperation, and commerce, our collaboration is making both of our nations, and the broader Indian Ocean region, safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

The deep ties of friendship and family between our two peoples form the foundation of a partnership that is innovative, resilient, and forward-looking. The United States looks forward to the future our two countries will build together.

*Washington, D.C.
August 14, 2026*



DR. MANOJ KUMAR MOHAPATRA
Ambasada Indiei, Romania
Embassy of India, Romania



MESSAGE

Message on the Occasion of the 80th Independence Day of India

It gives me immense pleasure to extend my warm greetings and best wishes to the readers of The Indian Panorama on the joyous occasion of the 80th Independence Day of India.

As we commemorate this historic milestone, we pay tribute to the extraordinary courage, sacrifice, and vision of our freedom fighters, whose unwavering commitment secured India's independence and laid the foundation of our vibrant democracy. Today, India stands among the world's fastest-growing major economies, a global hub of innovation and technology, and a responsible partner committed to peace, sustainable development, and the timeless ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—the world is one family. As we pursue the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, we remain confident that India's continued progress will contribute to global prosperity and shared development.

On this special occasion, I warmly congratulate the Indian diaspora across the United States and Europe. Their outstanding achievements and invaluable contributions to the economic, scientific, technological, academic, cultural, and public life of their adopted countries have earned them widespread respect and admiration. At the same time, they remain proud ambassadors of India's rich civilisational heritage and enduring democratic values, serving as a vital bridge of friendship and cooperation between India and their countries of residence.

I also convey my sincere appreciation for the continued support extended by Professor Indrajit Saluja to the Embassy of India in Bucharest. His longstanding commitment to strengthening engagement with the Indian community and promoting awareness of India's achievements is deeply valued. I also commend The Indian Panorama for its dedicated efforts in bringing together the global Indian community and fostering informed dialogue on issues of importance to India and the diaspora.

On behalf of the Embassy of India in Bucharest, I extend once again my heartfelt greetings to all readers and wish everyone a Happy 80th Independence Day.

Jai Hind!

*(Dr. Manoj Kumar Mohapatra)
Ambassador of India to Romania*



VINAY KWATRA
Ambassador of India
2107, Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington DC 20008



MESSAGE

It gives me great pleasure to extend my warm greetings to the readers of The Indian Panorama on the occasion of the 80th Independence Day of India.

This day invites us to recall the ideals that shaped our freedom struggle — ideals that were enshrined in our Constitution and that have shaped India's political, social and economic journey ever since. It is a moment not only for remembrance but for renewal: to recommit ourselves to those founding principles as we march steadily towards our 100th Independence Day in 2047 and towards the goal of a Viksit Bharat.

The importance of the next two decades in India's journey can hardly be overstated. India today stands among the largest economies in the world, and is the fastest growing among them. This has been made possible by the dedication and enterprise of every section of our society, and by the invaluable contributions of our diaspora across the globe.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Government is committed to raising productivity in agriculture and industry, to strengthening the role of women across every sector, to investing in technology and infrastructure, to renewing our ties with the diaspora, and to achieving our development goals sustainably.

The contributions of the esteemed members of the Indian-American community — to India, and to the India—United States partnership — are truly invaluable. You have long served as a living bridge between our two nations, and I am confident that you will continue to enrich this relationship in the years ahead.

I wish you and your families a joyous Indian Independence Day.

(Vinay Kwatra)



HARISH PARVATHANENI
Permanent Mission of India
To the United Nation, New York



INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE FOR INDIAN PANORAMA

Dear readers,

At the outset, I extend my heartiest greetings to you as we mark India's 80th Independence Day on 15th August.

This momentous milestone is time for reflection. It offers an opportunity to look back and marvel at the unprecedented transformation that India has witnessed in multiple fields, particularly in the recent past. This impressive journey has brought about remarkable changes in the socio-economic landscape of the country, with a marked improvement in living standards, access to services and overall quality of life for our citizens. Leveraging the tremendous potential of transformative technologies has enabled delivery of inclusive and citizen-centric governance.

In the United Nations, my team and I showcase these achievements as we work tirelessly to deepen the multi-dimensional India-UN partnership and contribute actively at the principal organs and institutions of the world's most universal multilateral organization. India shares its development experiences, its capabilities and resources with its friends and partners of the Global South by championing their development needs and aspirations. As the single largest cumulative contributor to UN peacekeeping, India's strong commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security stands out at the UN. India has also been at the forefront of countering the global scourge of terrorism, including by furthering initiatives that are aimed at stifling terrorist funding and preventing them from misusing new and emerging technologies. Building upon the success of the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi in February this year, India strongly advocates making AI human-centric and accessible. We maintained an active calendar of events in the UN in pursuance of each of these goals, as also championing women empowerment, rights of persons with disabilities, sustainability and, equitable green energy transition.

I am glad to share that External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar launched India's UN Security Council campaign for a non-permanent seat for the 2028-29 term last month. With vast experience of serving as an elected member on multiple previous occasions, India will work towards shared peace and prosperity of humanity and be guided by its approach of SHANTI - Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Integrity and Trust. Our endeavour for securing real and much needed reforms in the UN in order to make it fit-for-purpose, and equipped to handle contemporary and future challenges will continue.

Permanent Mission of India is approaching the 80th Independence Day of India with a strong sense of commitment to serve the nation with dedication and diligence, and to ensure that Indian tricolor flies high at the UN.

I wish you all a very Happy 80th Independence Day in advance.

JAI HIND, JAI BHARAT, VANDE MATARAM.

(Harish Parvathaneni)

BINAYA S. PRADHAN
Consul General of India
New York

MESSAGE

On behalf of the Consulate General of India, New York, I extend greetings and congratulations to The Indian Panorama on the publication of its illustrated special issue commemorating India's 80th Independence Day.

This landmark occasion is an opportunity to reflect with pride on India's journey since 1947. Over the past eight decades, India has emerged as a vibrant democracy, a global economy, a centre of innovation and technology, and a voice for peace, pluralism and inclusive development. The achievements of our nation have been strengthened by the invaluable contributions of Indians living across the world, including the Indian American community.

The Indian Panorama has played an important role in informing, engaging and connecting the diaspora with developments in India and the United States. Through its reporting and community-focused coverage, the publication has helped preserve cultural bonds, promote informed dialogue and celebrate the accomplishments of Indian Americans.

I commend the editorial team for bringing together historical perspectives, messages from distinguished personalities and expert articles in this commemorative edition. I am confident that the issue will inspire readers and deepen their appreciation of India's past, present and future.

I wish The Indian Panorama continued success and its readers a happy Independence Day.

(Binaya S. Pradhan)

TOM SUOZZI
Congressman Tom Suozzi
New York-3 Congressional District

MESSAGE

Today, we celebrate India's 80th Independence Day.

Throughout my career in public service, I have worked to strengthen the U.S.-India partnership because I believe it will remain one of the world's most important relationships for decades to come. As Vice Chair of the Congressional India Caucus, I am proud to help advance that partnership. As the world's two largest democracies, our nations are united by a shared commitment to democracy, religious pluralism, human rights, and the rule of law.

That is why I introduced House Resolution 1394, recognizing the enduring partnership between the United States and India and celebrating the values we share.

Our relationship is strengthened every day by the vibrant Indian American community, one of the most accomplished and entrepreneurial diaspora communities in the world. Here on Long Island and in Queens, Indian Americans have enriched our neighborhoods, strengthened our economy, and made invaluable contributions to our civic, cultural, and professional life.

As India marks 80 years of independence, I wish all my friends in the Indian community a joyful, healthy, and safe Independence Day celebration.

Jai Hind!"

AMIT VERMA
Country Head, US Operations
State Bank of India
425 Park Avenue, New York

MESSAGE

On the occasion of India's 80th Independence Day, I extend my warmest greetings. Seventy-nine years ago, India began a new chapter in its history, shaped by the courage, sacrifice and unwavering conviction of countless freedom fighters who devoted their lives to the cause of an independent nation.

That spirit has carried India from independence to its place today among the world's leading economies and democracies. Across diverse languages, cultures, regions and traditions, our unity remains one of the nation's greatest strengths. The values proclaimed on that August morning - liberty, equality, and the dignity of every citizen - remain as vital today as they were then.

My best wishes to all on this proud occasion.

Jai Hind.

CHARLES SCHUMER
U.S. SENATOR

MESSAGE

"Happy 80th Independence Day, India! I am proud to represent New York's vibrant Indian American community, whose contributions have strengthened every facet of our state and country. Indian Americans embody what makes New York so extraordinary: talented, hardworking people from around the world who come together to build a society that is stronger because of its diversity. As we commemorate this milestone, I look forward to continuing to strengthen the partnership between the United States and India and advance our shared democratic values for generations to come."

Charles Schumer

JOHN C LIU
Senator
16th Senate District
Majority Conference Vice Chair

MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I extend my best wishes of the Indian Panorama on the publication of its special issue celebrating India's 80th Independence Day!

On this important holiday, we celebrate the independence of India and join in festivities with friends, family and our community. Special thanks to the Indian Panorama as it continues to bring its readers the latest news and important information so that our community can stay abreast of current news and events. Since the newspaper's inception in 2006, the Indian Panorama has rapidly come to occupy a central place for the South Asian community and serve as an essential resource in this multicultural, multireligious contemporary American society.

On behalf of the New York State Senate, I commend all of the correspondents and staff of The Indian Panorama for their service. My sincere thanks to Chief Editor Professor Indrajit S. Saluja for his hard work and dedicated leadership. I look forward to continuing to work as your State Senator on behalf of our community in the future, and I would like to express my best wishes for a joyous Independence Day!

Wishing you and your loved ones a most joyous holiday during this 80th Independence Day!

Sincerely,

BRUCE A. BLAKEMAN
Nassau County Executive
Office of the County
Executive 1550 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, New York 11501

MESSAGE

Dear Readers of The Indian Panorama,

I want to extend my congratulations to those of you celebrating the 80th Independence Day of India. Nassau County is proud to have a vibrant Indian community that brings a rich history and culture to our neighborhoods, so it's important to commemorate India's commitment to upholding the principles of democracy that we also hold dear.

I ask that all of you take the opportunity to reflect on our common values. Nassau County is made up of people from many cultural backgrounds, and being able to celebrate events like this one is what make our county the best place to live in all of New York.

Once again, congratulations to everyone celebrating India's independence. Please accept my best wishes for your continued success.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Blakeman



D C MANJUNATH
CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA
HOUSTON



MESSAGE

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to The India Panorama for bringing out this special edition to mark India's 80th Independence Day. Your thoughtful initiative to curate an Independence Day edition each year has become a valued tradition—one that strengthens community bonds and keeps our shared heritage alive.

Over the years, The India Panorama has emerged as an important platform for the wider Indian diaspora in the United States. By providing space for diverse voices and perspectives, the magazine has helped showcase the richness of our community and present the Indian viewpoint to the mainstream media with clarity, balance, and depth. I appreciate your continued commitment to this role.

As we celebrate the 80th year of India's independence, we also reflect on our collective journey—one shaped by resilience, democratic values, and the aspirations of 1.4 billion people. India and the United States, the world's two largest democracies, share a relationship anchored in these very principles. The Indian American community, with its talent, leadership, and spirit of service, continues to play a vital role in strengthening this partnership.

On this joyous occasion, I convey my warm greetings to all members of the Indian diaspora. Your contributions—in culture, innovation, education, business, and public service—remain a source of pride for India. As we look ahead toward the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, I encourage you to continue serving as bridges of friendship between our two nations.

My best wishes to The India Panorama for the success of this special edition, and my warm regards to the entire community as we celebrate India's 80th Independence Day.

(D C Manjunath)



VK Raju M.D., F.R.C.S., F.A.C.S.,
Founder President
Eye Foundation of America



MESSAGE

As India celebrates 80 years of independence, we have much to be proud of. At independence, many observers doubted whether a nation of such extraordinary diversity could remain united or survive as a democracy. India proved them wrong. Despite enormous challenges, our democracy has endured, without a military coup or civil war.

Today, India presents a remarkable contrast. We have islands of excellence in science, medicine, technology, industry, education and space exploration. Yet around these islands remain many problems of a developing country—poverty, pollution, inadequate public health, unequal educational opportunities and deficiencies in basic infrastructure.

This should not discourage us; it should challenge us.

Germany and Japan were devastated during the Second World War, yet within a few decades emerged as major economic and technological powers. India has an even greater resource: hundreds of millions of young people, whose intelligence, energy and creativity represent perhaps our greatest national wealth.

Our responsibility is to give them quality education, opportunity, ethical leadership and an environment in which merit and service are valued.

On Independence Day, therefore, we should certainly celebrate what India has achieved. But perhaps the more important question is: What can India still achieve?

India's future should not be measured merely by economic or military power. With its ancient traditions of pluralism, tolerance and nonviolence, India has the potential to become a powerful force for knowledge, human welfare and peace.

At 80, India's greatest achievement may not be behind us. It may still be ahead of us.



GOBIND MUNJAL
Immediate Past National President,
AIA (2022-2025), and Member, Board of
Trustees, AIA



MESSAGE

India at 80: A Journey of Freedom, Progress, and Global Leadership

As India approaches its 80th anniversary of independence, it is a moment of reflection, pride, and renewed optimism. From the struggles of 1947, India has evolved into a confident global power, driven by resilience, democracy, innovation, and the talent of its people.

Over eight decades, India has emerged as one of the world's leading economies. Its achievements in space exploration, digital transformation, infrastructure, science, financial inclusion, and entrepreneurship demonstrate its remarkable progress. Initiatives such as Digital India and a thriving startup ecosystem have expanded opportunity for millions.

India's strength, however, extends beyond economic growth. As the world's largest democracy, its enduring commitment to freedom, diversity, and pluralism remains central to its identity. The challenge ahead is to ensure that progress translates into dignity, opportunity, and a better quality of life for every generation.

The Indian Diaspora, particularly Indian Americans, has become an important bridge between India and the world, contributing to business, technology, investment, culture, and diplomacy. Community service is equally important. My own commitment to senior welfare has reinforced my belief **that true progress must include compassion, dignity, and care for our seniors.**

As Immediate Past National President of the Association of Indians in America (AIA), I worked to strengthen community engagement and India-America relations. My four decades of professional experience with Taj Hotels and the Tata Group in finance, mergers and acquisitions, and hospitality have further shaped my appreciation for global collaboration.

At 80, India stands as a symbol of hope, opportunity, and democratic strength—and its best chapters may yet lie ahead.



GOBIND BATHIJA
President, GB Network Enterprise
Founder President, Asa Mai
Hindu Temple



MESSAGE

As India celebrates its 80th Independence Day, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Indians across the world and to our vibrant Indian American community here in New York. This historic milestone honors not only the moment India achieved freedom, but also the extraordinary journey of a nation that has grown into a global symbol of democracy, resilience, and cultural richness.

Eighty years ago, India emerged from colonial rule through the courage and sacrifice of countless freedom fighters who envisioned a nation built on justice, equality, and unity. Their determination laid the foundation for a country that today stands as one of the world's largest democracies and a leader in technology, science, education, arts, and global diplomacy. India's progress continues to inspire admiration and respect across continents.

For the Indian diaspora, Independence Day carries a profound significance. It reminds us of our heritage, our shared values, and the deep cultural roots that shape our identity. Living abroad, we proudly uphold India's traditions while contributing meaningfully to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the United States. Our dual identity strengthens us, allowing us to honor the legacy of our motherland while embracing the opportunities of our adopted homeland.

This 80th Independence Day is also a moment to reflect on India's remarkable achievements and the collective responsibility we share in supporting its continued growth. Through community service, cultural preservation, professional excellence, and civic engagement, the Indian diaspora plays an important role in strengthening India's global presence.

As we celebrate this milestone, let us honor the vision of the leaders who secured our freedom and reaffirm our commitment to unity, progress, and service. May this Independence Day inspire pride and purpose in every Indian heart.

Wishing everyone a joyous and proud 80th Independence Day. Jai Hind.

Gobind Bathija
CEO GBN Enterprises, Inc.
GB Group of Companies.

INDIA'S CLEAN ENERGY LEADERSHIP IN GREEN HYDROGEN

India has become a global leader in making progress on clean energy: by the end of December 2025, non-fossil fuel sources accounted for 51.93 per cent of India's installed power capacity, crossing the 50 per cent mark set by India's second Nationally Determined Contribution. According to IRENA's Renewable Energy Statistics 2025, India ranks fourth globally in total installed renewable energy capacity.

India's energy transition must be understood in relation to its development needs. The country has not yet reached peak energy demand, and energy access, affordability and security remain central to its development pathway. Its development strategy therefore combines renewable energy growth, energy efficiency, nuclear power, green hydrogen, carbon sinks and carbon markets with industrial competitiveness and job creation.

Green hydrogen has emerged within this as an important facet because it can support decarbonisation in sectors where direct electrification may not be sufficient. Green hydrogen is both a fuel and an industrial feedstock and its production using renewable energy can replace fossil fuel-derived

inputs in petroleum refining, fertiliser production, steel manufacturing, and other hard to abate sectors, while also supporting the decarbonisation of long-haul automobiles, railways and marine vessels. The Indian Railways has recently demonstrated the capacity to run hydrogen fuelled trains.

The National Green Hydrogen Mission provides the central policy framework for scaling this opportunity linking energy transition with industrial policy and external economic opportunity. It targets a production of 5 million metric tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030. Production capacity of 862,000 tonnes per year has already been allocated to 18 companies, while 15 firms have been awarded 3,000 MW of annual electrolyser manufacturing capacity. Three green hydrogen hubs have also been identified at Deendayal Port Authority in Gujarat, V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority in Tamil Nadu and Paradip Port Authority in Odisha.

A sectoral focus is connecting green hydrogen with concrete industrial use cases. In fertilisers, data indicates an aggregate procurement capacity of 7.24 lakh metric tonnes per annum of green ammonia at

₹55.75 per kg. In petroleum refining, green hydrogen is being used to reduce the carbon footprint of the industry, while in steel, five pilot projects with public and private producers are testing green hydrogen for iron reduction and other process applications under Indian operating conditions.

India's green hydrogen strategy also has a clear international dimension with India looking to use voluntary cooperation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. This international orientation is consequential because green hydrogen is expected to become part of future clean energy trade. Thus, India's green hydrogen effort not only responds to domestic decarbonisation needs, but also positions the country to contribute to the rules, markets and supply chains of a future low-carbon economy in the world.

India is also positioning itself in emerging international hydrogen platforms and partnerships. It entered the international hydrogen community at the World Hydrogen Summit in Rotterdam in 2024 with its first India Pavilion. Cooperation is expanding under the EU-India Trade and Technology Council, where more

BY ISHITA SRIVASTAVA,
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than 30 joint proposals have been received on hydrogen production from waste. India and the United Kingdom have engaged on hydrogen standardisation, and work is being undertaken with the Germans on market-based mechanisms and joint tender designs for exports. Moreover, Indian companies have secured long-term offtake agreements with Japanese companies for green ammonia and green methanol.

India has been in the forefront of pushing solar energy in the global south not only through its promotion but by the demonstrative effect of its domestic action. Its pro-active actions on green hydrogen would have a similar hugely positive effect in the global south.

(Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri is a former Indian diplomat who has served as Ambassador to the European Union (EU), Nepal, Belgium and Luxembourg. He has been India's Ambassador & Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN.)

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VIKSIT BHARAT 2047: A ROADMAP TO BECOME A DEVELOPED NATION

BY DR MOHAN KUMAR



It is creditable that the Government of India has set for itself and the nation a crucial goal: That India should become Viksit Bharat by 2047, which would be the one hundredth year anniversary of India's independence. While there is general agreement that the term Viksit Bharat denotes a developed country, it is still necessary for public policy purposes to break the concept down to know what it entails. What follows is an attempt to do so.

A 10 TRILLION-DOLLAR ECONOMY: While India can be legitimately proud of being the fourth largest economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the world, the fact remains that for a population that is approaching 1.5 billion, the present GDP of \$4.5 trillion is a little below par. So, if India must become "Viksit" in the real sense of the term, the GDP must grow significantly to attain the figure of at least 10 trillion dollars. This is entirely achievable if we can do a couple of things. First, 40 per cent of our GDP is foreign trade, so our share of international trade must simply double. In particular, our share of global exports, which hovers around 2 per cent, should rise to 10 per cent. Second, our Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which for the latest year is a little short of \$ 100 billion, must also grow manifold. In order for the above two things to happen, Government of India must carry out deep seated economic reforms in areas such as land, labour, power, agriculture, infrastructure and regulatory obstacles.

INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH: While there is no question that the GDP must accelerate, as mentioned above, that alone is not enough. Growth must be inclusive which is to say that it must percolate to the downtrodden people who are at the bottom of the pyramid. The government has conceived excellent



schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. But going beyond that, job creation for the youth must become a national mantra for both the Central and State Governments. Since it is not possible for the Government alone or even the organized sector to provide all the jobs that are necessary, it is vitally important to enable an ecosystem where the youth become entrepreneurs and job creators rather than be mere job seekers. Present levels of economic inequality are unsustainable and efforts must be made to make the society much more egalitarian.

SKILLING: It is well recognized that our education system relies heavily on rote learning and it churns out thousands of graduates every year who may not be immediately employable. In this context, skilling and re-skilling of graduates becomes crucial. The idea of vocational training, industry-academic collaboration and imparting tech skills (including Artificial Intelligence) for

our graduates must assume mission-mode importance. Spending on education, in both the public and private sector must increase exponentially, especially in states that lag the national average. In parallel, Research and Development must be given prime importance in all relevant institutions. It is indeed true that a population that is close to 1.5 billion can be a demographic dividend for India. But that is true only if the population is skilled enough to face the challenges of a knowledge economy.

HEALTH: India's healthcare system is undergoing dramatic transformation, driven by digitalization and by infrastructure expansion. But challenges remain on account of rising medical costs and a growing chronic disease burden. Government has undertaken significant efforts such as Ayushman Bharat and Ayushman Arogya Mandir schemes which have made a big impact on providing healthcare in the country. Medical college seats have more than

doubled since 2014, in an attempt to bridge the doctor-patient gap. Successful attempts have also been made to promote India as a global hub for medical tourism. Despite all this, serious challenges remain. Public spending on healthcare still lags desired levels. India also runs the risk of becoming the global capital for heart disease and diabetes. India therefore needs to continue its massive transformation of public health infrastructure to make it accessible, affordable and quality-driven for the vast majority of its population. The National Health Mission is doing a commendable job. It simply needs to be strengthened and streamlined.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: India must not emulate the ways of either the industrialized countries which followed a high-carbon pathway to development or indeed that of China, which even today burns more coal than the rest of the world put together. India is the only major economy today which potentially has the possibility of following a low-carbon pathway to a high-income economy based on sustainable development. And India must do it not just because the world wants it to, but because the people of this country deserve it as a matter of right.

CONCLUSION: India is indeed well positioned to become Viksit Bharat by 2047. But the country needs to be on mission-mode and a whole-of-government approach is required to make sure that no stone is left unturned in this national endeavour. By any reckoning, the next twenty years will be the most crucial period in India's history.

(Dr Mohan Kumar is a former Indian Ambassador to France and currently Dean/Professor at O.P. Jindal Global University. Views are personal.)

The arrogance of Trump's vaccine policy

THE PRESIDENT IS LYING ABOUT THE MMR VACCINE

In March, a federal judge did President Donald Trump a favor by striking down his administration's attempts to upend the childhood vaccine schedule. The changes had proven extremely unpopular, including among Republicans. White House officials used the opportunity to push Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. toward other pet projects.

The president, however, couldn't abide victory through defeat. On Monday, he signed an executive order reviving the issue, directing federal agencies to advance his new vaccine schedule "to the fullest extent allowable by law."

Trump's order will probably not have immediate repercussions, given that it

has already been blocked in court and that states control vaccine mandates.

Nevertheless, the details are unnerving. Previously, the government recommended universal childhood vaccines for 18 illnesses. Trump's schedule reduces that to 11 and recommends administering them at separate medical visits "to the maximum extent feasible," stressing "maximal parental choice."

That would further erode Americans' faith in lifesaving vaccines and undermine herd immunity.

In the Oval Office, Trump claimed that the combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine might be "quite lethal," and that if the components were

delivered separately, they would be "not at all lethal."

The claim is irresponsible, possibly deadly. The MMR vaccine has been available in its combined form since the early 1970s, and research has repeatedly affirmed its safety. It's also not possible to simply administer the vaccine as three separate shots. Developing such an option would take years of clinical trials.

Yet Trump's assertion might convince parents to forgo the vaccine at a time when measles is spreading at its highest levels in more than three decades.

The United States has rightly prided itself on having the world's most robust vaccine recommendations, developed over decades through careful

examination of research by epidemiologists.

Trump's proposal would replace much of that work with the judgment of a handful of political appointees who disdain the medical establishment. They have arbitrarily modeled their schedule off the immunization practices of Denmark, a country with a population about the size of Wisconsin and a dramatically different health system.

This is not a policy seeking to "follow the science, wherever it leads," as Erica Schwartz, the president's new director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, promised during her confirmation hearing. This is cherry-picking data to support a preferred outcome: fewer childhood vaccines.

Americans may pay the ultimate price.

(The Washington Post editorial)

Whose Independence Is It Anyway? Reflections on India's 80th Independence Day

BY GEORGE
ABRAHAM



THE REAL MEASURE OF INDIA'S FREEDOM IS NOT HOW LOUDLY WE CELEBRATE INDEPENDENCE DAY BUT WHETHER EVERY INDIAN, REGARDLESS OF FAITH, CASTE, LANGUAGE, ETHNICITY, OR POLITICAL BELIEF, CAN LIVE WITH DIGNITY, SPEAK WITHOUT FEAR, WORSHIP ACCORDING TO CONSCIENCE, AND DREAM WITHOUT INTIMIDATION.

As Indians across the world celebrate another Independence Day, an uncomfortable but unavoidable question keeps resonating in the minds of millions both at home and across the Diaspora: whose freedom are we actually celebrating?

Seventy-nine years after India won political independence, the debate is no longer about freedom from colonial rule. It is about whether every Indian today enjoys the constitutional freedoms envisioned by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel and countless others who sacrificed for a democratic, pluralistic republic.

For many citizens, Independence Day is still a celebration of India's remarkable achievements as the world's largest democracy and one of its fastest-growing economies. Yet for many others, including students marching peacefully in the streets, journalists questioning authority, religious minorities living under fear, and communities displaced by violence, the occasion has become one for self-examination rather than celebration.

The nationwide student uprising witnessed in recent months has become one of the defining moments in contemporary India. What began as protests over educational policies and alleged irregularities evolved into something much larger, a movement insisting on accountability, honesty and respect for democratic rights. Images of students confronting police barricades, allegations of excessive force by law enforcement, and the detention of student leaders have renewed an old debate about the shrinking space for peaceful dissent in the world's largest democracy.

Universities have historically been the conscience of every democracy. Institutions like Jawaharlal Nehru University were once famous for encouraging debate, intellectual diversity and critical thinking. Today, many students and faculty members argue that campuses have increasingly become arenas of surveillance, intimidation and prolonged disciplinary or legal proceedings. Whether one agrees with their politics or not, a democracy must protect the right of its young people to question authority without fear of being branded enemies of the nation.

The Student Awakening: The students in New Delhi were protesting for one simple reason: justice. They were not seeking privilege, power, or political advantage. They were asking only for fairness, the assurance that years of sacrifice, discipline, and relentless hard work would not be rendered meaningless by a system that failed them.

Instead of listening to the students' grievances and engaging in productive dialogue, the Modi government sought to suppress the protests through force. Security personnel reportedly used pellet guns, lathi-charged peaceful demonstrators including female students and, according to reports, even fired an AK-47 rifle during the unrest. Scores of protesters were allegedly manhandled and injured, while many faced FIRs, detention, and other legal actions for participating in the demonstrations.

Manipur: The violence in Manipur represents one of the gravest human rights and religious freedom crises in contemporary India. Since the conflict began in May 2023, hundreds have been killed, thousands injured, and tens of thousands displaced from their homes. Numerous churches and other places of worship were destroyed or damaged, while entire communities were uprooted along ethnic and religious lines. Reports through human rights organizations, civil society groups, and the media have documented allegations of killings, sexual violence, arson, forced displacement, and prolonged failures to defend vulnerable



GenZ protests in New Delhi are a loud cry of anguish at systemic failures with regard to their present and future. A

populations. The extended instability, coupled with concerns over delayed justice and accountability, has raised serious questions about the protection of fundamental rights guaranteed under India's Constitution, including the rights to life, equality, religious freedom, and equal protection under the law. The Manipur tragedy functions as a clear reminder that safeguarding human dignity, guaranteeing justice for victims, and protecting religious minorities are necessary to protecting India's democratic tenets and constitutional devotion to pluralism.

Religious Freedom Under Strain: The findings of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) paint a deeply troubling picture of the state regarding religious freedom in India. In successive annual reports, USCIRF has expressed concern over what it describes as a continuing deterioration in the treatment of religious minorities, including Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, and other vulnerable communities. The Commission has documented reports of churches being demolished or sealed, prayer meetings disrupted by mobs, pastors and clergy arrested under anti-conversion laws, and increasing incidents of intimidation, violence, and harassment against Christians. In several instances, victims of religiously motivated attacks have themselves faced criminal charges, while perpetrators have often escaped accountability. These developments, coupled with the misuse of restrictive legislation and the failure to adequately protect minority communities, have contributed to an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. USCIRF has concluded that these patterns reflect a serious decline in religious freedom and has repeatedly urged the Government of India to protect its constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion, ensure equal protection under the law, and hold liable those responsible for acts of religiously motivated violence and discrimination.

Institutions Under Pressure: India's democratic institutions have come under increasing strain, eliciting concern both within the country and internationally about the health of its constitutional democracy. Parliament has frequently witnessed diminished debate on major legislation and the reduced functioning of parliamentary committees, restricting opportunities for examination and consensus-building. Investigative agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and Income Tax Department have encountered criticism from opposition parties and civil society over allegations of selective enforcement and politically motivated investigations, although the government rejects these claims and maintains that these agencies operate independently. Sections of the media have been accused of self-censorship and declining editorial independence, while journalists reporting on sensitive issues have encountered legal action, intimidation, or prosecution. Universities, once regarded as energetic

centers of intellectual inquiry and dissent, have seen increased tensions over academic freedom, student activism, and administrative intervention. Civil society organizations and human rights groups have also encountered heightened regulatory scrutiny, restrictions on foreign funding, and judicial challenges that critics maintain have constrained their capacity to operate freely. Collectively, these developments have driven a wider debate about the strength of India's democratic institutions, the protection of civil liberties, and the need to preserve the constitutional principles of accountability, pluralism, and the rule of law. Parliament, investigative agencies, media, universities, and civil society.

The Diaspora's Moral Responsibility: At this decisive moment in India's democratic journey, the Indian diaspora cannot afford to remain silent. As beneficiaries of the freedoms, constitutional protections, and democratic traditions that characterize both the United States and India, we have a moral responsibility to speak out whenever the tenets of justice, equality, religious liberty, and the rule of law are threatened. Genuine patriotism is not determined by unquestioning loyalty to any government but by a firm dedication to the abiding ideals enshrined in the Constitution. Our voices should be raised not in anger or partisanship, but in defense of democratic institutions, human dignity, and the rights of every citizen, regardless of religion, caste, ethnicity, or political belief. By defending these shared values, the Indian diaspora can act as a bridge between the world's two largest democracies, encouraging both countries to uphold the freedoms that have inspired generations and fortified the bonds between them. Silence in the face of injustice risks normalizing it; principled engagement, by contrast, affirms our common commitment to democracy, pluralism, and the universal rights that each nation aspires to protect.

A New Generation Has Arrived: In the midst of these challenges, there is a powerful reason for hope: a new generation of Indians is finding its voice. Across the country, young people are demonstrating an increasing willingness to stand up for their constitutional rights, insist on accountability, and take part actively in molding the future of their nation. They are driven not by blind allegiance to political parties or ideologies, but by a desire to preserve the democratic tenets of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity that form the foundation of the Indian Constitution. Their courage in speaking out, organizing peacefully, and insisting that those in authority remain accountable reflects the strength of India's democratic spirit. Every generation is tested by history, and this generation has shown that it is prepared to defend the values it has inherited. Their awakening offers a sign of hope that India can become stronger, more embracing, and more faithful to its constitutional promise, proving once again that the nation's greatest strength does not lie in those who wield power, but in citizens who are willing to protect freedom with conviction and courage.

Independence is not simply the memory of August 15, 1947: It is a daily devotion to liberty, equality, justice and fraternity. The real measure of India's freedom is not how loudly we celebrate Independence Day but whether every Indian, regardless of faith, caste, language, ethnicity, or political belief, can live with dignity, speak without fear, worship according to conscience, and dream without intimidation.

That remains the unfinished work of the Republic.

(George Abraham is a former Chief Technology Officer with the United Nations, and Vice-Chairman, IOC USA. He is a regular contributor to The Indian Panorama. He can be reached at gta777@gmail.com)

INDIA'S SPACE SECTOR: A LAUNCHPAD FOR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

BY GURJIT
SINGH FORMER
AMBASSADOR
AND AUTHOR



Growing competition in outer space provides India with a unique opportunity to shape a narrative in which collaboration, rather than confrontation, drives space exploration. Recognised as a trustworthy and cost-effective spacefaring nation, India is now well placed to transform its technological advances into enduring international partnerships that contribute to scientific progress, economic growth, and sustainable development.

Today, India's achievements extend beyond developmental applications. The Chandrayaan missions, the Mars Orbiter Mission, the Aditya-L1 solar observatory, and the forthcoming Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme have established India as a nation capable of executing sophisticated and reliable space missions. Chandrayaan-3's successful soft landing near the Moon's south pole placed India among an exclusive group of space powers while demonstrating that world-class innovation can be achieved

Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), the expanding commercial role of NewSpace India Limited, and the growth of private enterprises have created one of the world's most dynamic emerging space ecosystems. Indian startups are developing launch vehicles, satellite platforms, geospatial applications and propulsion technologies that are attracting global investment and customers. Companies such as Skyroot Aerospace, Pixxel and Agnikul Cosmos

South Asia Satellite, it provided communication and developmental benefits to neighbouring countries. Indian launch vehicles have successfully placed hundreds of foreign satellites into orbit for governments, universities and commercial operators around the world. India's decision to join the Artemis Accords reflects its willingness to participate in the peaceful exploration of the Moon through international collaboration. Cooperation with NASA, the European Space Agency and JAXA has strengthened India's scientific and technological capabilities.

These partnerships reinforce India's standing as a leading voice of the Global South. India offers development partnerships based on affordability, reliability and mutual respect rather than creating technological dependence. Space cooperation has therefore become an increasingly important instrument of Indian diplomacy, strengthening bilateral relationships while delivering tangible developmental benefits.

To realise its full potential, India will aim to sustain the momentum of reform. Faster regulatory approvals, greater access to venture capital, stronger intellectual property protection, and closer collaboration among research institutions, industry and academia will be essential. Public procurement policies would continue supporting Indian startups, enabling them to scale up, innovate and integrate into global supply chains.

India is positioned to play a larger role in shaping the governance of outer space. Orbital congestion, space debris, responsible resource utilisation and equitable access to emerging space opportunities are becoming pressing international concerns. As space activities expand, there will be an increasing need for countries capable of building consensus on responsible norms and practices. India's long-standing commitment to the peaceful uses of outer space, combined with its growing technological capabilities, equips it to contribute meaningfully to the development of rules that promote transparency, sustainability and equitable access.

The coming decade will determine not only which countries lead in space but also how space is governed. With its scientific capabilities, entrepreneurial ecosystem and international credibility, India is uniquely placed to bridge the gap between established and emerging space nations. By building collaborative partnerships founded on inclusivity, mutual benefit and innovation, India can transform its space programme into a major pillar of its global engagement.

In an increasingly divided world, India's space sector offers a powerful reminder that the greatest achievements in space are those that bring nations together. That may well become India's most enduring contribution to humanity's next frontier.

(Gurjit Singh is a former Ambassador and author)



India Mastered Space Technologies - Need for More Strategic Focus

India's journey into space has been distinctive. Unlike many space programmes that emerged from Cold War rivalries, India's programme was conceived as an instrument of national development. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai anchored India's space vision in practical applications that would improve the lives of ordinary people. Under his leadership, satellites were developed to strengthen communications, weather forecasting, disaster management, healthcare, agriculture and education. This development-oriented philosophy remains central to India's space programme and resonates strongly with the needs of countries in the Global South, which seek practical applications of space technology rather than prestige alone.

at comparatively modest cost.

India's growing credibility comes at a time when the global space economy is expanding rapidly. Valued at over US\$600 billion today and projected to approach US\$1.8 trillion by 2035, the sector is increasingly driven by commercial activity in satellite communications, Earth observation, navigation, climate services, broadband connectivity, and emerging fields such as in-orbit servicing and lunar exploration. Many countries aspire to participate but lack indigenous capabilities. They seek dependable long-term partners rather than merely launch providers.

India possesses the capabilities to meet these requirements. The liberalisation of the space sector in 2020 transformed the ecosystem by opening it to private participation. The establishment of the

have demonstrated that Indian private enterprise can compete internationally in advanced space technologies.

The next step is to internationalise this ecosystem.

Rather than positioning itself only as a low-cost launch destination, India will offer comprehensive partnerships encompassing satellite design, launch services, mission operations, ground stations, astronaut training, capacity building and downstream applications in agriculture, disaster management and maritime security. Such integrated partnerships would be valuable for countries across the Global South and the Indo-Pacific seeking affordable, customised and reliable technologies to meet their development priorities.

India has demonstrated the diplomatic value of such cooperation. Through the

INDIA AT 80, AMERICA AT 250: TWO DEMOCRACIES, A DEEPENING PARTNERSHIP

"WE ARE HERE TO SERVE THE DIASPORA, TO WORK WITH YOU"

In a wide-ranging Independence Day conversation with Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja, Editor of The Indian Panorama, Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan speaks about India-U.S. relations, consular reforms, trade and technology, Indian students, family concerns within the diaspora, and why the next generation of Indian Americans should discover "the opportunity called India."



Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan in conversation with Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja, Editor, The Indian Panorama -TIP File Photo

Nine days before India celebrates its 80th Independence Day, I sat down on August 6 with Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, Consul General of India in New York.

It was probably my sixth or seventh interview with Ambassador Pradhan. I remember with pleasure our first conversation soon after he assumed office in New York in January 2024. My first impression then endured: he is cordial and unassuming, but sure of his ground - a career diplomat who knows his brief without feeling the need to advertise that knowledge.

Ambassador Pradhan is a 2002-batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service. His diplomatic career has included assignments in Moscow, Turkmenistan and Pakistan; responsibility at the Ministry of External Affairs for India's relations with Afghanistan and Iran; service as Deputy Chief of Mission in Moscow; and, immediately before New York, service as India's High Commissioner to Tanzania.

The New York assignment is an unusually demanding one. The Consulate serves a vast Indian community while operating in one of the world's foremost centers of finance, commerce, education, technology and culture.

Over the past two and a half years, I have watched Ambassador Pradhan travel extensively through the consular jurisdiction, attend community and university events, promote economic engagement, and emphasize accessibility of consular services.

Our hour-long conversation ranged from India at 80 and America at 250 to electronic OCI, fraudulent consular agents, India-U.S. trade, MSMEs, education, Indian students, distressed families, philanthropy and the place of second- and third-generation Indian Americans in the evolving India-America relationship.

What follows is an edited version of that conversation. Spoken repetitions have been removed and passages condensed for clarity, while the substance and spirit of the exchange have been preserved.

A SPECIAL MONTH - INDIA AT 80, AMERICA AT 250

SALUJA: GOOD AFTERNOON, AMBASSADOR. HERE I AM ONCE AGAIN, JUST AS WE APPROACH INDIA'S 80TH INDEPENDENCE DAY. THIS TIME I HAVE DELIBERATELY NOT BROUGHT A FORMAL QUESTIONNAIRE. LET ME GIVE YOU THE FREEDOM TO BEGIN WITH WHATEVER IS UPPERMOST IN YOUR MIND.

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: I feel elated to see so many Independence Day events being organized by the Indian diaspora and by friends of India across our consular jurisdiction.

Many friends are celebrating the two occasions together - America at 250 and India at 80. You have come out with a beautiful publication on America at 250, and I find many

events being woven around these two milestones.

It is a beautiful tradition: to celebrate the two democracies, the friendship between our two countries, and the common ideals and values in which we believe.

So, I would say this is a special month.

From our side, one of my priorities in speaking through The Indian Panorama is to reach your readers with information about some important new consular initiatives.

E-OCI, E-PASSPORTS AND FASTER IMMIGRATION

SALUJA: WHAT ARE THE INITIATIVES OUR READERS SHOULD PARTICULARLY KNOW ABOUT?

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: The first is the electronic OCI - e-OCI. People who already have OCI cards have traditionally carried the physical booklet. Now the Government of India has introduced electronic OCI. You can access the OCI portal, update the required information and have the document available digitally.

This is especially useful when somebody is traveling in a third country and suddenly needs to go to India.

The second initiative is expedited immigration at major Indian airports. If travelers register in advance, they can use the digital immigration facility and complete the immigration process very quickly. It is somewhat comparable to Global Entry in the United States, though the Indian facility is free.

We are also issuing chip-enabled Indian passports - e-passports. It remains a physical passport, but the embedded chip facilitates electronic processing at immigration counters around the world.

BEWARE OF FRAUDULENT CALLS

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: There is another matter I want to emphasize through your platform.

We continue to find people impersonating officials of Indian consulates and calling members of the community asking for personal information. We have issued advisories and videos, but it continues.

Let me reiterate clearly: Indian consulates, the Embassy and Government of India organizations do not call people asking them to provide personal information in this manner.

Please do not fall for such calls. Report them.

CONTD ON PAGE 12

CONTD FROM PAGE 11

"NOBODY NEEDS TO GO TO AN AGENT"

SALUJA: THAT BRINGS ME TO SOMETHING THAT HAS CONCERNED ME FOR YEARS. PRIVATE VISA AND CONSULAR-SERVICE OPERATORS SOMETIMES CREATE AN IMPRESSION AMONG MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY THAT THEY HAVE SOME CONNECTION WITH THE CONSULATE. PEOPLE CAN END UP PAYING SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS UNNECESSARILY. CAN SOMETHING MORE BE DONE?

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: Let us be very clear. We are trying to provide our services in the most efficient manner possible and to reach the community directly.

We have opened satellite centers and we organize consular camps. The whole idea is to reach the community.

We repeatedly tell people that they can reach the Indian Consulate directly. They do not need to go to anybody else.

Under the new arrangements, even if somebody has difficulty filling out an application, assistance is available at the service centers. Photographs and help in filling out applications are included within the prescribed service arrangement.

Practically speaking, nobody needs to go to an agent to avail himself or herself of Indian consular services.

If somebody believes an agency has cheated them, however, we need a written complaint. If I receive such a complaint, I am prepared to act. What we often hear instead are anecdotal accounts.

Community organizations and media organizations such as yours therefore have an important responsibility to spread awareness.

SALUJA: THEN PERHAPS WE IN THE COMMUNITY AND MEDIA HAVE ALSO FAILED TO PUBLICIZE THESE FACILITIES SUFFICIENTLY.

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: It is a collective responsibility. We know the limitations of our own reach. That is why we ask community organizations and friends like you, who have a larger reach, to repeat this information so people know where legitimate services are available.

WHAT DOES A CONSULATE REALLY DO?

SALUJA: TRADE AND COMMERCE APPEAR TO RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION FROM INDIAN MISSIONS ABROAD. HOW CENTRAL ARE THEY TO YOUR WORK?

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: Economic engagement is important, but it would be wrong to say that everything revolves around money.

I would describe three core areas of our work.

First is consular service. We serve a 2.4-million-strong Indian diaspora in this jurisdiction. Last year alone, we provided about 120,000 consular services, including passports and OCI-related services.

Second is the economic track - trade, investment and technology. We support Indian private-sector companies, investment groups, MSMEs and small businesses.

Third is political outreach. We engage political leaders, explain Government of India policies and discuss developments in India.

Beyond these three, we work extensively with the diaspora on cultural, educational and student-related activities.



THE \$500-BILLION AMBITION

SALUJA: WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPAL THRUST AREAS IN THE INDIA-U.S. ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP?

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: The leadership of the two countries has spoken about taking bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030.

We asked ourselves how the Consulate could contribute.

Working with the Embassy, other consulates and the Ministries of Commerce and External Affairs, we created the India-USA Trade Facilitation Portal.

Through the portal, we connect Indian exporters directly with American importers, including major buyers. We have organized engagements involving companies such as Costco, Walmart and Amazon, bringing exporters from different Indian sectors into contact with American buyers.

The portal also enables digital exhibitions. Travel to the United States and participation in exhibitions can be prohibitively expensive, particularly for MSMEs. Digital exhibitions allow Indian exporters to display their catalogs, brochures and products and interact directly with American importers without incurring those costs.

Artificial intelligence is also being used to help exporters and importers identify suitable matches.

I believe the India-U.S. trade corridor has enormous, untapped opportunity because in many areas our economies are complementary rather than directly competitive.

TRADE, INVESTMENT - AND TECHNOLOGY

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: TRADE IS ONLY ONE DIMENSION. INVESTMENT IS ANOTHER.

India benefits tremendously from American investment, but America is also benefiting from Indian investment. At SelectUSA this year, the Indian contingent was the largest delegation.

Then there is technology.

Across frontier technologies - AI, biotechnology, defense, aerospace and others - you see growing collaboration. Governments facilitate it, but private companies, universities and research institutions increasingly participate.

That is why I look at the economic relationship through three connected lenses: trade, investment and technology.

MSMEs AND ONE DISTRICT, ONE PRODUCT

SALUJA: HOW IMPORTANT ARE INDIA'S SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES TO THIS EXPANDING ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP?

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: Extremely important. A large part of Indian exports comes directly or indirectly from the MSME sector - agriculture, seafood, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals and many other products.

The potential is huge.

The same is true of One District, One Product - ODOP. We believe every district in India has products that should find a place in the global market. The Consulate has actively promoted ODOP products through exhibitions.

Helping smaller producers enter global supply chains is also an objective of our trade initiatives. We need to educate businesses that may not yet know how to become part of those supply chains and connect them with opportunities.



Prof. Indrajit S Saluja presenting to Ambassador Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, a copy of The Indian Panorama 270-page special edition in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of America's Independence -TIP Photo

CONTD ON PAGE 13

CONTD FROM PAGE 12

INDIAN STUDENTS: "WE DON'T WANT EVEN ONE TO FACE DIFFICULTIES"

SALUJA: EDUCATION IS A SUBJECT CLOSE TO BOTH OF US. WHAT CHALLENGES DO INDIAN STUDENTS FACE HERE, AND WHAT CAN THE CONSULATE DO?

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: We treat engagement with Indian students as a priority. Today we have about 340,000 Indian students in the United States. The number has risen substantially.

The initial months can be challenging. Students arrive from India and may not know American laws, cyber laws or cultural practices. Universities and Indian student associations provide support, and the Consulate also works with universities and student associations, organizes events, and issues guidance on dos and don'ts.

The feedback we receive from universities is very positive. Indian students are generally regarded as law-abiding and culturally sensitive and often adapt successfully.

But we don't want even a single student to face difficulties unnecessarily.

EDUCATION IS BECOMING A TWO-WAY STREET

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: Something else important is happening.

For many years, India-U.S. education cooperation was largely understood in one direction: Indian students coming to the United States.

That is changing.

American universities are showing interest in establishing programs and campuses in India. Institutions on the two sides are also undertaking concrete collaborative projects.

Columbia Engineering and IIT Bombay, for example, have created a collaboration involving artificial intelligence and manufacturing.

These are the models we need - universities from both countries working together on solutions to industrial, technological and developmental challenges while also giving students opportunities for research and internships.

Education cooperation is becoming much broader than student mobility.

YOUNG AMERICANS ARE DISCOVERING INDIA

SALUJA: ACADEMIC COOPERATION IS IMPORTANT, BUT WHAT ABOUT CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND YOUTH EXCHANGES?

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: It is already happening quite robustly.

During the last two and a half years, I have seen more than a dozen university student groups from here travel to India for summer programs and other study experiences. They include Indian-origin and non-Indian-origin students.

Universities, philanthropic organizations, community organizations and faith-based groups are facilitating exchanges.

We would certainly like to see even more American students going to India, but the trend is encouraging.

WHEN INDIAN FAMILIES IN AMERICA FACE CRISIS

SALUJA: I WANT TO RAISE A MORE DIFFICULT COMMUNITY ISSUE. WE SOMETIMES SEE SERIOUS DISPUTES WITHIN INDIAN FAMILIES, INCLUDING CASES INVOLVING WOMEN WHO NEED PROTECTION OR LEGAL ASSISTANCE. CAN THE CONSULATE PLAY A PREVENTIVE AS WELL AS REMEDIAL ROLE?

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: We do encounter such cases.

When a dispute reaches us at an early stage, we sometimes reach out and try to encourage resolution before matters become more difficult. Unfortunately, some cases eventually enter the legal system.

We maintain a panel of lawyers, many of whom provide pro bono assistance, and in appropriate circumstances we provide modest financial assistance toward legal support.

But this is a very large community, and many family matters never reach the Consulate. I am encouraged that many diaspora organizations, legal forums and philanthropic groups are active in helping people, including women facing difficulties.

Your suggestion that we should find additional ways to educate families and encourage well-meaning organizations to become involved is something I take very seriously.

THE NEXT GENERATION AND "THE OPPORTUNITY CALLED INDIA"

SALUJA: YOU HAVE OFTEN SPOKEN ABOUT BRINGING SECOND- AND THIRD-GENERATION INDIAN AMERICANS MORE CLOSELY INTO THE DIASPORA. WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: Out of the roughly 5.4 million-strong Indian diaspora in the United States, more than a million are second- and third-generation young people.

They are uniquely endowed.

They are born here. They are proud American citizens, and they are also proud of their Indian heritage.

But I believe their connection with India should not remain limited to cultural, linguistic or religious identity alone.

They should also be exposed to the opportunity called India.

India is among the fastest-growing major economies. Imagine the opportunities it could offer ten years from now.

Young Indian Americans have a special advantage. They understand America, which is one of the world's most dynamic economic, startup and technology environments. At the same time, their heritage and the OCI framework give many of them unusual access



to India - to study, innovate, conduct business and participate in its economic growth.

They should be encouraged to understand and leverage both worlds.

That is what I mean when I speak about bringing the second and third generations into the diaspora in a more meaningful way.

INDIA, PHILANTHROPY AND EDUCATION

SALUJA: LET ME END WITH A PERSONAL OBSERVATION. AMERICA HAS A REMARKABLE TRADITION OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND PRIVATE PHILANTHROPY. INDIA HAS CREATED ENORMOUS PRIVATE WEALTH IN RECENT DECADES. SHOULD WE NOT ENCOURAGE MORE OF THAT WEALTH TOWARD EDUCATION?

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: Since you describe it as a personal observation, let me respond in that spirit.

India does have significant examples of private philanthropy in education. BITS Pilani is one. The Tatas have made enormous contributions; the Indian Institute of Science itself reflects that tradition. Many religious and philanthropic organizations have contributed substantially to education.

We should also remember where India began.

At Independence in 1947, literacy was around 13 percent, women's literacy was even lower, and India had only a small number of universities. From there we have reached a point where India is not merely producing talent for itself but supplying talent to the world. People contribute differently. Some create wealth and employment. Others focus on health, education, philanthropy or skills. I don't believe we should judge somebody who lawfully concentrates on wealth creation. Wealth creation itself generates employment and tax revenue.

I am an optimist.

When I visit American universities and see recognition of Nalanda and of the extraordinarily advanced educational tradition India possessed centuries ago, I take that as a reference point.

India was once a great center of learning.

It is only a matter of time before we come back.

SALUJA: HATS OFF TO YOUR OPTIMISM, AMBASSADOR. I HOPE THAT OPTIMISM CONTINUES - AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, YIELDS THE RESULTS WE ALL DESIRE.

"WE ARE HERE TO SERVE THE DIASPORA"

AMBASSADOR PRADHAN: On the occasion of August 15, let me wish all our Indian American friends a very Happy Independence Day - and Happy America at 250.

We are here to serve the diaspora and to work with you.

Your feedback and suggestions matter to us greatly, and we will continue trying to improve our services.

And I again urge every member of the community: please be careful about fraudulent calls made in the name of Indian consulates. Government of India organizations do not call asking for personal information in that manner.

Stay informed, stay connected with legitimate sources, and let us continue working together.

SALUJA: THANK YOU, AMBASSADOR PRADHAN, FOR YOUR TIME AND THE VALUABLE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDED.

EDITOR'S REQUEST TO READERS OF THE INDIAN PANORAMA.

Readers are encouraged to ask any questions they may have about the consular services. Email your suggestions and complaints to editor@theindianpanorama.news. The Indian Panorama will promptly forward them to the Consulate for their attention and necessary action. Let us be friends of the Consulate if we want them to serve us well. Thank you.

India's 80th Independence Day Celebrations

EMBASSY OF INDIA IN BUCHAREST ORGANISES CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

AUGUST 12, 2026
BUCHAREST (TIP)

As part of the celebrations marking the 80th Independence Day of India, the Embassy of India, Bucharest organised a series of cultural and community engagement activities aimed at promoting India's rich cultural heritage and strengthening people-to-people ties between India and Romania.



Drawing & Painting Competition by Indian community children on Sunday, August 9, 2026



Children Drawing Painting during the competition



DRAWING, PAINTING AND QUIZ COMPETITIONS

On Sunday, 9 August 2026, the Embassy organised a Drawing and Painting Competition and a Quiz Competition at the Embassy premises. The events witnessed enthusiastic participation from a large number of children from the Indian community and Friends of India.

The young participants displayed their creativity and imagination through colourful artworks inspired by India's rich cultural heritage, traditions and national identity. The Quiz Competition also received an enthusiastic response, with participants demonstrating their knowledge of India's history, culture, heritage and achievements.

The events provided an engaging platform for children and community members to celebrate India's Independence Day while learning more about the country's diverse cultural traditions.

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP ON PHAD ART

As part of the continuing Independence Day celebrations, the Embassy also organised a Virtual Workshop on Phad Art on Wednesday, 12 August 2026, in coordination with the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

Phad is a traditional scroll-painting art form of Rajasthan, known for its vibrant colours, intricate storytelling and depiction of legends associated with local heroes and deities. The workshop introduced participants to this distinctive Indian traditional art form and provided them with an opportunity to learn about its artistic techniques through an interactive virtual session.

A large number of Indian community children and Friends of India participated enthusiastically in the workshop. The Embassy provided the necessary art materials to enable participants to engage practically with the art form during the workshop.

The workshop provided an opportunity to showcase



Enthusiastic interest of the participants on the Quiz Competition



Group photographs on Phad Art Virtual Workshop on August 12, 2026

India's rich intangible cultural heritage and generated considerable interest among the participants in India's traditional arts and crafts.

Strengthening Community and People-to-People Ties
The cultural activities formed an integral part of the Embassy's celebrations of India's 80th Independence

Day and provided meaningful opportunities for interaction among members of the Indian community, children and Friends of India.

The enthusiastic participation in the competitions and the Phad Art workshop reflected the strong interest in India's history, culture and artistic traditions and contributed to strengthening cultural and people-to-people linkages between India and Romania.

The activities were also widely publicised through the official social media platforms of the Embassy of India, Bucharest, providing wider visibility to the celebrations and highlighting the enthusiastic participation of the community and Friends of India.

The Embassy of India, Bucharest conveyed its sincere appreciation to all participants, parents, members of the Indian community and Friends of India for their enthusiastic participation and support in making the Independence Day cultural activities a success.

(Based on a press release issue by Embassy of India in Bucharest)



While learning Phad Art through Virtual Workshop





Taarak Mehta ka OOLTAH CHASHMAH



WELCOME THE CAST OF THE FAMED SHOW TO THE BIG APPLE FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER! MEET & GREET THEM IN PERSON, ONLY AT THE

HARMONY IN HERITAGE



44th INDIA DAY PARADE

SUNDAY AUGUST 16th, 2026 12:00 PM | E38TH ST. MADISON AVE. NEW YORK CITY

Scan for Event Map



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PARADE HOTSPOTS

- Marching Groups & Colorful Floats
E36th St. | 12:30 PM to 1:00 PM
- Bollywood Celebrities
E26th & E27th St. Near Review Stage
1:15 PM to 1:45 PM

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

- Booths & Food Fest
Pani Puri King & Queen Contest
E26th St. | 12:00 PM to 6:00 PM
- Cultural Programs
E24th St. | 2:00 PM to 5:30 PM

LIMITED FREE PARKING

- Between 5th Ave. and Park Ave.
E36th St. | E35th St. | E30th St. | E29th St.
- Between Madison Ave. and Park Ave. - E25th St.
- Between 5th Ave. and Madison Ave. - E24th St.

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Top Leadership from USA Pacific Northwest join in India's 80th Independence Day Celebrations at Seattle

AUGUST 14, 2026
SEATTLE (TIP)

In a special gesture to celebrate India's 80th Independence Day, Governors of Washington, South Dakota, Montana and Alaska conveyed their greetings and congratulatory messages on the upcoming 15 August flag hoisting ceremony to the Consulate General of India in Seattle. These Governors were also joined by US Senators and US Congressmen, who sent their video greetings congratulating the people of India. These included US Senator Maria Cantwell, US Congressman Adam Smith, US Congresswoman Kim Schrier, US Congresswoman Suzan DelBene, US Congressman Dusty Johnson, US Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland, and

economy, our school, our healthcare system, our businesses, and our communities makes Alaska a stronger place. On behalf of the people of Alaska, I want to congratulate the Consulate General of India in Seattle and everyone celebrating this special occasion". Larry Rhoden, Hon'ble Governor of South Dakota wished "May the friendship between our people continue to grow stronger in the years ahead."

From the US Senate, Senator Maria Cantwell stated "The achievements of India and the Indian people continue to inspire communities around the world. So, on this special occasion, I extend my sincere appreciation to the Consulate General of India in Seattle, the Indian-

commitment to innovation and learning and family and community really enriches all of us and all of our communities." U.S. Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland noted "We deeply appreciate your country's commitment to innovation, to learning, and community, which continues to enrich American culture today. I also want to congratulate Prime Minister Modi for becoming the longest continually serving Prime Minister of India earlier this year; on behalf of the South Sound, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Consulate General of India in Seattle". U.S. Congresswoman Suzan DelBene called "The partnership between India and the United States is strong, especially in our region. So many Indian and Indian

great days to come. Thanks for everything that you've done." In addition, U.S. Congressman Michael Baumgartner added "Last year, I had the wonderful opportunity to make my first visit to India, and I tell everyone that as the world faces a very complex set of national security challenges, that I think the peace and stability of the world really rests in part on good, solid relations between America and India, as the world's two largest democracies and two countries with different diversities and multiple religions. So, I want to wish all of you a very warm India National Day"

To mark the upcoming 80th Independence Day celebrations, Consulate also released a specially produced



Bob Ferguson
 Governor of Washington



Mike Dunleavy
 Governor of Alaska



Larry Rhoden
 Governor of South Dakota



Jim Pillen
 Governor of Nebraska



Greg Gianforte
 Governor of Montana



Dusty Johnson
 US Rep. South Dakota



Maria Cantwell
 US Senator, Washington



Michael Baumgartner
 US Rep. Washington



Suzan DelBene
 US Rep. Washington



Kim Schrier
 US Rep. Washington



Adam Smith
 US Rep. Washington



Marilyn Strickland
 US Rep. Washington

US Congressman Michael Baumgartner.

In addition, in a special recognition, the States of Washington and Nebraska also issued official proclamations declaring 15th August 2026 as INDIA DAY across their entire jurisdictions. Mayors of Seattle, Bellevue, Kent, SeaTac and the entire King County Council (covering 39 cities) of the Greater Seattle Area also issued proclamations - honoring the contributions of Indian Americans to the cultural fabric, economic vitality and civic life of these regions, including as innovators, entrepreneurs, educators, artists and professionals across diverse sectors.

In some of the key observations made by leadership from US Pacific Northwest, Greg Gianforte, Hon'ble Governor of Montana said "Deeply appreciate the contributions of the Indian and Indian American community to our state's cultural, educational, and economic life. Your commitment to innovation, learning, and community enriches all of us". Mike Dunleavy, Hon'ble Governor of Alaska stated "Alaska is proud to be home to a vibrant Indian and Indian American community. Your contributions to our

American community, and everyone participating in today's celebration". From the US House of Representatives, U.S. Congressman Adam Smith noted "It's also the 80th anniversary of U.S.-India relations, a relationship that has gone stronger with each passing year and is incredibly important right now. Two of the most important countries in the world, working together to try to create a more peaceful, prosperous, and stable society. And I really want to thank the Indian community in the Puget Sound region. They contribute so much to all of us in education, in government, in business, in innovation, and technology. They are making our community a stronger place to live every single day." Another U.S. Rep. Kim Schrier added "I hope today you can all celebrate this amazing milestone with delicious Indian food and music and art and family and by reflecting not only on the accomplishments that had been made by India but that have been made in our country by Indian Americans. Washington's Indian American community is central to our educational, cultural, economic life and your

American communities that have contributed to our strong economy, to innovation in many sectors, and shared their rich culture throughout our region"

From South Dakota, U.S. Congressman Dusty Johnson stated "I want to congratulate Prime Minister Modi on becoming the longest continuously serving Prime Minister in India's history. That is a big accomplishment. And then number three, I want to celebrate and acknowledge the 80th birthday of India, the world's largest democracy. Our world is stronger because India is a stable, forward-looking, growing, and increasingly prosperous country. Number four, I just want to acknowledge how much stronger America is because of the more than 5 million Indian Americans, and also how much stronger America is because of this great relationship we have with India. There is so much to celebrate with that friendship, and America is happier, more prosperous, and better positioned to tackle the problems of the future, both because of the relationship with India and because of the 5 million Indian Americans. So, looking forward to the growing friendship and the

rendition of "Vande Mataram", which was performed by Grammy Award-winning violinist Shri Ganesh Rajagopalan together with students from Swara Yoga Ensemble. Filmed at the Consulate premises, the musical tribute brings together classical Indian artistry and a new generation of young musicians from the Pacific Northwest, reflecting the timeless spirit of Vande Mataram and its resonance across generations.

It may be noted that the upcoming 15 August celebrations are being hosted with a Flag Hoisting ceremony scheduled on the top of the Federal Reserve Building, wherein a large section of US leadership along with leading Indian American community leaders are expected to join. It may also be recalled that Seattle has the unique distinction of raising the Indian Tiranga on top of the Space Needle to mark India's Independence Day last year.

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Connecticut General Assembly and City of Stamford Honor India and Indian Americans at India's 79th Anniversary



Connecticut State Assembly Citation
Recognizing GOPIO-CT

**AUGUST 12, 2026
STAMFORD, CT (TIP)**

As in the previous years, Connecticut State Assembly has issued a citation to honor Global Organization of People of Indian Origin - Connecticut Chapter (GOPIO-CT) for its India Day Celebration commemorating the 79th Anniversary of India's Independence. The official citation was initiated by Senator Patricia Billie Miller and introduced by nine other Senators and State Representatives. It congratulated GOPIO-CT for promoting awareness of Indian culture, customs and the substantial contribution of Indian Americans to various fields. The citation also recognized GOPIO-CT for supporting many charities in Connecticut. The citation was signed by CT General Assembly's Pro Tempore Marten M. Looney, House Speaker Matt Ritter and Secretary of State Stephanie Thomas.

Stamford Mayor Caroline Simmoins issued a proclamation in recognition of India's Independence and congratulating GOPIO-CT for its services and contributions to Stamford. It was presented by Mayor's Representative Janeene Freeman who is Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion at the

mayor's office. The proclamation had words of thanks to GOPIO-CT for its services and support of many charitable service providers in the Fairfield County

The proclamation noted, "In the last 20 years, GOPIO-CT has supported many service organizations in Connecticut including Future 5, Women's Mentoring Network, Children's Learning Center, Teach for America, Building One Community, Grass Roots of Stamford and Norwalk, Mill River Park Collaborative, Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants, Norwalk Community College, Dollar for Scholars, New Covenant Center and other food pantries in Fairfield County, Person to Person, and the Stamford Hospital Foundation, and its Bennet Cancer Center."

The program started with GOPIO-CT Secretary Mirat Joshi serving as the MC, who opened the India Independence Day program by welcoming guests to sing the American National Anthem, followed by the Indian National Anthem.

Joshi highlighted GOPIO-CT recently celebrating its 20th anniversary and directed his appreciation to all the past and existing GOPIO-CT members. He adds that Indian Americans are making progress in shaping American science, ecology, business, art, and public service. "As members of the Indian diaspora we represent the bridge between the two democracies. The world's greatest, the largest, and the world's oldest. Our two democracies share a lot through economic, innovative, cultural, and educational eyes. At the heart of this relation is the Indian diaspora," says Mike Joshi in reference to the prospering relationship between India and the U.S. Joshi ends his speech by discussing how GOPIO-CT celebrates the culture, heritage, and traditions of India that at its core focuses on giving back to local communities and passing along these great values to the next generation of Indian Americans.

The India Day Program Chair Sushanth Krishnamurthy, the Event Chair for the India Independence Day celebration welcomed guests to the program. Apart from GOPIO-CT representatives such as President Mahesh Jhangiani and GOPIO International Chairman Dr. Thomas Abrahams, Krishnamurthy introduced



Presentation of Connecticut State Citation and Stamford City Proclamation to GOPIO by elected officials at the ceremony of Indian Day Celebrations, from l. to r.: GOPIO-CT VP Sonali Gannu, Executive Vice President and Program Chair Sushanth Krishnamurthy, Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson, Indian Consul Upendra Negi, Senator Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox, Senator Patricia Billie Miller, Stamford Mayor's Representative Janeene Freeman, GOPIO-CT President Mahesh Jhangiani, GOPIO International Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham and GOPIO-CT Secretary Mirat Joshi

Indian Consul Upendra Negi, Senator Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox, and Stamford City's Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Stamford CT Janeene Freeman, and Representative Jonathan Jacobsen.

GOPIO-CT President, Mahesh Jhangiani acknowledged August 15th, 1947 as the day India gained independence from British colonial rule. Jhangiani recognized India Day not only as a celebration of Indian American culture and traditions, but as a day to recognize the people who celebrate them. He notes that at the core of Indian American and GOPIO beliefs is the idea that one's wellbeing is connected to the wellbeing of those around them. Jhangiani connects this belief to a well-known prayer: "May all be happy. May all be free from illness. May all see what is good. May no one suffer," he reads. The prayer is not about a specific community or a particular family but instead focuses on the wellbeing of others. He concludes his statement by stating the importance of being proud of all aspects of being Indian American.

GOPIO International Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham discussed the history of India's Independence, noting the millions of Indians worked towards separating from British colonial rule. He used this story to show how India was once challenged in the face of poverty and limited resources, and yet the country managed to choose democracy. India may not have been the first Democracy; however, India proved to the world that Democracy was sustainable even in a country plagued with adversity. Abraham adds that India is moving towards valuable scientific, economic, and social progress that is allowing it to slowly emerge as one of the leading economies on a global scale. He concluded his remarks by recognizing core Indian values, "Democracy, freedom, justice, tolerance, and peace," Abraham stated.

Dr. Abraham also highlights that Indian Americans are gaining more visibility through working in political spaces and even helping out in local communities. Dr. Abraham concluded his remarks by highlighting GOPIO-CT's newest achievement, 10 days ago,

Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont signed legislation to establish a Connecticut-India Trade Commission and he also inaugurated GOPIO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) - Connecticut Chapter.

Indian Consulate was represented by Consul for Culture Upendra Negi, who has just joined the Consulate four months back. He conveyed greetings from Consula General Binaya Srikanta Pradhan. Further he complimented the Indian American community for its achievements and thanked for its contributions to India.

Senator Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox, who had earlier served as a member of the GOPIO-CT Board, was recognized as the first Indian American Senator and the first female Senator who is of South Asian descent. In her remarks she acknowledged the diversification of Connecticut and the importance of Indian Americans being well represented in public spaces. Gadkar-Wilcox notes the progress Indian Americans and GOPIO has made in making this happen with Diwali now being recognized as an official holiday in the State of Connecticut, as well as the promising new Connecticut-India Trade Commission that Dr. Thomas Abraham previously mentioned.

She concludes her remarks with a story of how she was born on July 4th, also known as American Independence Day, in her hometown of Queens. Gadkar-Wilcox connects her Indian roots to her upbringing in America. "It's an immigrant story that becomes the American story," she said. She tells this story because even being born in America, she continues to receive hate within her career regarding her Indian American identity. However, despite the adversity she has received in online spaces, Gadkar-Wilcox notes that the future for representation of Indian Americans is looking brighter each year. Gadkar-Wilcox notes that Fairfield County and Hartford County alone have the highest concentration of Indian Americans in Connecticut, and the largest foreign-born population in the nation.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news



India Day Festival



After Gen Z, its Gen Alpha's turn to seek accountability: Kejriwal

AUGUST 15, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday, Aug 15, said that after Gen Z, Gen Alpha has started raising its voice for better facilities in government schools.

In a post on X on Independence Day, Kejriwal said children across the country were protesting for basic facilities, citing examples from Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur, Dehradun and Barmer, where students were demanding better roads and adequate teachers.

The Aam Aadmi Party leader said it was unfortunate that even after 75-80 years of Independence, government schools continue to have damaged buildings, leaking roofs, a lack of toilets, drinking water and teachers.

Kejriwal said people had accepted poor conditions in government schools as normal, but children are now questioning the system.

He claimed his party's government in Punjab improved schools there to such an extent that their students are now appearing for the NEET and JEE and becoming doctors and engineers.

Census set to seek for first time caste, Aadhaar, other IDs

AUGUST 15, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Union government on Friday, Aug 14, notified 40 questions, including a query on caste for the first time in independent India, to be asked of respondents for population enumeration in the Census, whose self-enumeration phase kicks off from August 17 in four snow-bound regions.

The order from Registrar General of India Mrityunjay Kumar Narayan notified 11 questions more than the 2011 Census, the last time the exercise was conducted in India. Among the new questions were those asking for parental details, and others on passports, Aadhaar, Voter ID and mobile number, driving licence, and Covid-19 vaccination details, and permanent residential address — which raised privacy concerns.

The question on caste was listed as question number 10 in the notification — as “scheduled caste/scheduled tribe/caste” — in open ended format, which means Census officers will record the caste of a person as declared, without any requirement to match it to pre-prepared lists.

This holds similarities to the 2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census, whose caste data was never released due to irregularities in caste entries. In states that have conducted the caste survey successfully — such as Bihar in 2023 — the enumerators carried pre-declared lists of castes and matched the caste and sub-caste mentioned by the respondent to the list generated by the government.

This is the first time since British rule that all castes are being enumerated in the Census. Till now,



only scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were demarcated separately in the census.

The door-to-door population enumeration in Ladakh and specific snow-bound areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, will take place from September 1 to 30. The self-enumeration in these regions begins on August 17. The enumeration in the rest of the country will be done next year.

The Census is being conducted using digital tools for the first time, with data collection undertaken using a dedicated mobile application as well as the traditional door-to-door enumeration process.

Originally scheduled for 2021, the Census was initially postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Data collection is targeted to conclude by March 1, 2027, but officials say the collation and publication of results will take two to three years. The exercise is likely to stamp India's status as the world's most populous nation.

The census questions were notified in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 8 of the Census Act, 1948.

“...the central government hereby instructs and directs that the census officers may, within the limits of the local area for which they have been respectively appointed, ask all such questions of all persons residing within such limits, subject to the items enumerated below, for collecting information through the household schedule in connection with the Census of India 2027,” Mrityunjay Kumar Narayan said in the notification.

He said that respondents will be asked personal information such as name, relationship to the head (of family), sex, date of birth and age (in completed years), current marital status, age at marriage (in completed years), spouse name, nationality as declared, disability, mother tongue and other languages known, religion, caste or tribe among others. *Source: HT*

Chamoli: 7 dead, 3 trapped in latest Himalayan project mishap

AUGUST 15, 2026

DEHRADUN/ NEW DELHI (TIP): Seven workers were confirmed dead and three remained trapped inside a flooded, under-construction hydropower tunnel in Chamoli late on Friday, more than 24 hours after a suspected aquifer burst sent a surge of water and debris rushing through the passage — the latest in a string of accidents at Himalayan hydroelectric projects this monsoon.

Rescue teams from the NDRF, SDRF, Army, ITBP, CISE, fire service and state police, backed by heavy pumps and specialist equipment, spent Friday wading through water that was chest-deep in places along a roughly 1.2-km flooded stretch of the tail-race tunnel (TRT) at Tehri Hydro Development Corporation (THDC) India's 444 MW Vishnugad-Pipalkoti project, searching for the three missing men. Officials said continuous water inflow, low visibility and the risk of further collapse were slowing progress.

Of the 22 workers on shift when the incident occurred around 7pm on Thursday, 19 have been brought out — seven of them declared dead at the district hospital in Gopeshwar and 12 admitted with injuries, including one referred to the Base Hospital at Srinagar. The three still missing are Lucas Topno from



Jharkhand and Chetan Poyam and Devnath, both from Chhattisgarh.

Ajay Verma, executive director of the Vishnugad-Pipalkoti Hydro Electric Project (VPHEP), said preliminary assessment pointed to a rain-saturated aquifer that ruptured through the roof of the 3-km tunnel about 1.44 km from the entrance.

“There was a surprise water body, an aquifer, blast inside the tunnel. It was like a cloudburst,” Verma said, adding that rainwater from surrounding slopes

had percolated into a water-bearing layer above the tunnel and released under pressure through a weak section of rock.

The force was sufficient to push a column of air ahead of the water, throwing some workers towards the tunnel mouth even as others were pinned by debris deeper inside. Rescued workers, speaking to news channels, described first hearing and feeling a violent gust of air, followed by muck, boulders and rising water.

Verma said tunnel excavation had already been completed and lining work was under way when the burst occurred; loose material that surviving workers say had been falling in the preceding days was consistent with ongoing lining work and unrelated in scale, he said.

The incident is the ninth accident or weather-linked disaster to hit a hydropower or dam project in the Himalayan belt since June 24, spanning the Teesta, Brahmaputra, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej and Yamuna basins.

The deadliest of the sequence was the methane explosion on July 20 inside an under-construction tunnel at NHPC's 500 MW Teesta Stage-VI project in Sikkim, which killed 25 workers.



'It's his desperation': Congress hits back at PM Modi's 'dimaagi Naxals' attack

AUGUST 15, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Congress hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, Aug 15, for his "dimaagi Naxals" attack and termed it a "sure sign of desperation".

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the Prime Minister first attacked his opponents as "urban Naxals" and is now calling them "dimaagi Naxals". He termed Modi a "master abuser" in entire political science.

"First he called his opponents 'urban naxals'. Now he calls them 'dimaagi naxals'. It is a sure sign of his desperation. It is a separate matter that he ends up doing whatever these so-called 'urban naxals' or now 'dimaagi naxals' are demanding or advocating.

"It is not for nothing that the PM has a MA being the 'Master Abuser' in Entire Political Science that he is," Ramesh said in a post on X.

In his 13th consecutive Independence Day address to the nation, Modi hailed the elimination of Naxalism from the country but cautioned against lowering the guard, saying "armed Naxals may have gone, but dimaagi (intellectual) Naxals are lurking around".

"We have succeeded in getting rid of armed Naxals in the jungles, but the 'dimaagi Naxals' are looking for opportunities to create violence, unrest.... They want to drag the society on the wrong path," the prime minister said.

President approves 78 gallantry awards, 13 posthumous, on I-Day eve

AUGUST 15, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): President Droupadi Murmu has approved seventy-eight Gallantry awards, including 13 posthumous, to the personnel of the Defence Forces and Central Armed Police Forces on the eve of Independence Day 2026.

Following the announcement, the Indian Army paid glowing tributes to the recipients of the prestigious Shaurya Chakra, honouring their extraordinary valour and fearless commitment to the nation.

Indian Army wrote, "National Gallantry Award. Indian Army salutes the unyielding courage and bravery of Shaurya Chakra awardees. Their heroic tales will forever remain a source of inspiration for generations to come."

The awards include nine Kirti Chakras, of which seven are posthumous. The awards also include one Bar to Shaurya Chakra, 19 Shaurya Chakras, one of them posthumous, five Bars to Sena Medals (Gallantry), 36 Sena Medals, five of them posthumous, three Nao Sena Medals and five Vayu Sena Medals.

The nation proudly celebrates the exceptional bravery of the Indian Army personnel awarded the prestigious Shaurya Chakra for Independence Day, officers featured in the official honours include, Major Gaurav Singh Brijwal (21 Grenadiers), Major Vipeen Kumar (Dogra / 11 Rasthriya Rifles), Nb Sub Shankar Ram (3 Assam Rifles), and Nb Sub Dabbal Singh Bisht (21 Para (SF)), whose resolute spirit and fearless service remain a profound source of inspiration for the entire nation.

On the other hand, a total of 1,057 personnel from the Police, Fire, Home Guard and Civil Defence and Correctional Services have been awarded Gallantry and Service Medals on the occasion of Independence Day, 2026, with the declaration of the names of three police personnel from Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh Police who were honoured with Gallantry



Of the 1,057 awards, 301 are related to the Medal for Gallantry, 92 for the President's Medal for Distinguished Service and 664 for the Medal for Meritorious Service

Medals posthumously, the Ministry of Home Affairs announced on Friday.

Chhattisgarh Police constables late Nitesh Ekka and late Ramesh Koreti, as well as Uttar Pradesh Police Inspector late Sunil Kumar, are among those honoured with the gallantry medals posthumously.

Of the 1,057 awards, 301 are related to the Medal for Gallantry, 92 for the President's Medal for Distinguished Service and 664 for the Medal for Meritorious Service.

Among the majority of the 301 Gallantry awards, 197 personnel are from Left Wing Extremism-affected areas, 51 from the Jammu and Kashmir

region, 12 from the North-East and 41 personnel from other regions are being awarded for their gallant action.

Out of 301 Medals for Gallantry, 272 Police Personnel and 29 Fire Service personnel have been awarded GM, respectively. Medal for Gallantry is awarded on the ground of a conspicuous act of Gallantry in saving life and property, or in preventing crime or arresting criminals, the risk incurred being estimated with due regard to the obligations and duties of the officer concerned.

Of the total 92 President's Medals for Distinguished Service, 83 have been awarded to police service, four to fire service, three to Civil Defence and Home Guard service and two to Correctional Service. Out of 664 Medals for Meritorious Service, 606 have been awarded to police service, 28 to fire service, 18 to Civil Defence and Home Guard service and 12 to correctional service.

The President's Medal for Distinguished Service is awarded for a special distinguished record in service, and the Medal for Meritorious Service is awarded for valuable service characterised by resource and devotion to duty.

Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge skip Red Fort I-Day event again

AUGUST 14, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, skipped the 80th Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort on Saturday for the second consecutive year, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the national ceremony.

According to sources, both Rahul Gandhi and Kharge skipped the Independence Day event due to improper protocols. Sources said the seating arrangements and other ceremonial protocols were not in accordance with their positions.

Rahul Gandhi had been invited to this year's Independence Day event, with the Defence Ministry saying his seating would be determined according to the official Table of Precedence. Under the Warrant of Precedence issued by the President's

Secretariat, the Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition has a rank equivalent to that of a Union Cabinet Minister.

The absence of Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, the two senior Congress leaders, came amid a lingering controversy over the Gandhi scion's seating arrangement at the 2024 Independence Day celebrations.

In 2024, Rahul Gandhi, who had been appointed Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha with Cabinet rank, was seated in the fifth row at the Red Fort. The Congress criticised the arrangement, alleging that the government had insulted the office of the LoP and displayed "pettiness". The Defence Ministry, however, said the seating arrangement was made to accommodate Olympians attending the ceremony.

Rahul Gandhi and Kharge had also skipped the Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort in 2025.

The Congress has repeatedly raised concerns over the treatment of its leaders at national ceremonial events. It had also criticised the seating arrangements at this year's Republic Day celebrations, alleging that Gandhi and Kharge were seated in the third row.

The Defence Ministry maintained that the seating arrangements at the Republic Day celebrations in 2025 and 2026 were made in accordance with the Table of Precedence.

The Table of Precedence governs seating and protocol at state and ceremonial occasions and is based on constitutional rank and office rather than political affiliation.

India in history this Week

AUGUST 14 TO AUGUST 20

14 AUGUST

- 1862 Bombay High Court was established.
- 1924 Birth of renowned writer and journalist Kuldeep Nayyar.
- 1947 Partition of India, Pakistan became a separate nation.
- 1968 Morarji Desai honored with Pakistan's highest civilian honor, Nishan-e-Pakistan.
- 1956 Indian comedian Johnny Lever was born.

15 AUGUST

- 1772 The East India Company decided to set up separate civil and criminal courts in the districts.
- 1854 East India Railway ran the first passenger train from Calcutta to Hooghly in a distance of 37 km. However, it was officially inaugurated in 1885.
- 1872 Writer and litterateur Sri Aurobindo was born.
- 1947 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was sworn in as the first Prime Minister of independent India.



- 1950 An earthquake of 8.6 magnitude killed 20 to 30 thousand people in India.
- 1972 Postal index number ie PIN code is implemented.
- 1982 The national program of nationwide color broadcasting and TV was inaugurated in Delhi.
- 1990 The ground-to-air missile Akash was successfully launched.
- 1907 It was founded on 15 August as part of the Indian Bank-Swadeshi movement.

16 AUGUST

- 1886 Ram Krishna Paramahansa Dev breathed his last at the Twilight Vela.
- 1946 The Muslim League declared a direct action day, during which around 5000 people were killed and 15,000 were injured in Kolkata during the violence.
- 2018 Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee died at the age of 93.



17 AUGUST

- 1909 Madan Lal Dhingra was hanged in the Pentonvilli prison in connection with the murder of Vayali and Lalkaka.
- 1947 After the independence of India, the first British troops left home.

1941 Bimal Jalan, the 20th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, was born on 1941.

2011 Lokpal movement: Anna Hazare continued his fast in Tihar, despite his release in 2011, till he got written permission to continue his fast in JP Park.

2009 On the issue of internal security, the one-day conference of all the Chief Ministers of the country was held in New Delhi on 2009 under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

18 AUGUST

1900 Vijayalakshmi Pandit, sister of former Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was born.

1934 The film director, lyricist and poet Gulzar was born.



1940 For the first time, the weather map was broadcast on television.

1945 The great freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chand Bose was badly injured in a plane crash in Taihoku, Taiwan, later died in a military hospital.

1951 Indian Institute of Technology was established in Kharagpur.

1872 Birth of Pandit Vishnu Digambar, the great musician of Maharashtra. Despite being blind, he achieved memorable achievements in the field of music.

1800 Governor General Lord Vallejoli established Fort William College in Calcutta.



1956 Indian cricketer Sandeep Patil was born in Mumbai. He scored 1588 runs in 29 Test matches.

2008 The Mayawati government in Uttar Pradesh announced the implementation of the Sixth Pay Commission recommendations in 2008.

2010 In 2010, TVS Electronics included a rupee symbol just above the tab in its new key board called 'TVS Gold Bharat'.

1700 Bajirao I, the great general of the Maratha Empire, was born on 1700.

19 AUGUST

1757 The first one rupee coin of the East India Company was made in the Calcutta mint.

1918 Birth of Dr. Shankardayal Sharma, 9th President of India.

1666 Shivaji escaped from Aurangzeb's captivity by hiding in a fruit basket in Agra.

1949 Bhubaneswar became the capital of Odisha.

1999 Angered by India's draft nuclear policy, the G8 announced a ban on all kinds of aid.

1600 Mughal Emperor Akbar captured Ahmednagar.

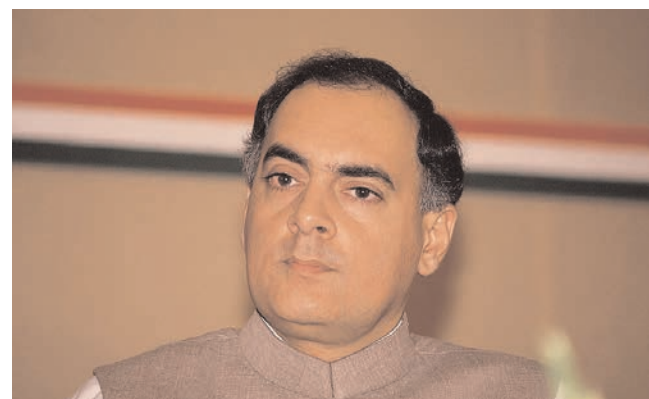
1964 The communication satellite Cincom 3 was launched.

1939 Guruvardhan Ravindra Nath Tagore laid the foundation stone of Subhash Chandra Bose Mahajati Sadan in Calcutta in 1939.

1907 Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, essayist, novelist, critic, thinker and researcher was born in 1907.

20 AUGUST

1597 Dutch East India Company's first ship returned from East Asia.

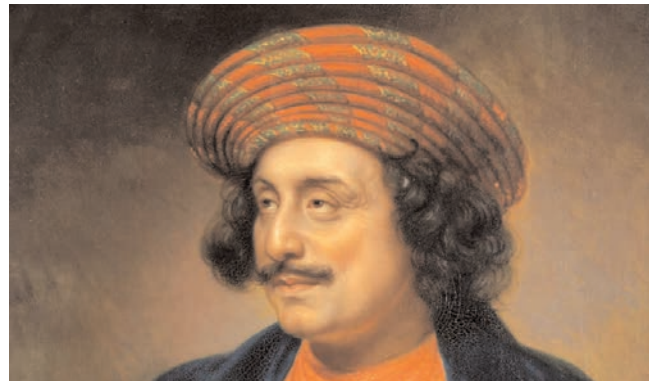


1944 Former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi was born.

1921 Start of Mopala Rebellion in Malabar, Kerala.

1979 Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh resigned from his post.

2011 India's famous historian Ram Sharan Sharma died.



1828 The first session of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Brahmo Samaj was held in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

1897 Ronald Ross identified malaria-causing anopheles mosquito while working at the Presidency General Hospital in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

1988 A magnitude 6.5 earthquake in India and Nepal killed a thousand people.

2018 Vinesh Phogat of India won the gold medal in the 50 kg category of the Jakarta Asian Games women's wrestling competition. She became the first woman wrestler in the country to achieve this feat.





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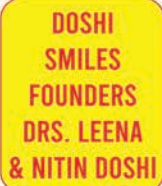


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MADHU PAREEK



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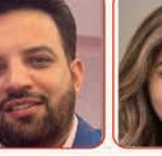
PAWAR BROTHERS



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SACHIN SHARMA



GAURAV ARORA



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After pellet gun row, Khatron Ke Khiladi 15 draws flak over molten wax task

Khatron Ke Khiladi 15 has again come under scrutiny after another pain-based stunt triggered strong reactions from viewers and contestants. A week after a rubber pellet gun task left four participants badly bruised and sparked outrage online, the Rohit Shetty-hosted show aired a molten wax elimination stunt that many described as harsh and difficult to watch.

In the second week of the season, the four contestants who received the 'fear fanda' - Rubina Dilaik, Ruhaanika Dhawan, Harsh Gujral and Vishal Aditya Singh - were made to perform an elimination task based on pain endurance. They had to collect hot wax poured directly on to their hands over a 10-minute period, with the contestant gathering the maximum wax safe from elimination.

After Rohit Shetty announced the stunt, all four contestants appeared visibly anxious. Ruhaanika began crying, while Shetty told them they could quit at any point during the task. Trying to calm her down, Rubina said, "All of us are scared; I am getting goosebumps. I have to use all my strength and patience here to endure this pain." Vishal added, "This pain auction has left me speechless; my entire body is paining."

Before the stunt began, Shetty said it would be carried out under medical supervision. During the task, Ruhaanika broke down, while the other contestants also cried out in pain. Rubina screamed, "It's just killing. My soul has come out, sir." When Shetty announced that the flow of the hot wax would be increased, she said, "Now, it's stinging, and those stings are unbearable. The wax on the layer is penetrating even deeper. The impact is killing." As the wax flow increased, Ruhaanika Dhawan aborted the task, while Harsh Gujral won it.

After the stunt, Vishal said, "The pain auction is something; we come on a show and shoot ourselves in the foot. We go through this process, and it's painful." Rubina said, "The skin tolerance just kept breaking; I wanted to see my pain threshold. My condition is so bad that even talking is taking too much energy."

Anup Soni breaks silence as Ajay Devgn takes over Crime Patrol as new host

Actor Ajay Devgn has been announced as the new host of Crime Patrol, prompting a reaction from former host Anup Soni, who remains closely associated with the long-running true-crime series. The move marks a new phase for the show, with Devgn stepping into a television role that had become strongly linked with Soni.

Speaking about the change, Soni reflected on how deeply Crime Patrol shaped his public image. He said that despite other work in his career, the show continues to be the one audiences remember him for.

While speaking to ANI, Soni said, "Until something bigger than Crime Patrol comes along in my career, no matter how much other work I do, people will continue to remember me for Crime Patrol. Before Crime Patrol happened, people used to recognise me for Balika Vadhu. But when Crime Patrol came along, people forgot about Balika Vadhu."

Reflecting on the roles that stay with viewers, Soni also recalled advice from veteran actor Anil Kapoor on how certain projects end up defining an actor's identity. "Since these things are popular, as an actor, instead of running away from them, you should accept them," he added.

Earlier this week, the makers unveiled the first promo for Crime Patrol 2026, offering a glimpse of Devgn as the show's new host. In the promo, he speaks about the changing nature of crime and says that perpetrators are often known to their victims before signing off with, "Main rahunga aapke saath (I will be with you all)." The new season is scheduled to premiere on August 31 on Sony Entertainment Television and Sony LIV.

The journey of Crime Patrol began in 2003 on Sony Entertainment Television, with Diwakar Pundir as its first host. He was replaced by Shakti Anand in 2004 before the show went off air in 2006. The series returned in 2010 with Anup Soni and Sakshi Tanwar sharing hosting duties, and from 2011 Soni became the sole host, remaining the face most closely associated with the show until 2018.

Apart from television, Devgn also has upcoming films slated for release. He will next be seen in the action film, Chauhaan, directed by Neeraj Yadav and co-produced by Jyoti Deshpande, Aanand L Rai and Himanshu Sharma.



Heated Rivalry season 2 gets five new cast members - and one has surprising past

Production on the second season of Crave's breakout hit drama Heated Rivalry is officially underway in Toronto, and the series is dramatically broadening its footprint. Following the recent casting announcements of Justice Smith (Harris Drover) and Charlie Gillespie (Troy Barrett), Crave has unveiled five major additions to the Season 2 ensemble: Emily Hampshire, Edvin Ryding, Robert Naylor, Sabrina Jalees, and Canadian drag icon Priyanka.

The new wave of casting indicates that Season 2 will expand significantly into author Rachel Reid's broader Game Changers novel series—specifically pulling storylines and characters from The Long Game, Role Model, and Tough Guy. Among the new additions, Schitt's Creek star Emily Hampshire steps into the role of Vanessa, a fan-favorite character introduced in Tough Guy, while Swedish actor Edvin Ryding (Young Royals) joins as Luca Haas, a rookie player on the Ottawa Centaurs. Comedian Sabrina Jalees (Search Party) will portray sports agent Farah Jalali, who represents lead characters Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov, while Robert Naylor (Cardinal) enters the locker room as Ottawa Centaurs goaltender Wyatt Hayes.

Among the new announcements, Priyanka's casting has generated substantial social media buzz due to her unique path to scripted television. Before adopting her stage persona and making her mark in drag, performer Mark Suknunan built a career in Canadian broadcasting as a flagship host on YTV's long-running afternoon programming block, The Zone. After pivoting to drag, Priyanka rose to international fame by winning the inaugural season of Canada's Drag Race in 2020,



eventually becoming a recurring judge on Canada's Drag Race All Stars. Joining the cast of Heated Rivalry as Vanessa's roommate, Tarek, marks one of her most prominent mainstream scripted acting roles to date.

Created by Jacob Tierney, Heated Rivalry became an international sensation during its first season, sweeping major Canadian Screen Awards and earning both a Peabody and a GLAAD Award. Season 2 sees core leads Hudson Williams (Shane Hollander) and Connor Storrie (Ilya Rozanov) return to navigate the next decade of their complex relationship, balancing their secret romance with evolving careers on and off the ice.

Erasing Borders Dance Festival Returns to NYC for Eighteenth Year

BY MABEL PAIS

The Erasing Borders Dance Festival (EBDF) for the 18th annual year will be hosted and presented by the Indo-American Arts Council (<https://iaac.us>) on Saturday, September 19, 2026, and Sunday, September 20, 2026, each evening at 6PM at The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College (68th Street between Park and Lexington Avenues).

New York's premier Indian dance festival, Erasing Borders, features performances by eminent Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Odissi artists as well as US-based dance companies.

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

Saturday, September 19, features Bharatanatyam and Kalaripayattu group Radhe Jaggi and Team, a Kuchipudi solo by Sreelakshmy Kallungal Govardhanan, and Kathak trio Shila Mehta.

Sunday, September 20, will include a performance by Dr. Neena Prasad Mohiniyattam group, the Odissi trio Arushi Mudgal, and a contemporary solo by Preeti Vasudevan.

TICKETS & MORE INFORMATION**

For tickets & more information on the performances, visit <https://iaac.us/ebdf2026-ibs>

**Program subject to change.

PERFORMANCE LINEUP

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2026 | 6-8PM, THE KAYE PLAYHOUSE

Ganesh Vasudev and Nitya Narasimhan: Bharatanatyam duo
Sreelakshmy Kallungal Govardhanan: Kuchipudi solo
Shila Mehta, Salonee Satagar, Sanchita Dighe: Kathak trio
Preeti Vasudevan: Contemporary solo
Radhe Jaggi and Team, Bharatanatyam and Kalaripayattu group

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2026 | 6-8PM, THE KAYE PLAYHOUSE

Radha Varadan: Kathak solo
Neena Prasad and Musicians: Mohiniyattam group
Aparna Sindhoor & Anil Natyaveda: Sindhoor Natya, Navarasa group
Arushi & Sawani Mudgal: Odissi trio

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING:

FIFTH ANNUAL DR. SUNIL KOTHARI LECTURE | THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2026 AT 6PM

Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
The Balanced Dance as a Journey Towards Inner Stillness and Equanimity by Rama Vaidyanathan

THE ARTISTS

Radhe Jaggi is a Bharatanatyam artist whose dance is an exquisite balance of grace, tradition, and depth. Rooted in the classical rigor of Bharatanatyam, her artistry is deeply influenced by her lifelong practice of yoga, lending her movements fluidity, strength, and precision.

Radhe's journey as a performer began



Radhe Jaggi & team Photo Credit - <https://iaac.us>

in the temples of Tamil Nadu, where she spent the first two years of her career performing in over sixty temples. Since then, she has graced some of the most esteemed stages in India. Her international presence has been equally distinguished, with performances at Cambridge University (UK), the House of Commons in London, the Gwanju Arts Festival in South Korea, and venues across Malaysia, North America, and Europe. Learn more at <https://instagram.com/radhejaggi> and <https://x.com/radhejaggi>.

Dr. Neena Prasad is recognized as a distinguished dancer of the nation, noted for her evocative and intellectually nuanced choreography, which seamlessly integrates tradition with contemporary sensibilities, thereby expanding the expressive and thematic

of Mumbai, she continues to advocate Indian classical dance as a means of cultural connection and holistic well-being.

Learn more at https://instagram.com/shila_mehta.

Sreelakshmy Kallungal Govardhanan is a renowned Kuchipudi dancer, choreographer, and researcher from Kerala, India. She blends classical rigor with contemporary thought. She is a graded Doordarshan and ICCR empanelled artiste and a trained psychologist professionally. An author and PhD scholar at the University of Mumbai, she continues to advocate Indian classical dance as a means of cultural connection and holistic well-being. Learn more at https://instagram.com/sreelakshmy_go_vardhanan



Shila Mehta -Photo Credit - <https://iaac.us>

horizons of Mohiniyattam. She is the foremost representative of Mohiniyattam in the country, performing in major and prestigious Dance Festivals in India and abroad. Learn more at <https://neenaprasad.com>.

Shila Mehta is a distinguished Kathak artist, scholar, performer, and pedagogue with over four decades of experience in performance, education, and research. A noted researcher, she received the Government of India Senior Fellowship for pioneering work on Charani ballad singing and its manifestation in 'Charani Kathak.' An author and PhD scholar at the University

Arushi Mudgal is an acclaimed Odissi dancer and choreographer celebrated for her technical virtuosity and innovative approach to tradition. She has received international recognition, with her work Murta-Amurta being named among The New York Times' Top Ten Dances of 2018. A noted researcher, she received the Government of India Senior Fellowship for pioneering work on Charani ballad singing and its manifestation in 'Charani Kathak.' An author and PhD scholar at the University of Mumbai, she continues to advocate Indian classical dance as a means of cultural connection and

holistic well-being. Learn more at <https://arushimudgal.com>

Sawani Mudgal is a distinguished Hindustani classical vocalist known for her versatility as a performer, music educator, and collaborator. She was awarded the gold medal for her Master's degree in Music from Khairagarh University. Her international collaborations include the Indo-Flamenco production directed by Carlos Saura in Spain, performances with the Belgian ensemble Ragini Trio, and the Indo-Brazilian project Samwaad presented across Brazil, France, and the Netherlands. In India, she has appeared at major festivals including the Khusrau-Kabir Festival, Bhakti Utsav, and Mahindra Kabira Festival. She also conducts music workshops across the world. Learn more at <https://instagram.com/sawani.mudgal>

Shalakha Rai, trained in Odissi dance, performs extensively within India and abroad. As the principal dancer of her guru's ensemble, she has performed at leading international platforms including the Fall for Dance Festival in New York, the Darbar Festival in the United Kingdom, and the Festival of India in Spain, among others. Learn more at <https://instagram.com/raishalakha>

Preeti Vasudevan is an award-winning and critically acclaimed choreographer. Preeti's provocative and unconventional storytelling challenges the status quo of dance-theater, bridging ancient traditions with the contemporary world. Preeti is the 2018 Arts Ambassador of the US Department of State with cultural diplomacy programs and serves on the New York Lincoln Center's Artistic Committee advocating representation and diversity in the arts. Preeti created her arts impact non-profit, Thresh, in 2005, as a platform inviting multidisciplinary artistic collaborators and thought leaders to work towards a common voice on issues that impact our global society with a focus on women and youth. Learn more at <https://instagram.com/vasudevan.preeti>

Ganesh Vasudev is a Bharatanatyam dancer, choreographer and researcher who has been performing his own works for the last 15 years. He has been training for more than 30 years and under the guidance of Bragha Bessel since 2009. Learn more at <https://ganeshvasudeva.com>

Nitya Narasimhan is a Bharatanatyam artist from California, USA. As the artistic director of Prayukti Arts, she is actively building a community for Indian arts in the Bay Area. Prayukti Arts was awarded the Sunnyvale City Arts Award in 2024. With a foundation rooted in tradition and a commitment to thoughtful practice, Nitya continues to engage with Bharatanatyam as a student, performer, teacher, and curator. Learn more at <https://instagram.com/nitnaras> and <https://prayuktiarts.org>

CONTD ON PAGE 23

CONTD FROM PAGE 22

APARNA SINDHOOR & ANIL NATYAVEDA

Aparna Sindhoor, Artistic Director of Sindhoor Natya - Navarasa, is a Mysore-style Bharatanatyam exponent. She creates a unique style of dance-theater and has worked in films with Oscar-winning Anthony Dod Mantle.

Anil Natyaveda, Co-Director of Sindhoor Natya - Navarasa, is a leading Kalari artist. He has choreographed for films and for Franco Dragone's circus. Learn more at <https://navarasa.org>

Sanjib Bhattacharya, distinguished Manipuri dance exponent and President's Award recipient, is trained under eminent gurus and has performed internationally. Formerly based in Cleveland, now in California's Bay Area, he is a choreographer, educator, and founder of Movements in Motion, integrating classical Manipuri with contemporary practice. Learn more at https://instagram.com/sanjib_sb

Radha Varadan is a creative artist

dedicated to the evolution of Kathak. Trained from a young age in classical ballet, Kathak, and modern dance, she has been recognized internationally for her work in translating ballet variations into the traditional Kathak vocabulary and for her research on injury prevention in Indian Classical Dance. She has recently been awarded the Fulbright Nehru Award to continue her scholarship in Kathak. Learn more at <https://instagram.com/radha.varadan>

DR. SUNIL KOTHARI LECTURE

Dr. Sunil Kothari, Padma Shri awardee, was a frequent visitor to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts in the Dance Division in his lifetime, and he contributed greatly to scholarship on Indian classical dance. This lecture, which was initiated in his honor following his death, has been an important way to remember him and to carry his work forward. Kothari also participated in the Erasing Borders

Arushi Mudgal & Sawani Mudgal -Photo Credit - <https://iaac.us>

Dr Aparna Sindhoor and Anil Natyaveda: Sindhoor Natya, Navarasa group

Credit - <https://iaac.us>

Festival and covered it in published reviews. This year, Rama Vaidyanathan will be the featured presenter. Her work in the field of Bharatanatyam dance is groundbreaking, in both classical and innovative forms.

Rama Vaidyanathan is one of the foremost Bharatanatyam dancers of her generation. She trained intensively under the legendary dancer Yamini Krishnamurthy and the celebrated Guru Saroja Vaidyanathan. In a performance career spanning more than 40 years, Rama has developed her own individual style without forsaking the core principles of her dance form. Her technique is grounded, and yet there is a fresh approach to the innumerable dance compositions that she has added to the Bharatanatyam repertoire.

Learn more at <https://instagram.com/ramavaidyanathan>

THE INDO-AMERICAN ARTS COUNCIL

The IAAC supports all the artistic disciplines in classical, fusion, folk, and innovative forms influenced by the arts of India. IAAC works cooperatively with colleagues around the United States to broaden its collective audiences and to create a network for shared information, resources, and funding. Its focus is to help artists and art organizations in North America as well as to facilitate artists from India to exhibit, perform, and produce their work here. For more information, visit <https://iaac.us>

Mabel Pais writes on The Arts and Entertainment, Social Issues, Education, Spirituality, Health and Wellness, Business, and Cuisine.

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Ranbir Kapoor calls out 'CGI critics' for criticising Ramayana's VFX

Filmmaker Nitesh Tiwari's *Ramayana* is among the most-awaited films of the year. The film's trailer, released on July 30, quickly became a talking point, with viewers divided over its visuals and VFX. While some praised the scale of the project, others criticised its CGI. Now, in an interview with Collider, actor Ranbir Kapoor has addressed the criticism and spoken about what he called the rise of "CG critics".

Ranbir said that viewers have become increasingly interested in the quality of CGI, particularly with the growing use of AI. "There has been a phenomenon right now. In the last few years, there are such a large number of people who have become these CG critics. They see the trailer, and they are always critiquing that it's not good enough or it's seemingly not done. So I think people are getting more aware, especially with the influx of AI. People are getting more interested in how good the CGI is and how good the CGI will finally look once the film releases," he said.

He added, "I think it's quite funny sometimes because people who know how CG is done think like someone's just used some AI and released something. You know, there are countless hours of work where artists are working for years. I have seen Nitesh sir and Namit sitting on VFX calls ever since this project started, trying to get even a certain colour of the sky right. I think it's tricky right now trying to impress the audience with authentic CGI."

The film's producer, Namit Malhotra, also addressed the criticism, arguing that much of it stems from viewers watching the trailer on phones rather than experiencing it in IMAX 3D. Calling the criticism "noise", he said the team has been encouraging creators and influencers to assess the visuals in the format they were designed for. He cited Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* as an example of a film best experienced on a large-format IMAX screen, adding that judging visual and sound quality on a phone does not provide an accurate representation of the intended experience.

Batwara 1947 Day 1: Sunny Deol film falls behind Awarapan 2

Sunny Deol and Preity Zinta's *Batwara 1947* opened to Rs 5.75 crore nett in India on Friday, registering a moderate start at the box office. The Rajkumar Santoshi directorial, which arrived in theatres alongside Emraan Hashmi's *Awarapan 2*, trailed its box-office rival by a significant margin on Day 1.

According to early estimates by Sacnilk, *Batwara 1947* earned Rs 5.75 crore nett in India on its opening day across 8,721 shows. The film's India gross collection stood at an estimated Rs 6.84 crore.

The film also recorded an estimated Rs 1.50 crore in overseas gross, bringing its opening-day worldwide gross to approximately Rs 8.34 crore. *Batwara 1947* recorded an overall occupancy of 15.42 per cent on Day 1, with night shows witnessing the highest turnout.

On the other hand, the Emraan Hashmi-starrer had already established a significant lead through advance bookings before its release and went on to record a much stronger opening.

Awarapan 2 earned an estimated Rs 21 crore nett in India on Day 1, putting it well ahead of *Batwara 1947*. Interestingly, veteran actor Shabana Azmi features in both films.

With the Independence Day weekend ahead, *Batwara 1947* will now look to benefit from the holiday period and positive word of mouth to build momentum over the coming days.

IndiaToday.in's review of the film reads, "Adapted from the play *Jis Lahore Nai Vekhya*, *O Jamya E Nai*, the writing has ideas, the conversations have weight,



and the central metaphor is powerful. But cinema needs emotional texture, lived-in relationships and performances that make you believe in the people on screen. It has all the right things to say but doesn't know how to, and that makes this potentially moving story feel surprisingly cold."

Directed by Rajkumar Santoshi, the movie marks the comeback of Preity Zinta, who has been away from films for eight years. Apart from the lead pair, the film also features Shabana Azmi, Karan Deol, Ali Fazal, Abhimanyu Singh, Khushi Hajare, Kanikka Kapur, and Isha Sandhir.

Haiwaan teaser: Saif Ali Khan plays a blind man, Akshay Kumar looks sinister

The teaser of *Haiwaan*, starring Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan, was released today. Directed by Priyadarshan, the upcoming thriller offers a dark and mysterious glimpse into a world where appearances may not be what they seem. In the teaser, Saif plays a blind man and Akshay's character builds curiosity.

The teaser keeps much of the plot under wraps, relying on atmospheric visuals, shadows and brief glimpses of the characters to build suspense. It also raises the central question of the film: "Hero ya Haiwaan?"

Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan appear to be at the centre of the mystery, with the teaser hinting at a confrontation between the two. However, their characters and the nature of their relationship remain unclear. Saif plays a blind man and is seen walking with the help of a stick, while Akshay appears to be keeping a close eye on him. At one point, he is seen watching Saif from close quarters, adding to the mystery surrounding their characters.

The film also features Boman Irani, Saiyami Kher and Shriya Pilgaonkar in pivotal roles. The makers have described the film as a thriller driven by mystery, danger and "haiwaaniyat".

Haiwaan marks another collaboration between director Priyadarshan and Akshay Kumar, who have previously worked together on films such as *Hera Pheri*, *Garam Masala*, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa*, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* and *Bhooth Bangla*. The film is produced by Venkat K Narayana and Shailaja Desai Fenn under KVN Productions and Thespian Films.



Avengers Doomsday trailer: Robert Downey Jr's Doctor Doom rules as top villain

The second trailer for Avengers: Doomsday is out, putting Robert Downey Jr's Doctor Doom front and centre. The trailer offers a closer look at the villain's emotional backstory, his connection to The Fantastic Four and the terrifying extent of his powers. Unveiled at Disney's D23, the footage expands on the story teased in the first trailer and sets up a major confrontation between Doom and some of Marvel's most powerful heroes.

The two-minute, ten-second trailer sheds light on Victor von Doom's past and his relationship with The Fantastic Four, particularly Reed Richards and Sue Storm. Vanessa Kirby's Sue is heard explaining Victor's transformation to a group of heroes that includes the Avengers, Shang-Chi, the X-Men, Steve Rogers and Shuri.

"Victor was always the smartest guy in every room. He used to be different. He used to be kind, he used to be caring. And then, everything he loved was taken from him. I knew he was lost, but I did not realise he was broken," Sue says.

The clip then shifts to Pedro Pascal's Reed Richards confronting Doom and asking him, "Did you do this?"

Doom responds with a cryptic warning: "All of you have lived stolen lives. But now you must give them back."

The sequence cuts between the superheroes and glimpses of their lives and families before showing Doom standing before a tapestry depicting his wife and son, hinting at the personal tragedy that may have shaped his motivations.

One of the highlights in the trailer sees Chris Hemsworth's Thor going up against Doom. Armed with Stormbreaker, Thor charges towards the villain and warns, "I swear you will beg for hell long before I grant it."

But Doom barely appears threatened. He stops Thor's attack using just two fingers before overpowering the God of Thunder and sending him flying with a blast of green energy.



Selena Gomez sued by investors over mental health startup

Singer and actor Selena Gomez was sued by investors who say the Only Murders in the Building star committed fraud by failing to fulfill duties to build and promote her mental health start-up.

The plaintiffs invested nearly \$1.2 million in Wondermind Global, which was launched in 2021 to help users strengthen their "mental fitness," according to the lawsuit filed in federal court in Delaware.

Investors said they were told Gomez, one of the biggest celebrities on social media with more than 500 million followers, would be actively involved in building the company as head of marketing. They argue that Gomez and other company leaders failed to deliver on promises including creating a mobile app.

"Gomez purported to sign a contract obligating her to perform and then ignored it," the lawsuit said.

"There was no legitimate enterprise in the works, much less a lucrative one," the plaintiffs added, saying that the company failed to meet "even its most basic obligations, such as timely paying its employees and vendors."

A representative for Gomez did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The lawsuit argues that the plaintiffs were unaware of the company's troubles until an online news story detailed them in September 2025. Plaintiffs are seeking to recoup their investments and legal fees.



Verity: Anne Hathaway's darkest secrets draw Dakota Johnson into a trap



Anne Hathaway and Dakota Johnson are stepping into a story where the truth is never quite what it seems. The trailer of Verity, based on Colleen Hoover's bestselling psychological thriller, offers a closer look at the secrets waiting inside a remote estate. The film will release in India on October 2, 2026.

Hathaway plays Verity Crawford, a successful author who is left unable to complete her book series after a personal tragedy. Johnson plays Lowen Ashleigh, a struggling writer who is brought in to finish Verity's work.

What begins as a writing assignment soon takes a disturbing turn.

Lowen moves into the Crawford family's remote estate to work on Verity's unfinished books. While there, she discovers what appear to be Verity's autobiographical notes. What she reads is far more disturbing than anything she expected.

The writings contain deeply unsettling confessions about Verity's marriage to Jeremy Crawford, played by Josh Hartnett,

and the events surrounding their family. As Lowen continues reading, the boundaries between Verity's version of events and reality begin to blur.

Soon, Lowen finds herself caught between suspicion and attraction. What exactly happened inside the Crawford home? And can she trust what she is reading?

The trailer leans into that uncertainty, keeping Verity herself at the centre of the mystery. Hathaway's character remains an unsettling presence even when she is not physically at the centre of the action, while Johnson's Lowen is pulled deeper into a situation she may no longer be able to control.

Directed by Michael Showalter, Verity adapts Hoover's 2018 novel, which became a bestseller and developed a large readership for its mix of psychological suspense, secrets and complicated relationships.

The film is produced by Amazon MGM Studios and distributed by Sony Pictures Releasing International. It will release in cinemas in India on October 2, 2026.

INDIA @ 80: FROM FREEDOM TO A GLOBAL POWER

From 1947 to the India of Tomorrow: Building a Nation, Shaping a Future



Illustration: Google Gemini

India's story is one of extraordinary transformation. On 15 August 1947, a nation emerged from nearly two centuries of colonial rule, carrying the immense burdens of Partition, poverty, illiteracy, food insecurity and weak infrastructure - but also an unshakable belief in its own destiny. The freedom struggle had brought together remarkably different visions and voices. Gandhi made non-violence and mass mobilisation powerful instruments of resistance; Nehru championed modern institutions and scientific temper; Patel helped unite a fragmented political landscape; Ambedkar gave the Republic its constitutional foundation; and revolutionaries such as Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Kartar Singh Sarabha and Subhas Chandra Bose represented the courage and sacrifice of another strand of the struggle. Together with millions of ordinary Indians, they made independence possible. The years after 1947 became a vast experiment in nation-building. India adopted universal adult franchise, built democratic institutions, reorganized its states, expanded education and industry, strengthened agriculture and developed an independent scientific and technological base. Wars, political upheavals, the Emergency, communal violence, economic crises and social tensions repeatedly tested the Republic.

Then came another turning point. The economic reforms of 1991 opened India to a more competitive and interconnected world. Liberalization, the IT revolution, entrepreneurship and expanding infrastructure reshaped the economy and created new possibilities for millions. Today, India stands as a major global economy, nuclear power, space faring nation, technology hub and influential democracy. Digital infrastructure, scientific achievements and a globally connected population have transformed everyday life. Yet India's journey remains unfinished. Employment, inequality, education, healthcare, environmental pressures, social cohesion and the quality of democratic institutions remain defining challenges.

India @ 80 is therefore not merely a celebration of how far the nation has travelled. It is a reflection on what was built, what was achieved and what must still be created - as India looks towards the next chapter of its extraordinary journey.

INDIA BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

A Civilization, a Subcontinent, a Nation in the Making

India marks its 80th Independence Day celebration on August 15, 2026. This event completes 79 years of freedom since 1947 and enters the country into its 80th year of independence. Eighty years is a short chapter in the life of an ancient civilisation, but for modern India it has been a period of extraordinary transformation. Since Independence in 1947, the country has travelled from the uncertainties of Partition, poverty and limited infrastructure to become one of the world's largest economies, a vibrant democracy, a major technological power and an increasingly influential voice in global affairs. Yet the India of today cannot be understood without looking beyond 1947. Its foundations lie in a civilisation shaped over millennia by diverse cultures, languages, religions, kingdoms, knowledge traditions and trading networks. The freedom struggle added another defining chapter, uniting millions in the quest for self-rule and giving birth to a democratic republic committed to liberty, equality and justice. The eight decades since Independence have brought triumphs and trials: nation-building, wars, economic reforms, the Green Revolution, scientific and technological advances, social transformation and the digital revolution. They have also exposed enduring challenges of inequality, employment, education, health and social cohesion. India @ 80 looks at this remarkable journey—from civilisation to colony, from freedom to republic, and from nation-building to global ambition—while asking the most important question of all: What lies ahead for India?

INDIA BEFORE THE RAJ: THE CIVILIZATION THAT ENDURED

Long before the map of India acquired its modern political shape, the subcontinent was already home to one of the world's great civilization experiments. Cities rose along rivers, merchants crossed seas, philosophers debated the nature of existence, physicians recorded diseases and treatments, mathematicians developed sophisticated numerical ideas, poets composed epics, artisans produced textiles and metalwork, and rulers built states that stretched across vast territories.

There was never one uninterrupted Indian empire. There was no single political authority that ruled the entire subcontinent for most of its history. Yet political fragmentation did not mean civilisational isolation. Ideas travelled across kingdoms. Pilgrims followed religious routes. Merchants crossed mountains and seas. Languages borrowed from one another. Religious traditions debated, absorbed and transformed each other.

That distinction is essential to understanding India's history before independence. India was not historically one political state; it was a remarkably interconnected civilizational space.

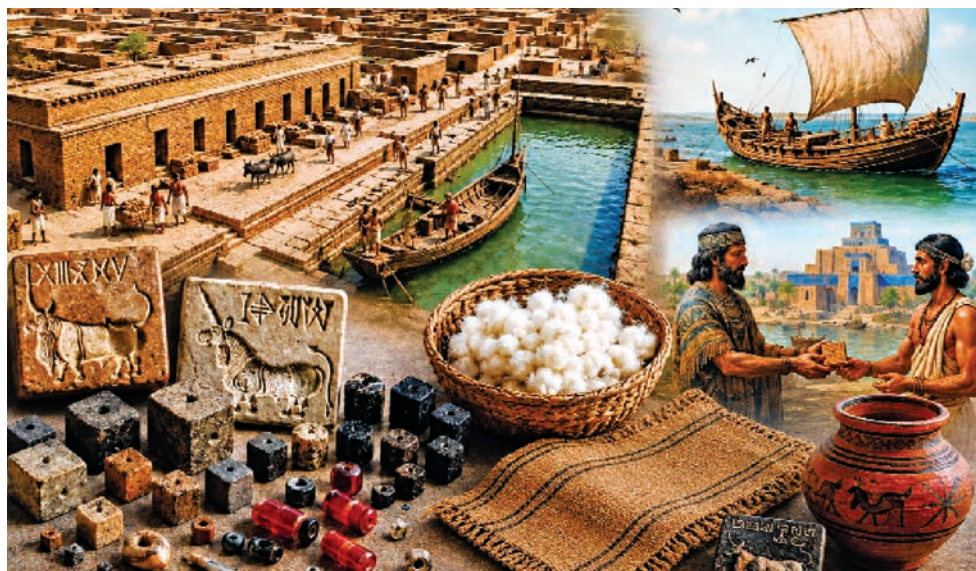
The cities of the first urban civilization

Some of the earliest evidence of complex urban life comes from the Indus or Harappan civilisation, which flourished broadly across parts of present-day Pakistan and northwestern India from roughly the third millennium BCE.

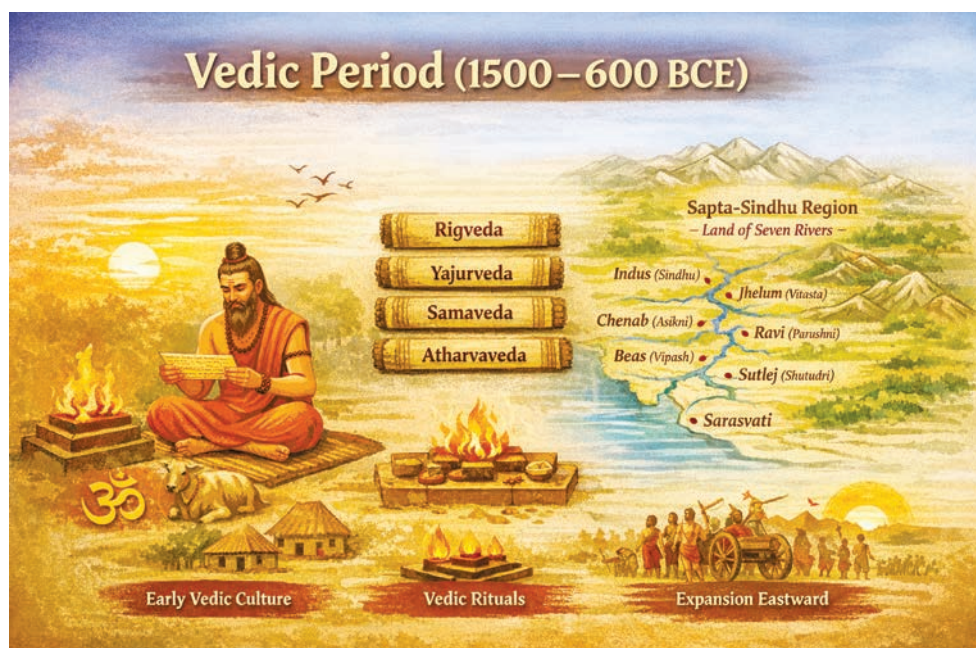
Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, Dholavira, Rakhigarhi and other sites reveal an urban society of extraordinary organisation. Streets were laid out systematically. Houses were built with standardised bricks. Drainage systems demonstrated sophisticated civic planning. Craft production, long-distance trade and standardised weights point to a society connected by economic and administrative practices.

The Harappans traded with regions far beyond the subcontinent, including Mesopotamia. Their world was not isolated; it was part of a wider Bronze Age network.

Yet the civilisation remains partly



The earliest evidence of complex urban life comes from the Indus or Harappan civilisation, which flourished broadly across parts of present-day Pakistan and northwestern India from roughly the third millennium BCE.



The later Vedic period witnessed significant changes in agriculture, settlement, political organisation and social institutions.

mysterious. Its script has not been conclusively deciphered, and historians continue to debate its political organisation, social structure and the reasons for its transformation after the second millennium BCE.

What is beyond doubt is that urban civilisation in the subcontinent has extremely deep roots.

The Vedic world and the

changing social landscape

After the decline of the urban Harappan phase, different forms of settlement and social organisation developed across northern India. Vedic traditions became important in the cultural and intellectual history of the region.

The Vedas, composed and transmitted orally over generations,

became foundational texts within the Brahmanical tradition. The later Vedic period witnessed significant changes in agriculture, settlement, political organisation and social institutions.

The early political landscape was dominated by clans and tribal polities, but gradually larger territorial states emerged. Agriculture expanded and iron technology became increasingly important in parts of northern India.

By the middle of the first millennium BCE, the subcontinent was entering another period of profound change.

The age of the Mahajanapadas

The sixth century BCE was an age of political experimentation and intellectual ferment.

The old tribal structures increasingly gave way to territorial states. Buddhist and Jain texts refer to a number of major political entities known as the Mahajanapadas.

Among them were Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa and Avanti.

Magadha eventually became particularly powerful. Its fertile territory, access to iron resources, strategic location and strong rulers helped it dominate much of northern India.

But political consolidation was only one part of the story.

This was also the age of Gautama Buddha and Mahavira.

Buddhism and Jainism emerged in a society questioning established assumptions about ritual, social order, renunciation and the nature of liberation. Both traditions placed ethical conduct, discipline and the individual's spiritual journey at the centre of their teachings.

Buddhism would eventually travel far beyond India—to Sri Lanka, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, China, Korea and Japan—becoming one of the world's major religions.

Jainism remained more geographically concentrated but became a lasting and influential Indian religious tradition, particularly in western and southern India.

The Mauryan moment

The rise of the Mauryan Empire in the fourth century BCE represented one of the earliest large-scale political unifications of much of the subcontinent.

Chandragupta Maurya established the empire around the end of the fourth century BCE. His successors expanded its reach, and under Ashoka, the empire reached one of its greatest extents.

Ashoka's reign became particularly significant after the devastating Kalinga War. His inscriptions, carved on rocks and pillars across his empire, provide some of the earliest extensive written evidence of an Indian ruler addressing his subjects across a large territory.

Ashoka promoted dhamma, emphasising ethical conduct, tolerance, compassion and respect among different religious communities.

His patronage helped Buddhism expand, although his empire did not simply become a Buddhist theocracy. The inscriptions reveal an attempt to articulate an ethical political order across a diverse population.

The Mauryan state also demonstrates something that would recur throughout Indian history: political unity could emerge without erasing cultural diversity.

After the Mauryas: Many centres, many traditions

The Mauryan Empire eventually declined, but political and cultural life did not collapse with it.

A succession of regional powers emerged. Indo-Greek, Shaka, Kushan and Satavahana rulers played important roles in different parts of the subcontinent.

The Kushans, particularly under Kanishka, helped connect northern India with Central Asia and the wider Buddhist world. Trade routes linked India with Central Asia, the Mediterranean and China. Meanwhile, southern India developed powerful political and commercial centres of its own.

The Gupta age and the flowering of classical culture

The Gupta period, particularly between the fourth and sixth centuries CE, is often remembered as a high point in classical Indian culture. The political authority of the Guptas did not cover the whole subcontinent, and historians today are careful about describing the period simply as an all-India "golden age." Nevertheless, it witnessed important developments in literature, mathematics, astronomy, art, religion and political culture.

Kalidasa became one of the great names of Sanskrit literature. Astronomers and mathematicians developed sophisticated methods for understanding numbers, planetary movements and mathematical operations. The visual arts flourished. Sculpture, temple architecture and painting reached notable levels of refinement. At the same time, Buddhism and Jainism continued alongside expanding Brahmanical traditions.

The famous Chinese traveller Faxian, who visited India during this period, left observations about society and Buddhist institutions.



The Maurya Empire (321–185 BCE) was one of the largest and most powerful empires in ancient India, encompassing vast territories across the Indian subcontinent, including modern-day India and Pakistan. Founded by Chandragupta Maurya and expanded under Emperor Ashoka, the empire established a well-organized administration, a prosperous economy, and a structured social order.



The Gupta Empire, often hailed as the "Golden Age of India", flourished between the 4th and 6th centuries CE.

The South writes its own history

The story of pre-modern India cannot be reduced to the history of northern empires. Across the peninsula, powerful kingdoms developed their own political, cultural and maritime traditions.

The Pallavas contributed to the development of temple architecture and helped shape the cultural landscape of southern India. The Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas built powerful states in the Deccan. The Cholas later created one of the most formidable maritime powers in Indian history. Under rulers such as Rajaraja Chola I and Rajendra Chola I, the Chola state developed extensive connections across the Bay of Bengal. Their influence reached parts of Southeast Asia, while Tamil merchants participated in long-distance commerce.

The monumental Brihadisvara Temple at Thanjavur stands as one of the great achievements of medieval Indian architecture. India's history was therefore not merely a story of armies moving across land. The sea was equally important.

Delhi and the Sultanate

The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate at the beginning of the 13th century introduced another major political phase. The Sultanate was ruled by successive dynasties, including the Mamluks, Khaljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids and Lodis. Its authority varied considerably over time and geography. At different moments, rulers in Delhi exercised control over large parts of northern and central India, while powerful regional states continued to exist elsewhere.

The Sultanate brought new political institutions, military techniques, architectural forms and cultural influences. Persian became an important language of administration and high culture. Indian traditions interacted with those brought by Central Asian and Persianate elites.

The result was neither simple replacement nor complete continuity. It was interaction, conflict, adaptation and synthesis. The emergence of Indo-Islamic architecture, the growth of new literary traditions and the development of vernacular languages were among the long-term consequences of this interaction.

The Mughal century and beyond

In 1526, Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi at the First Battle of Panipat and established the Mughal dynasty.

The empire expanded substantially under Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, although its territorial reach and administrative control changed over time. Akbar's reign was particularly important for the consolidation of a large, diverse empire. His administrative system, including the mansabdari and revenue arrangements, helped create a sophisticated imperial structure.

Mughal culture produced extraordinary achievements in painting, architecture, gardens, literature and court culture.

The Taj Mahal, built under Shah Jahan, became one of the most recognisable monuments in the world.

But Mughal India was not simply an imperial court. It was also a vast economic world of farmers, artisans, merchants, bankers, soldiers and regional elites.

Indian textiles-especially cottons and silks-were sought after in international markets. Ports on both the western and eastern coasts connected the subcontinent with the Indian Ocean economy.

The age of regional powers

The decline of Mughal political authority in the 18th century did not mean the collapse of India.

Instead, power became increasingly distributed among regional states.

The Marathas emerged as a major political and military force.

The Sikhs gradually developed from a religious community into a significant political and military power, culminating in the Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the early 19th century.

The kingdoms of Mysore under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, the Nizam's Hyderabad, Awadh, Bengal and numerous Rajput states also played important roles.

The political landscape was fragmented, but it was dynamic.

And into this world came another force: European commercial powers.

India before colonial rule was not a static civilization

It is tempting to look backwards and imagine pre-colonial India as a fixed civilisation waiting for modernity to arrive from Europe. History tells a different story. India was constantly changing. Religions evolved. Languages developed. New kingdoms appeared. Trade routes shifted. Agricultural frontiers expanded. Technologies changed. Communities migrated. New artistic styles emerged. Indian society was marked by enormous inequalities of caste, class, gender and status, and political violence was hardly unknown. But alongside these realities existed powerful traditions of intellectual debate, religious pluralism, commerce, craftsmanship and cultural exchange. The India encountered by European merchants was therefore not a passive land awaiting discovery.

It was a major civilisation already deeply connected to the world.

And that is the India that Europe entered.

THE MAKING OF A SUBCONTINENT

How Geography, Languages, Faiths and Trade Created India's Extraordinary Diversity

India's diversity is often described through a familiar list—languages, religions, cuisines, festivals, clothing and customs. But diversity in the subcontinent is deeper than cultural variety. It is rooted in geography, migration, agriculture, trade and centuries of political interaction.

The Himalayas, the great river plains, the deserts of the west, the Deccan Plateau and the long coastline created different ecological worlds. Communities adapted to these environments, developing distinct economies and cultures.

Yet these worlds were never completely separate.

A geography of enormous contrasts

The Himalayas formed a dramatic northern boundary, but they were never an absolute barrier. Mountain passes connected the subcontinent to Central Asia and Tibet. The Indus and Ganga river systems supported enormous agricultural zones. The Deccan Plateau created another vast ecological and political region. The Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats shaped the peninsula's rainfall and agriculture.

And beyond them lay the Indian Ocean. The sea was not the edge of India. It was one of its great highways.

Rivers and civilisation

The great rivers were central to settlement and agriculture.

The Indus basin supported one of the world's earliest urban civilisations. Later, the Ganga basin became a major centre of agriculture, cities and states.

River systems supported not only food production but also political power. Surplus agriculture enabled rulers to maintain armies, administrators and monumental construction.

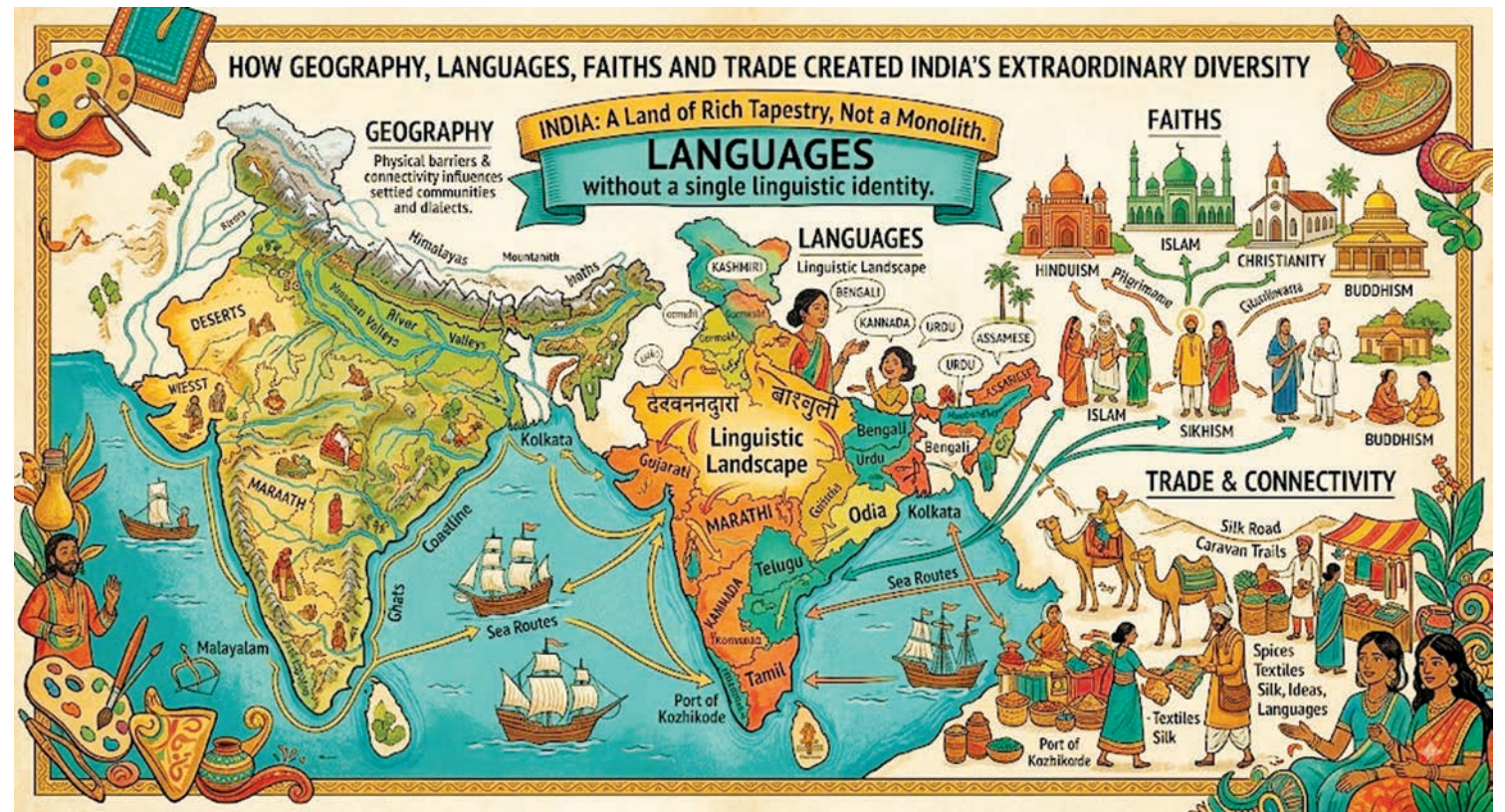
Languages without a single linguistic identity

India developed several major language families. Indo-Aryan languages became dominant across much of northern, western and eastern India, while Dravidian languages—including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam—flourished primarily in the south.

Tibeto-Burman and other language groups added further diversity.

Sanskrit became an influential language of scholarship and religious literature. Prakrits and later regional languages carried traditions into wider society. Persian became important under several medieval regimes. Arabic entered Indian intellectual and commercial life through Islamic networks.

Eventually, languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, Gujarati,



There was not a single linguistic culture but a civilisation communicating across languages. Illustration Google Gemini



Urdu, Assamese and others developed powerful literary identities.

The result was not a single linguistic culture but a civilisation communicating across languages.

Religions that travelled and transformed

Hindu traditions evolved over centuries rather than emerging as a single, centrally organised religion.

Buddhism and Jainism originated in India and became major intellectual and religious forces.

Islam arrived through multiple channels—Arab merchants on the western coast, Central Asian migrations, political conquest and Sufi networks.

Christian traditions have also had a long history in India, while Zoroastrian Parsis found a home on the western coast after migrating from Persia.

Sikhism emerged in Punjab in the late 15th century and developed into a distinctive religious tradition.

India therefore became a meeting ground of religious traditions rather than the exclusive homeland of one.

The pilgrimage routes

Pilgrimage created another form of unity. Buddhist sites connected different regions. Hindu pilgrimage networks linked sacred places from the Himalayas to the southern peninsula.

Sufi shrines attracted people across religious and social boundaries.

Jain pilgrimage routes connected communities across western, central and southern India.

These journeys helped create a cultural geography that often extended beyond political borders.

Markets connected what armies could

not

Merchants were among the great unifiers of the subcontinent.

Textiles, spices, precious stones, metal goods, salt, horses and agricultural commodities moved across regional boundaries.

Merchant communities developed networks extending from inland markets to coastal ports.

India's western coast connected it to Arabia and East Africa. The eastern coast connected it to Southeast Asia.

Ports such as Bharuch, Cambay, Calicut, Surat, Masulipatnam and others became important nodes in different periods.

A civilisation of regional identities

India's unity therefore did not emerge from uniformity. A Tamil merchant could participate in an Indian Ocean trading world while belonging to a highly distinctive linguistic and cultural environment. A Punjabi Sikh, a Bengali Vaishnava, a Kashmiri scholar, a Gujarati Jain merchant or a Kerala Muslim merchant inhabited very different social worlds. Yet they could all participate in networks that crossed political and cultural boundaries.

That is perhaps the most important feature of India's pre-modern history:

Its unity was layered.

People belonged simultaneously to a village, caste or community, linguistic region, religious tradition, kingdom and wider civilisational world.

THE KNOWLEDGE TRADITIONS THAT SHAPED A CIVILIZATION

India's contribution to knowledge cannot be reduced to a handful of famous discoveries. Its intellectual history developed through mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, linguistics, architecture, metallurgy, literature and systems of education.

Some claims about ancient Indian science have been exaggerated in popular accounts, but the genuine achievements are impressive enough without embellishment.

The mathematics of numbers

One of India's most consequential intellectual contributions was the development of the decimal place-value system and the mathematical use of zero.

Indian mathematicians built on earlier numerical traditions and developed increasingly sophisticated methods of calculation.

Aryabhata, writing in the fifth century CE, made important contributions to mathematics and astronomy.

Brahmagupta, in the seventh century, provided systematic rules involving zero and negative numbers.

Over time, Indian mathematical ideas travelled westward through scholarly exchanges and the Islamic world and eventually became part of the global mathematical tradition.

The numerals we commonly call "Arabic numerals" have a more complicated history: their roots lie in Indian mathematical traditions, with transmission and further development through the medieval Islamic world.

Looking at the heavens

Astronomy was closely connected with calendars, ritual and mathematics.

Aryabhata proposed sophisticated explanations of celestial phenomena and calculated astronomical constants with notable precision for his time.

Indian astronomical traditions developed methods for calculating planetary positions, eclipses and calendars. Astronomy was not simply abstract speculation. It served practical purposes: agriculture, ritual, navigation and the organisation of time.

Ayurveda and medical knowledge

Indian medical traditions developed through texts and schools of thought collectively associated with Ayurveda.

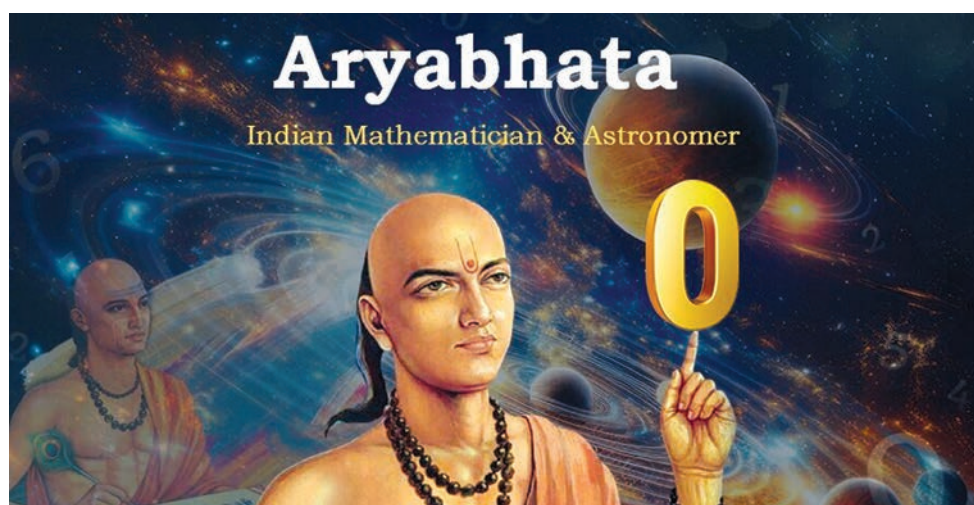
The Charaka Samhita emphasised medicine, diagnosis and treatment, while the Sushruta Samhita is particularly associated with surgery.

The historical development of these texts is complex and spans centuries, but they demonstrate a sustained Indian effort to systematise knowledge of the body, disease and treatment.

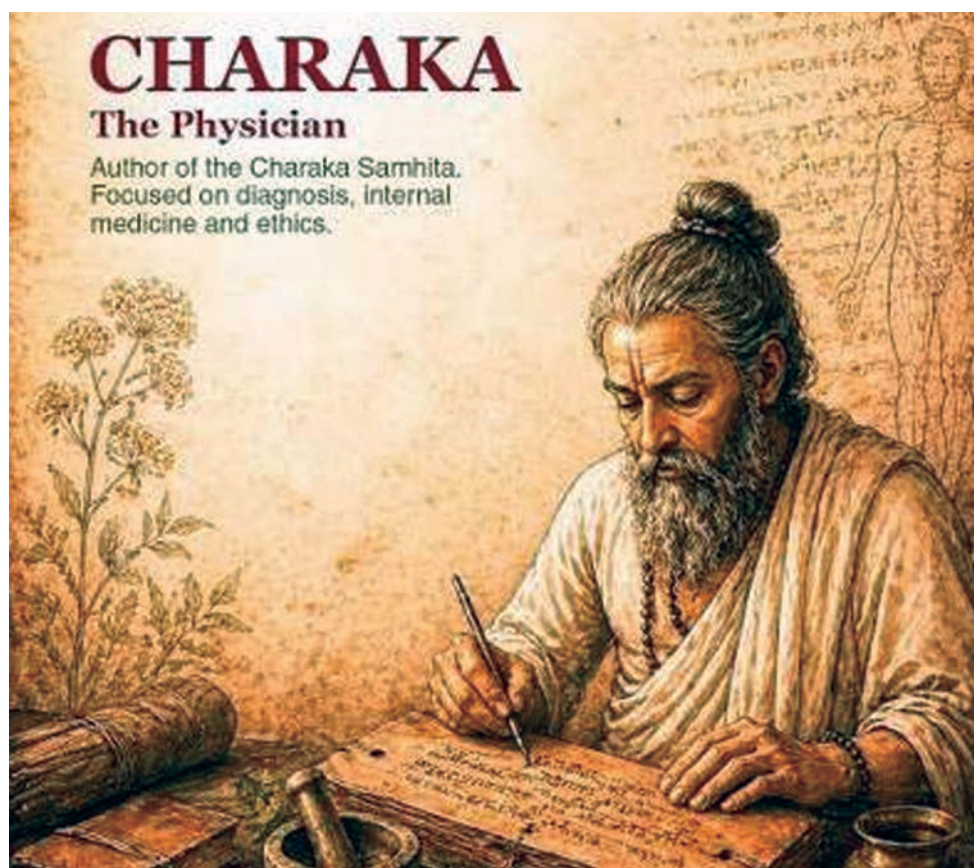
The Sushruta tradition is especially notable for its detailed discussions of surgical procedures and instruments.

Ancient medicine, however, should not be judged as if it possessed modern biomedical knowledge. Its concepts were rooted in the intellectual frameworks of its time.

Its importance lies in the development of systematic medical



Aryabhata made important contributions to mathematics and astronomy.



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Nalanda University

traditions and observation-based practices.

The science of metal

Indian metallurgical traditions produced remarkable achievements.

The Iron Pillar of Delhi, generally dated to the Gupta period, has long attracted attention because of its unusual resistance to corrosion.

Indian iron and steel production also became internationally significant.

Wootz steel, produced in parts of southern India, became famous for its quality and played a role in the

development of the steel associated with Damascus blades.

The story of metallurgy reveals an India in which craft knowledge was not merely manual skill. It involved generations of accumulated experimentation.

Architecture as engineering

From the urban planning of Harappan cities to the monumental temples of southern India, architecture reveals another strand of Indian technical knowledge.

Stupas, rock-cut caves, temples, forts,

stepwells and palaces required knowledge of materials, geometry, water management and construction.

The great temple complexes of the Cholas demonstrate sophisticated planning and engineering.

Stepwells in western India combined water management with architectural design.

Fortifications across the subcontinent show the adaptation of military architecture to terrain.

Universities and centres of learning

Ancient and early medieval India developed major centres of scholarship.

Nalanda became one of the best-known centres of Buddhist learning, attracting students and scholars from different parts of Asia.

Taxila, although belonging to a much earlier and different historical context, was another major centre of learning and intellectual exchange, though it is anachronistic to imagine it as a modern university.

Other monastic institutions and scholarly centres existed across the subcontinent.

Education was also transmitted through temples, monasteries, gurukuls, courts, scholarly households and specialised professional communities.

Literature and philosophy

India's intellectual tradition was never limited to science.

The Vedas, Upanishads, epics, Buddhist texts, Jain literature, Sanskrit poetry, Tamil Sangam literature and countless regional traditions created an enormous literary inheritance.

The Mahabharata and Ramayana became cultural frameworks whose stories were repeatedly retold and reinterpreted across languages and regions.

Indian philosophical schools debated questions concerning knowledge, consciousness, reality, ethics and liberation.

The Buddhist philosophical tradition developed sophisticated analyses of mind, perception and causation.

Jain philosophers developed ideas about multiple perspectives on reality.

The intellectual history of India was therefore fundamentally plural.

The knowledge of the sea

Indian civilisation was also maritime.

Sailors and merchants travelled across the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal.

Indian ports connected the subcontinent to East Africa, Arabia, Persia and Southeast Asia.

The monsoon winds made predictable seasonal travel possible, creating a maritime rhythm that linked distant societies.

South Indian kingdoms and merchant guilds played important roles in Indian Ocean commerce.

This maritime history is crucial because it challenges the idea that pre-modern India was primarily inward-looking.

India was both continental and oceanic.

WHEN EUROPE CAME TO INDIA

The Merchants Who Arrived by Sea



India began on May 20, 1498, when Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama landed at Calicut (Kozhikode) on India's southwest coast. This voyage via the Cape of Good Hope broke Arab-Venetian trade monopolies, bypassed Ottoman land route restrictions, and opened a direct sea corridor for the lucrative spice trade. British (1600): The English East India Company incorporated in 1600, landing initial voyages in the early 17th century before securing imperial trading concessions and expanding territorial power. French (1664): The French East India Company was the last major European corporate arrival, anchoring key coastal trading hubs at Pondicherry (Puducherry), Chandernagore, and Mahe.

When Vasco da Gama reached the Malabar coast in 1498, he did not discover an unknown India.

He entered an old and sophisticated commercial world.

Calicut was already a major port. Arab merchants had traded along India's western coast for centuries. Chinese vessels had crossed the Indian Ocean. Indian merchants operated extensive networks.

What changed after the arrival of the Portuguese was the entry of European powers determined to reshape the existing commercial system.

Portugal arrives

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to establish a major maritime presence in the Indian Ocean after the beginning of the European maritime expansion.

Vasco da Gama's arrival at Calicut opened a new phase.

The Portuguese did not merely want to trade. They sought to control key

maritime routes and impose a system of naval dominance.

They established bases and fortified settlements, most famously at Goa, which became the centre of Portuguese power in Asia.

Their arrival brought violence as well as commerce. Naval warfare, attacks on shipping and attempts to control the spice trade became part of the Portuguese strategy.

The Dutch challenge

The Dutch East India Company entered the Indian Ocean at the beginning of the 17th century.

Dutch commercial interests were particularly strong in the spice trade and Southeast Asia, but Dutch merchants also established trading settlements in India.

They competed with the Portuguese and later with the English.

Yet none of these European companies initially possessed the power to conquer the entire subcontinent.

They depended on Indian rulers,

merchants, bankers, suppliers and local political conditions.

The English arrive

The English East India Company received its royal charter in 1600.

Its original purpose was commercial.

It established trading centres at places such as Surat, Madras, Bombay and Calcutta over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Company initially sought privileges from Indian rulers rather than territorial sovereignty.

It bought Indian textiles, spices, saltpetre and other commodities and exported them to international markets. But commerce brought political influence. And political influence eventually brought armies.

The French enter the contest

France also established trading interests in India.

Pondicherry became the centre of French influence. The Anglo-French

rivalry reached a critical stage during the Carnatic Wars in the 18th century.

The conflict demonstrated that European companies could use Indian political rivalries to expand their own influence. The British ultimately emerged as the stronger European power. Why did commerce become conquest?

This question lies at the heart of modern Indian history.

European companies entered a subcontinent that was politically fragmented but economically wealthy.

They found powerful Indian states, established merchant communities and sophisticated commercial networks.

The transformation occurred because European companies increasingly combined commercial capital with military power and political intervention.

The English East India Company became particularly adept at exploiting rivalries between Indian states while building its own military and financial resources.

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

From Merchants to Masters

The East India Company began as a commercial corporation.

By the 18th century, it had become something far more consequential: a territorial power.

The transformation did not happen overnight. It emerged from a combination of military victories, political alliances, financial arrangements, administrative innovation and the weakening of major regional powers.

Plassey: the turning point

The Battle of Plassey in 1757 is often treated as the moment when British power began in India.

The reality is more complicated, but the battle was unquestionably decisive.

The Company's forces under Robert Clive defeated the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-daulah.

The victory was aided by defections and political conspiracies within the Nawab's camp.

Plassey gave the Company enormous influence over Bengal.

More importantly, it demonstrated that a trading company could intervene directly in Indian politics and emerge as the decisive power.

Buxar completes the transformation

Seven years later came another crucial battle. At Buxar in 1764, the Company defeated the combined forces of the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II, the Nawab of Awadh Shuja-ud-daulah and the Nawab of Bengal Mir Qasim.

Buxar strengthened the Company's military position in northern India.

In 1765, the Mughal emperor granted the Company the Diwani-the right to collect revenue in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. This was revolutionary.

A company established to make profits from trade was now collecting taxes from millions of people.

Revenue becomes the foundation of empire

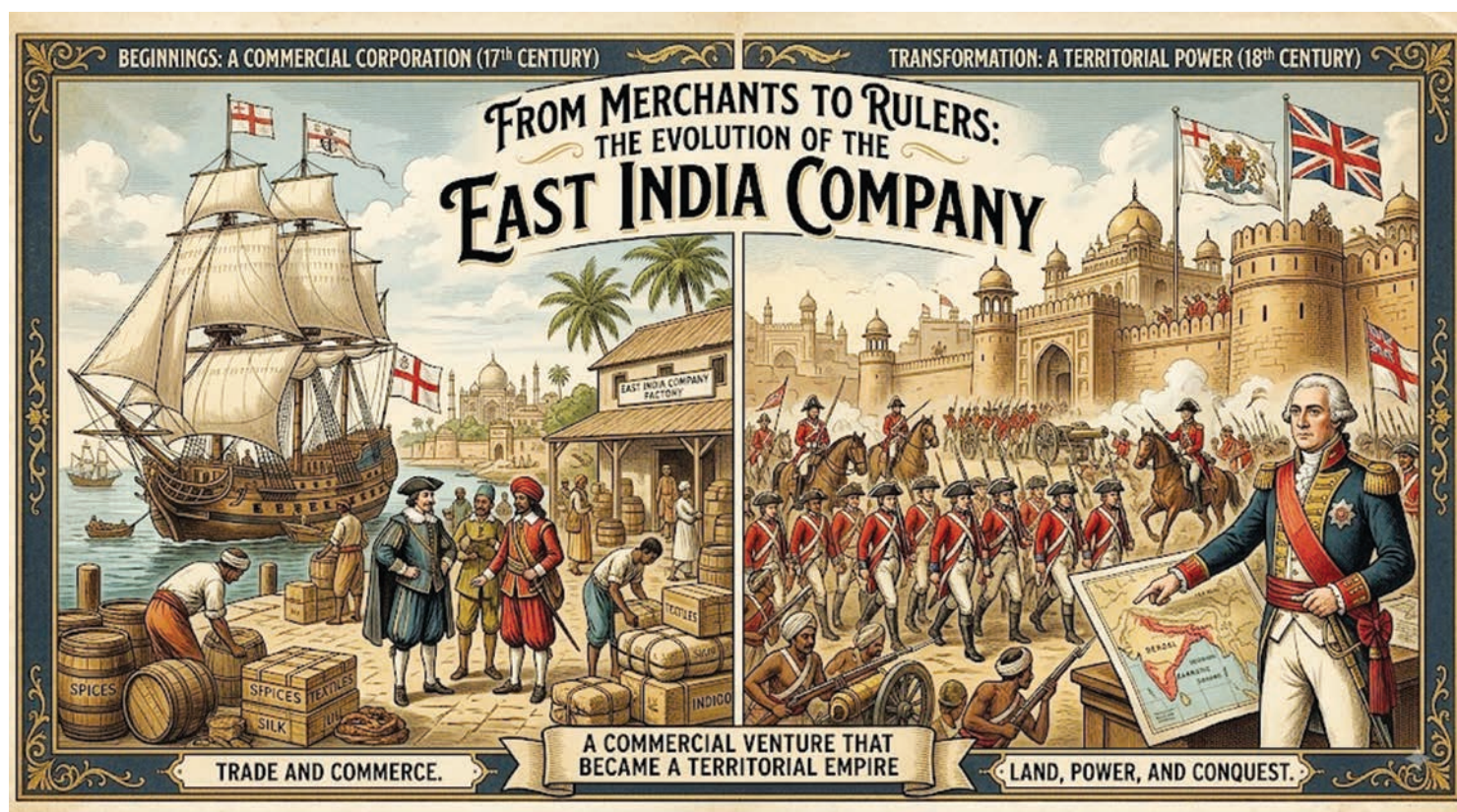
The Diwani transformed the Company's financial position.

Indian revenues could now help finance the Company's army and further territorial expansion. This created a powerful cycle: Territorial conquest, revenue collection, larger military resources, further conquest. The Company was no longer merely importing Indian goods. It was increasingly governing Indian territory.

Building the Company state

The Company developed administrative structures to govern its expanding territories.

The Regulating Act of 1773 and Pitt's India Act of 1784 increased parliamentary oversight over Company affairs. The British state was increasingly involved in Indian governance even though the Company continued to exercise substantial authority. The Company also built one of the largest military establishments in the subcontinent. Indian soldiers-sepoys-formed the



overwhelming majority of Company forces.

Subsidiary alliances

Under Governor-General Lord Wellesley, the Company developed the system of Subsidiary Alliances.

Indian rulers who entered such arrangements accepted the presence of British troops and agreed to pay for their maintenance. They often surrendered significant control over foreign affairs.

The system allowed the Company to expand its influence without direct annexation in every case.

The defeat of rivals

The Company fought numerous wars against Indian states. The Mysore Wars brought the Company into conflict with Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. The Marathas

were defeated in a series of Anglo-Maratha wars. Punjab became a major theatre of conflict, culminating in the annexation of the Sikh kingdom after the Anglo-Sikh wars.

Each victory expanded the Company's territorial and political authority.

The Doctrine of Lapse

Under Governor-General Lord Dalhousie, the Company pursued an aggressive policy of annexation.

The Doctrine of Lapse allowed the British to annex certain princely states where a ruler died without a recognised natural heir, rejecting adopted heirs in specified circumstances.

States including Satara, Jhansi and Nagpur were annexed under policies associated with Dalhousie.

These measures generated deep

resentment among sections of Indian political society.

The transformation of power

By the middle of the 19th century, the East India Company had become ruler of vast territories. Its original commercial identity had not disappeared. Profit remained important. But the Company now operated as a state: collecting revenue, maintaining armies, administering justice and shaping economic policy.

The irony was striking. A corporation had acquired the machinery of sovereignty. That experiment would end dramatically with the uprising of 1857.

How Colonial Rule

Reshaped India's Economy

The British built railways. They established telegraph lines. They expanded ports. They created modern bureaucratic institutions. They introduced new legal and educational systems. But infrastructure cannot be examined separately from the purpose for which it was built.

The central economic question of colonial India was not simply whether development occurred.

It was whose interests that development primarily served.

The colonial economy

Before British political dominance, India had a large manufacturing and commercial sector, particularly in textiles.

Indian cotton textiles were exported to markets across Asia, Africa and Europe.

Bengal's muslin became famous. Indian calicoes and chintzes influenced European fashion.

British industrialisation changed this relationship dramatically.

THE DRAIN OF WEALTH

One of the most influential nationalist economic arguments was the Drain Theory, associated particularly with Dadabhai Naoroji.

Naoroji argued that substantial resources generated in India were transferred to Britain without an equivalent return.

The argument focused on several channels, including salaries and pensions of British officials, military expenditure, profits, interest payments and other transfers.

Later nationalist economists expanded the critique.

The "drain" became more than an economic theory. It became a powerful political argument against colonial rule.

It helped Indian nationalists explain why a country producing enormous quantities of goods and revenue could nevertheless experience widespread poverty.

Land and revenue

Colonial rule transformed relationships between land, cultivators and the state.

The Permanent Settlement in Bengal created a system in which zamindars were recognised as revenue-collecting intermediaries under fixed arrangements with the state.

Elsewhere, systems such as the Ryotwari settlement placed greater emphasis on direct revenue relations between the state and cultivators.

The Mahalwari system operated in parts of northern and central India.

These systems differed, but all made land revenue a central feature of colonial administration.

High or inflexible revenue demands could leave cultivators vulnerable when harvests failed or prices collapsed.

Cash crops and the world market

Colonial agriculture became increasingly connected to global markets.

Indigo, cotton, opium, tea, coffee and other commercial crops expanded in different regions.

This did not mean Indian farmers everywhere simply abandoned food crops. The reality was more complicated and varied by region.

But commercialisation exposed cultivators to global price movements while leaving many vulnerable to debt and fluctuations in harvests.

The indigo crisis in Bengal, for example, demonstrated the tensions that could emerge when colonial commercial interests collided with peasant livelihoods.

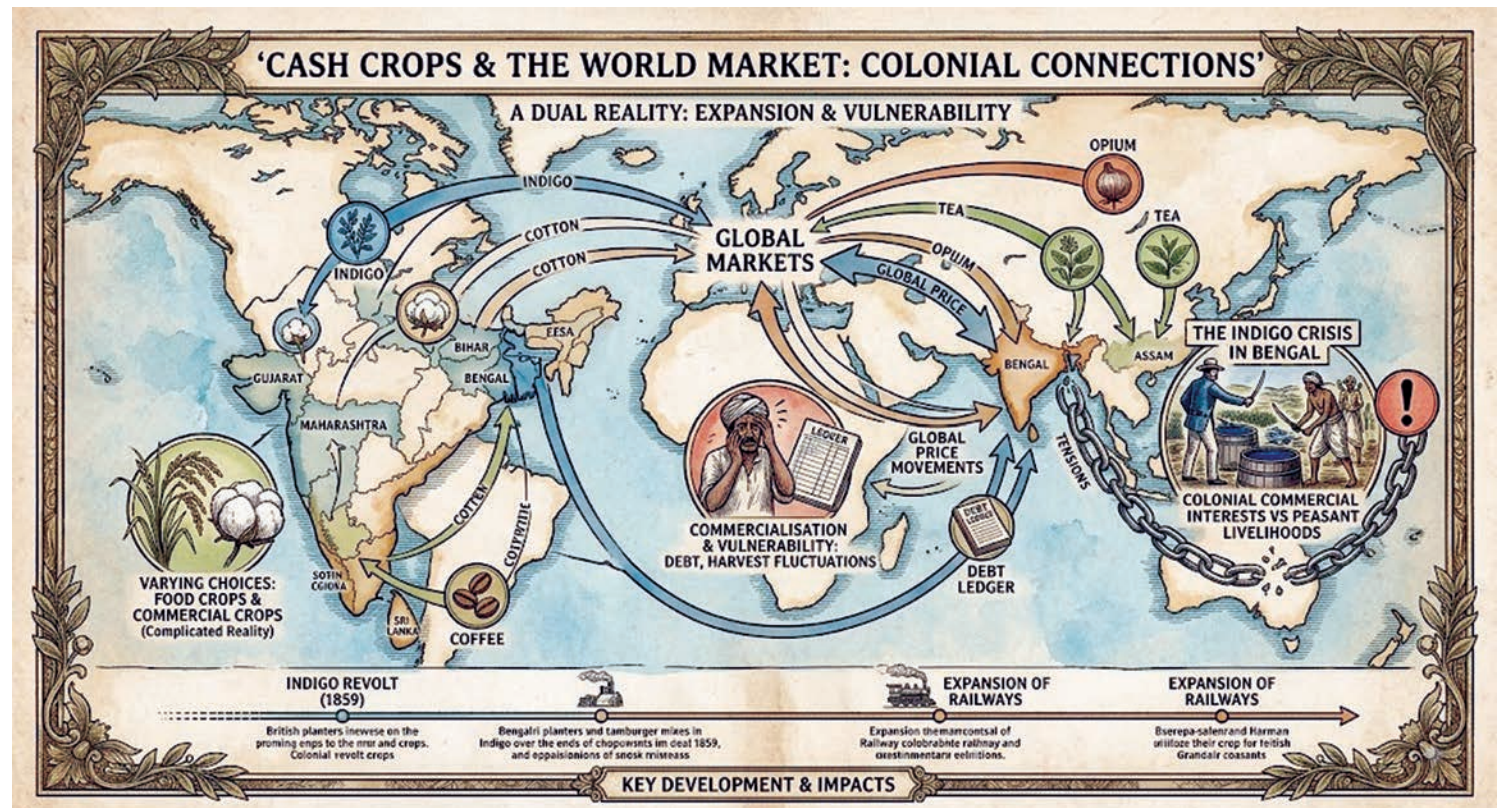
Famines and vulnerability

Famines were not new to India.

The subcontinent had experienced severe food crises long before British rule.

But the scale and frequency of major famines during the colonial era became a defining feature of 19th-century India.

The Bengal famine of 1770 occurred during the early period of Company rule and caused catastrophic mortality.



The "drain" became more than an economic theory. It became a powerful political argument against colonial rule. It helped Indian nationalists explain why a country producing enormous quantities of goods and revenue could nevertheless experience widespread poverty. Illustration: Google Gemini

Later famines struck large parts of India in the 19th century.

Historians continue to debate the precise interaction of rainfall, harvest failure, markets, prices, government policy, relief systems and exports in particular famines.

What is clear is that colonial institutions often struggled to protect vulnerable populations from extreme food insecurity, and policy choices could worsen the consequences of scarcity.

The railway paradox

The railway became one of the most visible symbols of British India.

The first passenger railway ran between Bombay and Thane in 1853.

Railways transformed travel and trade. They connected inland production centres to ports and linked previously distant regions.

They also enabled faster movement of troops and officials.

For the colonial state, railways had obvious strategic and commercial value.

For Indians, they eventually became something more than imperial infrastructure. They helped create new markets, facilitated migration and communication and unintentionally contributed to the emergence of a more interconnected political public.

The railway therefore embodied the contradictions of colonial modernity:

It was simultaneously an instrument of empire and an infrastructure later used to challenge empire.

Ports, telegraphs and modern infrastructure

British India developed major port cities such as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

Telegraph networks reduced communication times dramatically.

Roads and canals expanded in different regions.

But investment was uneven, and infrastructure frequently reflected

imperial priorities—moving raw materials to ports, connecting military centres and facilitating trade within the colonial economy.

The emergence of Indian industry

Colonial India was not economically frozen.

Indian entrepreneurs responded to new opportunities.

The development of modern cotton mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad created an emerging industrial sector.

The Tata group became one of the most important Indian industrial enterprises, eventually expanding into steel, power and other sectors.

Jute manufacturing expanded in Bengal, although much of the industry was controlled by British capital.

Coal mining grew.

Railways themselves generated demand for Indian production.

Thus, late colonial India witnessed the beginnings of modern industrial capitalism alongside widespread poverty and economic inequality.

The rise of the Indian economic critique

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, educated Indians increasingly analysed colonialism in economic terms.

Dadabhai Naoroji, R.C. Dutt and others argued that India's poverty was connected to the structure of colonial rule.

Economic nationalism became a central component of the freedom movement.

The call for Swadeshi was not merely a political slogan. It was an economic strategy: buy Indian goods, build Indian industry and reduce dependence on foreign manufactures.

The freedom struggle therefore became increasingly linked to questions of economic sovereignty.

The complicated legacy of colonial infrastructure

A mature historical assessment must resist two simplistic positions.

The first is that British rule produced no modern infrastructure or institutional change.

That is demonstrably false.

The second is that the existence of railways, universities, ports and modern administration somehow makes colonial rule fundamentally developmental.

That is equally misleading.

Infrastructure was built within an imperial system whose central political purpose was control and whose economic structures largely served imperial interests.

The important historical question is therefore not simply:

"Did the British build railways?"

It is:

"Why were they built, who financed them, who benefited from them, and how did Indians eventually repurpose them?"

That distinction helps explain the paradox of colonial India.

The same railway that carried cotton to a port could later carry a nationalist worker to a political meeting.

The same printing technologies used by colonial institutions helped create a nationalist press.

The same English education intended partly to produce colonial intermediaries created generations of Indians capable of challenging imperial rule.

Colonialism changed India profoundly—but Indians also appropriated, resisted and transformed many of the institutions colonial rule created.

And by the beginning of the 20th century, an increasingly organised national movement was asking the question that would ultimately reshape the subcontinent:

If India could produce wealth, knowledge and institutions for an empire, why should it not govern itself?

THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

1857-1947: The Long Road to Independence

India's independence was not the achievement of a single movement, a single leader or a single generation. It was the culmination of a long, complex and often painful historical process in which political resistance, social reform, economic criticism, revolutionary nationalism, mass mobilization and constitutional negotiation gradually converged. When the Indian tricolour rose over a free nation on 15 August 1947, it represented decades of struggle and the sacrifices of countless people whose names would never enter the history books.

The story of India's freedom struggle is often told through its most recognizable figures: Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and many others. But beneath these towering personalities lay a much larger story involving peasants, workers, students, women, tribal communities, soldiers, journalists, reformers and ordinary citizens. Their participation gradually transformed resistance to colonial rule from scattered opposition into a powerful national movement.

The road from 1857 to 1947 was neither straight nor peaceful. It contained moments of extraordinary unity as well as deep divisions, constitutional negotiations as well as revolutionary violence, non-violent resistance as well as armed rebellion. It witnessed the birth of Indian nationalism, the growth of democratic ideas, the rise of mass politics and, ultimately, the tragedy of Partition.

1857: The First Great Revolt

The first great rupture in the history of British rule came in 1857. By then, the East India Company had expanded its political authority over large parts of India. Its policies had displaced rulers, altered traditional power structures and imposed new systems of revenue collection and administration. Among soldiers of the Company's army, resentment had also been building over pay, service conditions, promotion and perceived threats to religious practices.

The immediate spark came from the controversy over the new Enfield rifle cartridges, which Indian soldiers were required to bite open. Rumors spread that the cartridges were greased with cow and pig fat, offending the religious beliefs of both Hindu and Muslim soldiers. The controversy became the trigger for a much deeper accumulation of anger.

The revolt began at Meerut on 10 May 1857 and quickly spread to Delhi. The rebels entered the Mughal capital and proclaimed the ageing emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar as their symbolic leader. Although the Mughal emperor



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possessed little real political power, his presence gave the uprising a powerful historical legitimacy.

From Delhi, the revolt spread across large parts of northern and central India. At Kanpur, Nana Sahib emerged as a major rebel leader. In Jhansi, Rani Lakshmibai became one of the most enduring symbols of resistance. Tantia Tope continued the struggle through a mobile guerrilla campaign. In Bihar, the elderly Kunwar Singh joined the rebellion, while Begum Hazrat Mahal became a prominent leader of resistance in Awadh.

The uprising was far more than a military mutiny in several regions. Peasants, landlords, dispossessed rulers and sections of the urban population joined the rebellion. Yet it was not a uniformly national uprising. Large parts of India remained outside it, and many Indian rulers and soldiers supported the British.

The British eventually reconquered the rebel territories with overwhelming military force. Delhi fell. Jhansi fell. Lucknow was recaptured. The suppression was accompanied by severe reprisals.

Yet the revolt had fundamentally altered the political landscape.

In 1858, the British Crown took direct control of India, ending the rule of the East India Company. The failed revolt had therefore produced a historic consequence: the Company Raj gave way to the British Raj.

After 1857: The Empire Reorganizes

The British government understood that India could not be ruled in exactly

the same manner after 1857. Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1858 promised respect for Indian religions and customs and assured princely rulers that their territories would not be annexed simply through the earlier policies of expansion.

The British also reorganized the army. The proportion of European troops was increased, while recruitment patterns were altered to prevent the emergence of another large-scale military rebellion. Indian soldiers were increasingly recruited from communities that colonial officials classified as "martial races", a policy that itself reflected the racial assumptions of the Raj.

The relationship with princely states also changed. Rather than seeking to annex every state, the British increasingly relied on princes as allies within the imperial structure. India thus developed a complicated political arrangement: directly ruled British provinces existed alongside hundreds of princely states.

At the same time, the colonial state became more powerful. Railways, telegraph lines, courts, police networks and administrative institutions expanded. The British built these systems primarily to serve the needs of empire, but they produced an unintended consequence. They connected India more closely than ever before.

People, newspapers, ideas and political movements could travel faster.

The infrastructure of empire gradually became one of the networks through which opposition to empire could spread.

The Intellectual Awakening

The emergence of Indian nationalism cannot be understood without looking at the social and intellectual transformations of the 19th century.

Reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy challenged social practices and advocated modern education. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar campaigned for widow remarriage and women's education. Jyotirao Phule attacked caste inequality and worked to expand education among oppressed communities. Swami Dayanand Saraswati called for social reform and educational revival. Swami Vivekananda sought to restore confidence in India's intellectual and spiritual traditions while engaging with the modern world. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan promoted modern education among Muslims and encouraged intellectual engagement with contemporary knowledge.

Their objectives were different, and they did not constitute a single political movement. But together, the reform movements helped create a new public sphere.

Education produced a growing class of lawyers, teachers, journalists and professionals. Newspapers became increasingly influential. Public meetings and debating societies emerged. Indians began discussing representation, rights, economic exploitation and political freedom.

The question was no longer simply whether British rule was efficient.

It was whether a foreign power had the moral and political right to govern India.

1885: THE BIRTH OF THE CONGRESS

The creation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 marked another decisive stage. Its first session was held in Bombay under the presidency of W.C. Bonnerjee, with the retired British civil servant A.O. Hume playing an important role in its formation.

The early Congress was cautious. Its leaders did not initially demand complete independence. They sought greater Indian participation in government, expansion of legislative councils, reform of the civil services and changes in economic policy.

Yet their constitutional approach laid the foundation for organised Indian nationalism.

Dadabhai Naoroji gave the movement an important economic dimension through his analysis of the "drain" of Indian wealth to Britain. He argued that India's poverty was not simply the result of internal weaknesses but was linked to the structure of colonial rule.

Surendranath Banerjee became an influential voice for political rights, while Gopal Krishna Gokhale represented a belief in gradual constitutional reform.

The early Congress was often criticized for being dominated by an educated elite.

That criticism was not entirely without basis.

But its historical significance lay in creating an all-India political platform where Indians from different regions could begin discussing common political interests.

The Rise of a More Assertive Nationalism

By the beginning of the 20th century, patience with gradual reform was wearing thin.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak emerged as one of the most powerful advocates of assertive nationalism. Through newspapers, public festivals and political mobilization, he sought to take nationalism beyond elite political circles. In Bengal, Bipin Chandra Pal became a major advocate of Swadeshi, while Punjab produced the powerful nationalist voice of Lala Lajpat Rai. Together, Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Pal became known as the Lal-Bal-Pal triumvirate.

Their approach was more confrontational than that of the early Congress leadership.

They advocated boycott, Swadeshi and mass political mobilization.

The disagreement between the two tendencies eventually contributed to the Congress split at Surat in 1907.

But the nationalist movement had already entered a new era.

1905: Bengal and the Swadeshi Revolution

The partition of Bengal in 1905 by Lord Curzon became one of the great turning points in India's freedom struggle.

The British government defended the decision as an administrative measure. Indian nationalists saw it as an attempt to weaken political



opposition by dividing a large and politically active province.

The response was immediate and intense.

The Swadeshi movement encouraged Indians to boycott foreign goods and promote Indian products. Students participated in demonstrations. Women joined picketing campaigns. National schools and educational institutions were established.

Swadeshi became more than an economic program.

It became a political philosophy.

Buying Indian goods became an expression of patriotism. Rejecting British goods became an act of resistance.

The movement also strengthened revolutionary nationalism, particularly in Bengal. Secret societies began organizing young men who believed that armed struggle was necessary to overthrow colonial rule.

The British eventually annulled the partition in 1911, but the political impact could not be reversed. Nationalism had moved beyond petitions and public meetings and entered everyday life.

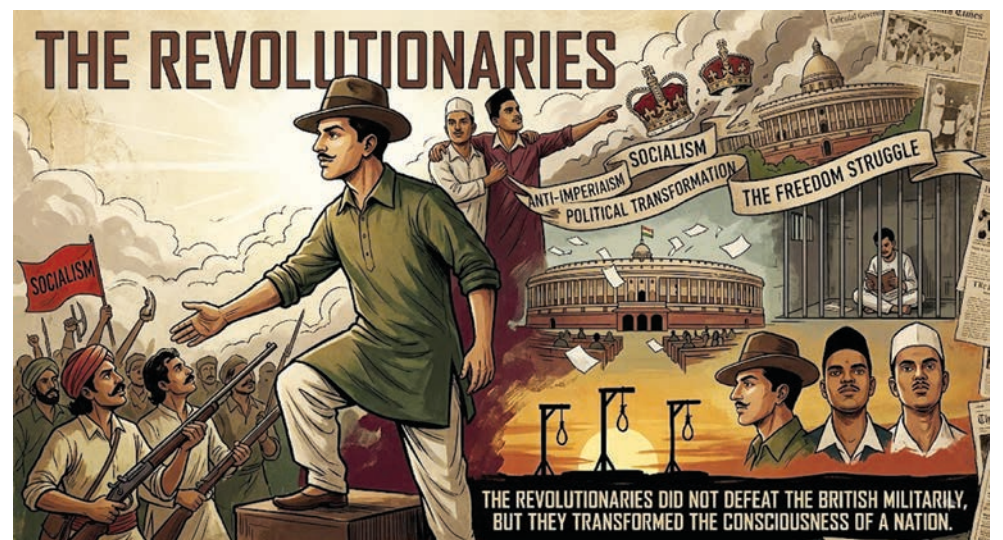
The Revolutionaries

The revolutionary stream of the freedom movement developed alongside constitutional and mass politics.

Organizations such as Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar emerged in Bengal. Revolutionary groups also appeared in other parts of India and among Indians living abroad.

Young men such as Khudiram Bose became symbols of revolutionary sacrifice. Madan Lal Dhingra carried the struggle overseas, assassinating Curzon Wyllie's in London in 1909 and later facing execution.

The revolutionary tradition reached a new stage in the 1920s. The Hindustan Republican Association brought together figures such as Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan and



Unlike some earlier revolutionaries, Bhagat Singh increasingly saw the struggle through the lens of socialism, anti-imperialism and political transformation. Illustration: Google Gemini

Chandrashekhar Azad.

The Kakori train action of 1925 became one of the most famous episodes in revolutionary history.

Then came Bhagat Singh.

Unlike some earlier revolutionaries, Bhagat Singh increasingly saw the struggle through the lens of socialism, anti-imperialism and political transformation. His actions in the Central Legislative Assembly, his hunger strike and his courtroom statements turned him into a figure whose influence extended far beyond revolutionary circles.

His execution in 1931, alongside Rajguru and Sukhdev, transformed him into one of the most enduring symbols of India's freedom struggle.

The revolutionaries did not defeat the British militarily.

Their significance lay elsewhere.

They demonstrated the depth of political anger among India's youth and created a culture of sacrifice that deeply influenced nationalist consciousness.

Gandhi and the Transformation of Nationalism

When Mohandas Karamchand

Gandhi returned to India in 1915, Indian nationalism was already developing rapidly. Yet Gandhi transformed its scale and character.

He introduced satyagraha as a method of political resistance based on truth, non-violence and civil disobedience.

His early campaigns in India were rooted in local grievances. In Champaran, he supported indigo cultivators facing exploitative arrangements. In Kheda, he backed peasants demanding relief from land revenue after crop failure. In Ahmedabad, he became involved in a dispute between textile workers and mill owners.

These campaigns established Gandhi's distinctive political method. He could connect local suffering with a larger national struggle.

A farmer could see the connection between his land and colonial policy.

A worker could understand his labor dispute as part of a broader struggle for justice.

Nationalism was no longer confined to political associations and urban elites.

It was becoming a movement of ordinary people.

JALLIANWALA BAGH: A TURNING POINT

The events of 1919 accelerated this transformation. The Rowlatt Act gave the colonial government extraordinary powers to deal with political dissent. Protests spread across India.

In Amritsar, tensions reached a devastating climax.

On 13 April 1919, thousands gathered at Jallianwala Bagh. Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer ordered troops to fire on the crowd. The massacre shocked India.

It also damaged the moral legitimacy of British rule in the eyes of many Indians who had previously believed that reform within the empire might be possible.

Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood. Gandhi moved towards a much more confrontational political strategy. Jallianwala Bagh became a permanent wound in the memory of the freedom struggle.

Non-Cooperation and the Rise of Mass Politics

In 1920, Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Indians were encouraged to withdraw from British institutions, boycott foreign goods and participate in peaceful political resistance. The movement coincided with the Khilafat movement and created a significant period of Hindu-Muslim political cooperation.

Across the country, students left government institutions, lawyers abandoned legal practice and people participated in boycotts.

The movement revealed the extraordinary potential of mass mobilisation. But it also exposed its dangers.

In February 1922, violence at Chauri Chaura resulted in the deaths of policemen. Gandhi, unwilling to continue a movement that had turned violent, suspended the campaign.

Many nationalists disagreed with the decision. Yet the significance of Non-Cooperation remained immense. The Congress had been transformed into a mass political organisation.

Purna Swaraj and the Demand for Complete Independence

By the end of the 1920s, the political vocabulary of the freedom movement had changed again.

The demand for greater self-government was increasingly replaced by the demand for complete independence.

At the Lahore session of the Congress in December 1929, under Jawaharlal Nehru's presidency, the Congress adopted the goal of Purna Swaraj.

26 January 1930 was observed as Independence Day.

It was a declaration of political intent.

The idea of an independent India was no longer a distant aspiration.

It had become the central objective of the national movement.

Salt: The Weapon of Civil Disobedience

Gandhi's next great campaign demonstrated his extraordinary understanding of political symbolism.

He chose salt.

It was an everyday necessity, consumed by rich and poor alike, and the colonial government imposed a tax and restrictions on its production.

In March 1930, Gandhi began his

famous march from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi.

When he reached the coast and broke the salt law, the act itself was simple.

Its political meaning was enormous.

Across India, people began making or selling salt in defiance of colonial regulations. Foreign cloth was boycotted. Women entered the movement in large numbers. Thousands were arrested.

The Salt Satyagraha demonstrated how civil disobedience could turn an apparently minor issue into a nationwide challenge to state authority.

The British could imprison leaders.

They could not easily imprison an entire population.

Women and the Freedom Struggle

The national movement also changed the public role of Indian women.

Sarojini Naidu became one of its most prominent leaders. Annie Besant had already played an important role in the Home Rule movement. Kasturba Gandhi participated in campaigns alongside her husband. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

promoted both political activism and social reconstruction.

During the 1940s, Aruna Asaf Ali became a powerful symbol of resistance during the Quit India Movement. Usha Mehta helped run the underground Congress Radio. Matangini Hazra became a martyr of the Quit India struggle.

In the northeast, Rani Gaidinliu resisted British authority.

During the Second World War, Captain Lakshmi Sahgal became the commander of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment of the Indian National Army.

Yet the history of women in the freedom struggle extends far beyond famous names. Thousands of women acted as messengers, organisers, fundraisers, protestors and underground workers.

Their participation changed the social meaning of nationalism.

The Forgotten Millions

The freedom struggle was not fought only in Congress sessions or major cities.

Across rural India, peasants challenged

revenue demands and oppressive landlords. Tribal communities resisted colonial restrictions on forests, land and traditional livelihoods. Workers organised strikes and protested exploitative working conditions. Plantation labourers and industrial workers became increasingly involved in political movements.

These struggles did not always fit neatly into the national narrative.

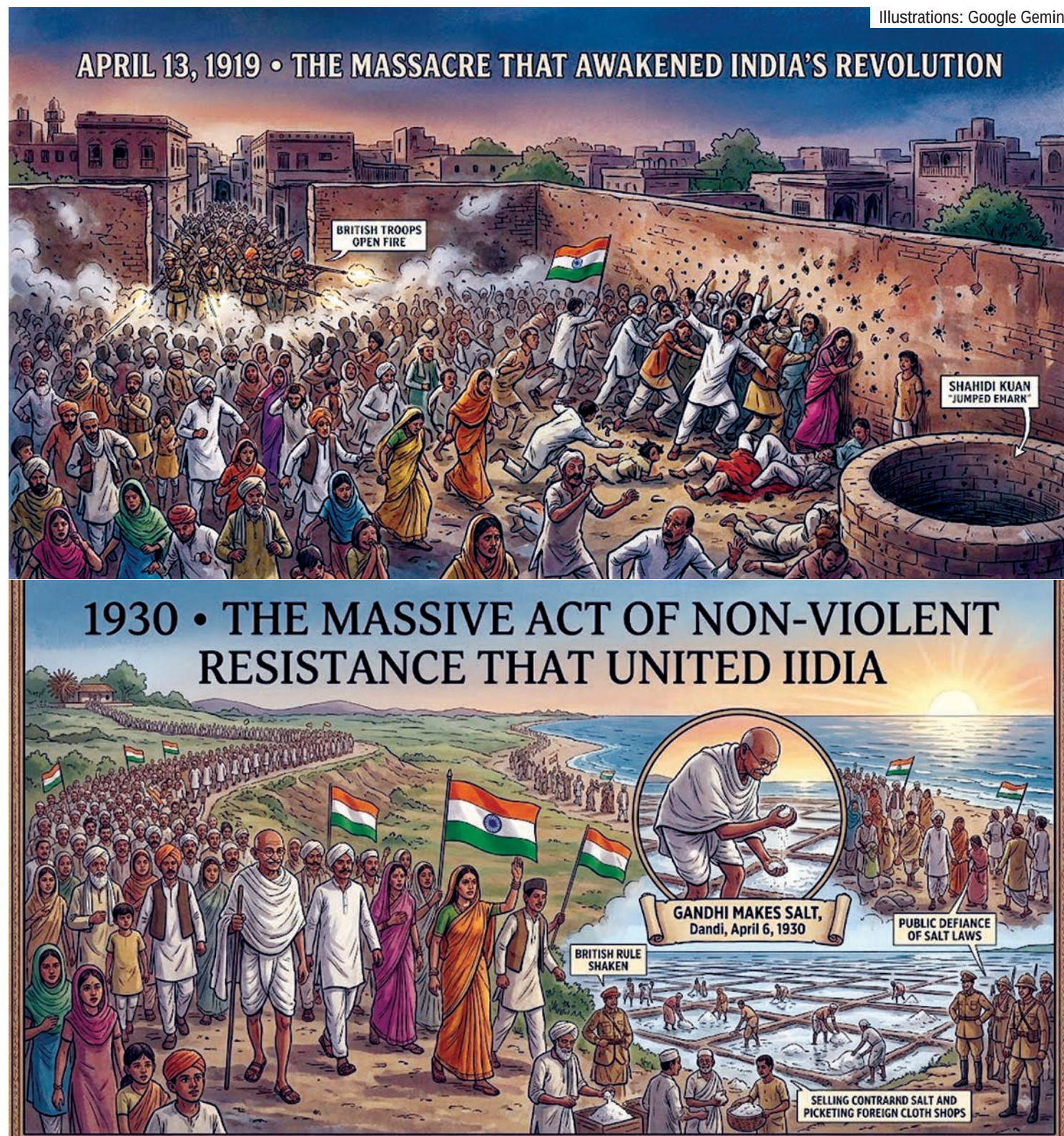
A peasant might join a movement because of land revenue rather than constitutional reform.

A tribal community might resist forest laws because its livelihood depended on traditional access to forests.

A worker might strike over wages and working conditions.

Yet these local struggles gradually became part of a larger challenge to colonial authority. India's freedom movement was therefore both national and local. Its strength came from the ability of the idea of freedom to acquire different meanings in different parts of the country.

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THE CONSTITUTIONAL BATTLE

Alongside mass movements, Indian leaders continued to engage with constitutional reforms.

The Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 expanded legislative councils but also introduced separate electorates for Muslims, a development that would have lasting political consequences.

The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 introduced dyarchy in the provinces.

The Government of India Act of 1935 went further, providing provincial autonomy and expanding the electorate.

The elections of 1937 brought Congress ministries to power in several provinces.

These governments gave Indian politicians valuable experience in administration. But the reforms remained limited. The central structure of colonial power remained intact. The political question was increasingly unavoidable: could India be governed indefinitely without Indian sovereignty?

The Second World War

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 created a new crisis.

Britain declared India to be at war without consulting Indian political leaders. Congress objected, and its provincial ministries resigned.

The war nevertheless transformed India's strategic importance.

Indian soldiers fought across multiple theatres. Indian industries expanded to support the war effort. The colonial government demanded resources from a population already facing economic hardship. For Indian nationalists, the contradiction became stark.

Britain claimed to be fighting for freedom and democracy while continuing to deny India independence.

The failure of the Cripps Mission in 1942 convinced many Congress leaders that further negotiations without mass pressure would not produce freedom.

Quit India: "Do or Die"

In August 1942, the Congress launched the Quit India Movement. Gandhi's message was uncompromising: "Do or Die." The British responded immediately.

Gandhi, Nehru and other major leaders were arrested. But the movement continued. Students, workers and ordinary citizens organised protests. Underground networks emerged. Secret communication systems were established. Aruna Asaf Ali became one of its most visible figures, while Usha Mehta's underground radio helped spread nationalist messages.

In some regions, parallel governments emerged briefly. The British eventually suppressed the movement, but the political damage to colonial authority was considerable. The message was clear: Britain could suppress resistance, but it could not indefinitely secure Indian consent.

Subhas Chandra Bose and the INA

At the same time, Subhas Chandra Bose was pursuing a radically different route to independence. Bose had broken with the Congress leadership over strategy and eventually escaped India in



Illustrations: Google Gemini



1941. After reaching Europe and later Southeast Asia, he assumed leadership of the Indian National Army and the Azad Hind movement.

The INA sought to enter India with Japanese military support and challenge British rule through armed struggle.

The campaign failed militarily at Imphal and Kohima.

But its political impact survived the battlefield.

When INA officers were put on trial at the Red Fort after the war, public sympathy for them was widespread.

The trials generated protests and united many Indians across political divisions.

The INA had not defeated the British Army.

But it had helped undermine the psychological foundations of imperial authority.

1946: The Empire Begins to Lose Its Grip

By 1945, Britain itself was exhausted by war.

The economic cost of maintaining the



empire had increased enormously.

In India, nationalist sentiment was stronger than ever.

The INA trials were followed by another dramatic development: the Royal Indian Navy revolt of 1946.

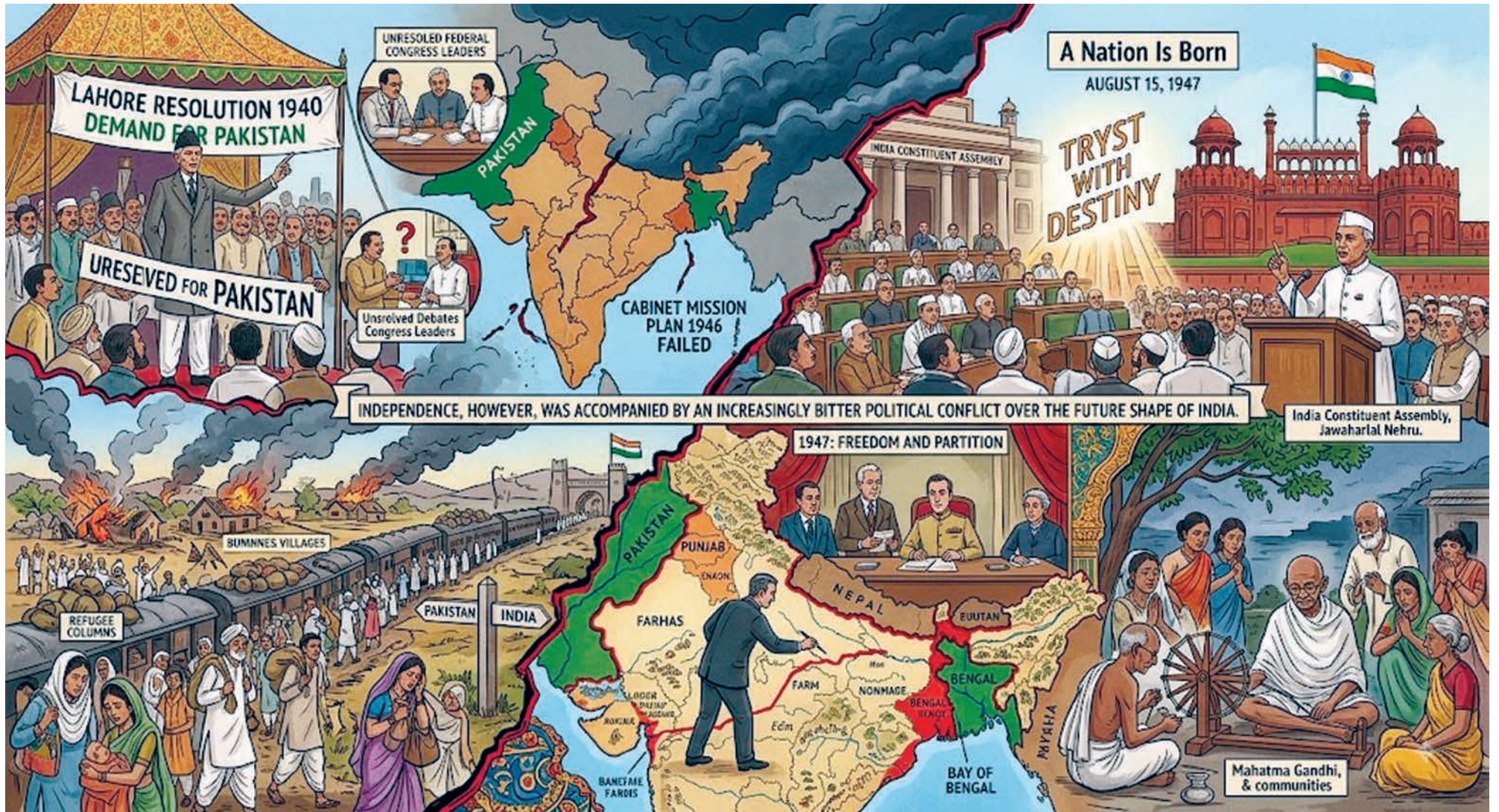
Indian naval ratings protested against poor conditions and racial discrimination. The unrest spread from

Bombay to other centres, and sections of the civilian population expressed support.

The revolt was eventually brought under control. But its significance was profound.

The British could no longer take the unquestioning loyalty of Indian servicemen for granted.

THE ROAD TO PARTITION



Illustrations: Google Gemini

Independence, however, was accompanied by an increasingly bitter political conflict over the future shape of India.

The Muslim League, under Muhammad Ali Jinnah, increasingly demanded a separate homeland for Muslims.

The Lahore Resolution of 1940 became central to the League's political programme.

Congress leaders continued to argue for a united India, though disagreements over federal arrangements and political representation remained unresolved.

The Cabinet Mission of 1946 attempted to find a compromise that could preserve Indian unity through a complex federal structure.

The plan ultimately failed.

Communal tensions escalated.

The Direct Action call by the Muslim League in August 1946 was followed by devastating communal violence, beginning with the Great Calcutta Killings and spreading elsewhere.

By 1947, the political question of independence had become inseparable from the question of Partition.

1947: Freedom and Partition

Lord Louis Mountbatten arrived in India as the last Viceroy with instructions to transfer power.

The timetable was accelerated.

The Mountbatten Plan accepted the division of British India.

The Indian Independence Act was passed by the British Parliament.

A new boundary had to be drawn.

The task fell to Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who had never previously visited India.



The Radcliffe Line divided Punjab and Bengal.

It separated villages, farms, railway lines and families.

Independence came with an extraordinary human cost.

Millions crossed the new borders.

Hindus and Sikhs moved towards India, while Muslims moved towards Pakistan. Communal violence killed vast numbers of people.

Homes were abandoned.

Families disappeared.

Refugee columns stretched across the Punjab countryside.

Trains became symbols of both

migration and horror.

The new India inherited not only freedom but also the enormous responsibility of rebuilding the lives of those displaced by Partition.

15 August 1947: A Nation Is Born

At midnight between 14 and 15 August, Jawaharlal Nehru addressed the Constituent Assembly.

India had finally achieved freedom.

His famous "Tryst with Destiny" speech captured the mixture of triumph and responsibility that defined the moment.

But Mahatma Gandhi was not in

Delhi celebrating.

He was in Bengal, working among communities torn apart by communal violence.

His presence there was a reminder that political independence was only one part of freedom.

The deeper challenge was to build a country in which different communities could live together with dignity and security.

On the morning of 15 August, the Indian flag was raised over a free nation.

The British Raj had ended.

But India's work had only begun.

THE MAKING OF MODERN INDIA

1947-2026: Democracy, Development and Transformation

On 15 August 1947, India inherited freedom. On 26 January 1950, it gave that freedom a constitutional shape. Between those two dates lay one of the most demanding transitions in modern history: the transformation of a newly independent, deeply divided and economically fragile country into a sovereign democratic republic.

Independence had ended British rule, but it had not ended the problems created by centuries of political fragmentation and colonial economic structures.

The new India faced the enormous task of integrating hundreds of princely states, rehabilitating millions displaced by Partition, establishing democratic institutions, protecting its borders, reviving an impoverished economy and creating a political system capable of accommodating extraordinary diversity.

There was little room for complacency. The country was poor, overwhelmingly rural and burdened by low literacy, inadequate healthcare and limited industrial capacity. Partition had left deep scars. Communal tensions remained raw, refugees needed homes and livelihoods, and questions surrounding Kashmir and the integration of princely states demanded immediate attention.

Yet the founders of the republic chose an ambitious path. They did not postpone democracy until India became prosperous. They did not restrict political participation to the educated or wealthy. They built a constitutional democracy based on universal adult franchise, fundamental rights, federalism, parliamentary government and an independent judiciary.

The making of modern India therefore began not with a single event but with a series of foundational decisions. The first was to hold the country together.

The second was to give it a Constitution.

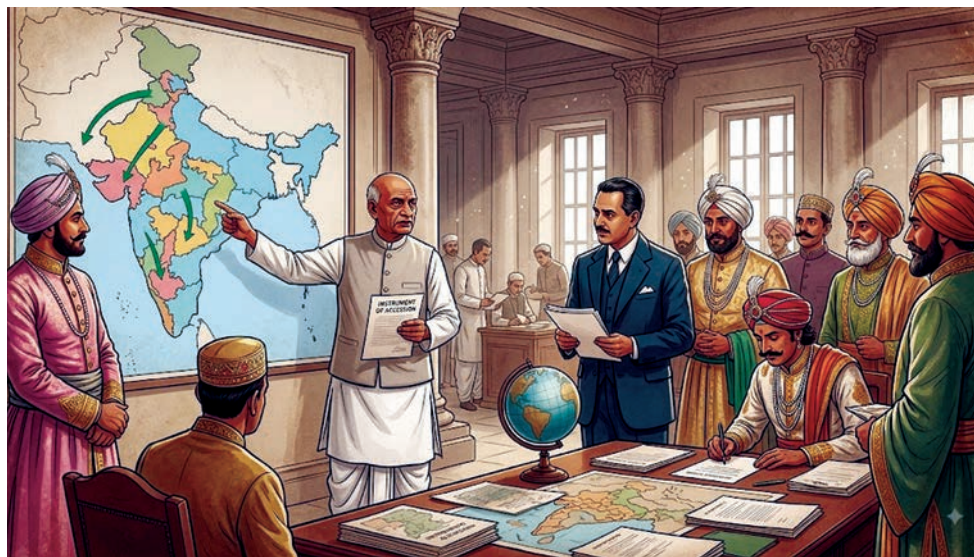
The third was to transform independence into republican citizenship.

1947: A NATION IS BORN, BUT THE WORK HAS JUST BEGUN

The celebrations of August 1947 unfolded against a landscape of extraordinary suffering.

India had become independent, but Partition had displaced millions. Refugees crossed the new borders on foot, by train and in convoys, leaving behind homes, farms, businesses and ancestral lands. Cities such as Delhi had to absorb enormous numbers of displaced people. Punjab and Bengal were particularly devastated by communal violence.

The new government faced the immediate task of restoring order and



There were more than 560 princely states of varying size and importance. Some were little more than estates; others possessed substantial territories, armies and populations. The man who emerged at the centre of this enormous political challenge was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's first deputy prime minister and home minister. Illustration: Google Gemini

rebuilding lives.

Jawaharlal Nehru became independent India's first prime minister. His government inherited a state apparatus designed by the colonial regime but now had to transform it into an instrument of democratic governance.

The priorities were enormous: food security, refugee rehabilitation, economic reconstruction, education, public health, infrastructure and national defence.

The country also faced the question of political geography.

British India had consisted of directly ruled provinces, but alongside them existed hundreds of princely states. Their rulers had enjoyed varying degrees of autonomy under British paramountcy. With British rule ending, paramountcy itself disappeared.

The question was simple but potentially explosive:

Would these states join India, join Pakistan or attempt to remain independent?

The answer would determine whether the new country emerged as a united political entity or as a fragmented collection of territories.

THE INTEGRATION OF INDIA

Few tasks in the early years of independence were more consequential than the integration of the princely states.

There were more than 560 princely states of varying size and importance. Some were little more than estates; others possessed substantial territories, armies and populations.

The man who emerged at the centre of this enormous political challenge was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's first deputy prime minister and home minister.

Working closely with V.P. Menon, the senior civil servant who played a crucial role in negotiations and administrative planning, Patel sought to persuade the rulers to accede to

India.

The Instrument of Accession provided the initial constitutional mechanism. By signing it, princely rulers transferred authority over specified subjects, principally defence, external affairs and communications, to the new Union.

For most states, accession occurred through negotiation.

But several cases were considerably more complicated.

Travancore and the Question of Independence

Travancore, a prosperous princely state in southern India, initially considered remaining independent.

Its location, resources and political importance made the issue significant.

Negotiations eventually led to accession to India.

Travancore's eventual integration illustrated an important characteristic of the process: not every challenge required military action. Political negotiation, persuasion and changing circumstances brought many rulers into the Union.

Junagadh: A Complicated Accession

Junagadh presented a different problem.

The princely state had a predominantly Hindu population but was ruled by a Muslim nawab who announced accession to Pakistan.

India objected, arguing that geography and the wishes of the population made the decision untenable. Political turmoil followed, and India eventually assumed control.

A plebiscite subsequently recorded overwhelming support for joining India.

Junagadh demonstrated the complexity of the principle of accession in a subcontinent where rulers and populations did not always share the same religious identity.

Hyderabad: The Largest Challenge

Hyderabad was perhaps the most formidable integration challenge.

The princely state was geographically surrounded by Indian territory and was ruled by the Nizam, who initially sought to maintain independence.

Negotiations continued for months.

The situation deteriorated amid political tensions and violence involving the Razakars, a paramilitary organisation associated with the Nizam's government.

In September 1948, India launched what it called "Operation Polo". The Hyderabad state forces surrendered within days.

Hyderabad was integrated into India.

The episode remains historically significant not only because of its political outcome but also because of the violence surrounding the process and the subsequent debates over the conduct of the operation.

Kashmir: The Unfinished Question

Kashmir presented an entirely different challenge.

Maharaja Hari Singh initially sought to remain independent.

In October 1947, tribal forces supported from Pakistan entered Kashmir. Faced with the invasion, the Maharaja sought military assistance from India and signed the Instrument of Accession.

Indian troops were subsequently deployed.

The First India-Pakistan War followed.

A ceasefire eventually came into effect, but the conflict left Kashmir divided and created one of the most enduring disputes in South Asian history.

Unlike most princely states, Kashmir's accession became entangled with war, international diplomacy and competing political claims.

It would remain a central issue in India-Pakistan relations for decades.

The Political Achievement of Integration

By the early 1950s, the map of India had been fundamentally transformed.

Former princely territories were incorporated into the Union. Many were merged into larger administrative units. The process eventually culminated in the States Reorganisation Act of 1956, which reorganised much of the country largely along linguistic lines. The integration of India was therefore not simply the work of signing accession documents.

It was the beginning of a much longer project: turning a politically fragmented subcontinent into a functioning federal republic.

Patel and Menon's achievement lay in ensuring that the political map inherited at independence did not become the permanent map of India.

THE CONSTITUTION: INDIA'S FOUNDING DOCUMENT

From Freedom to Constitutional Government

The Constitution was the bridge between the struggle for independence and the functioning of the republic.

The Constituent Assembly began its work in December 1946, before independence. After Partition, its composition changed, but the Assembly continued the task of designing the constitutional framework of the new nation. The debates were extensive.

India's founders had to answer fundamental questions.

What should citizenship mean?

How should power be divided between the Union and the states?

- What rights should individuals possess?
- How should minorities be protected?
- What should be the relationship between the legislature, executive and judiciary?
- How could democracy function in a country marked by enormous social inequality?

And perhaps the most ambitious question of all:

- Could universal democracy work in a country where most people were poor and many were not yet literate?
- The framers answered with a resounding yes.

Ambedkar and the Constitutional Vision

B.R. Ambedkar, chairman of the Drafting Committee, became the most prominent architect of the Constitution's legal framework. His contribution went beyond drafting legal provisions.

Ambedkar understood that political democracy could not survive indefinitely alongside deep social inequality. The Constitution therefore sought to establish political equality while providing a framework for social transformation.

The abolition of untouchability, equality before law, fundamental rights and safeguards for historically disadvantaged communities reflected this broader vision.

Ambedkar repeatedly warned that constitutional democracy required more than institutions.

It required constitutional morality.

Nehru and the Idea of a Democratic Nation

Jawaharlal Nehru played a major role in shaping the political philosophy of the new republic. His Objectives Resolution, adopted by the Constituent Assembly in 1947, provided an important foundation for the Constitution's vision of sovereignty, democracy, justice and equality.

Nehru's conception of India emphasised parliamentary democracy, scientific temper, secular citizenship and economic modernisation.

He believed political freedom had to be



Illustration: Google Gemini

followed by social and economic transformation.

Rajendra Prasad and the Assembly

As president of the Constituent Assembly, Rajendra Prasad presided over some of the most consequential debates in India's history.

The Assembly brought together lawyers, politicians, administrators, social reformers and representatives from different parts of the country.

Their political disagreements were often intense.

But the debates demonstrated an important characteristic of the

founding moment: India's Constitution was not imposed by a victorious leader.

It was debated, amended and argued over.

A Constitution Shaped by Many Voices

The making of the Constitution involved far more people than the handful of names most commonly remembered.

Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, K.M. Munshi and numerous other members made important contributions to the constitutional debates.

Women members of the Assembly also played significant roles.

Hansa Mehta advocated equality and women's rights and contributed to debates on fundamental rights.

Dakshayani Velayudhan, one of the first Dalit women to become a member of the Constituent Assembly, brought the perspective of communities historically subjected to social discrimination.

Other women members, including Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Durgabai Deshmukh and Sucheta Kripalani, contributed to discussions on rights, social reform and governance.

Their presence mattered.

The Constitution was being written not merely for the India that existed in 1947 but for the India that its framers hoped to create.

A DOCUMENT OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Constitution established a parliamentary system of government and a federal structure with a strong Union.

It guaranteed Fundamental Rights.

It established an independent judiciary.

It created institutions designed to prevent the concentration of political power.

The Directive Principles of State Policy articulated social and economic goals for the state. The Constitution also adopted universal adult franchise.

This was revolutionary. India did not gradually expand voting rights over generations.

It began its democratic life by giving adult citizens the right to vote.

The decision reflected confidence in ordinary Indians.

A landless labourer and a wealthy industrialist were equal in the voting booth.

A village woman and a university professor possessed the same vote.

The republic would ultimately be judged by whether it could convert this political equality into broader social and economic opportunity.

THE CONSTITUTION IS ADOPTED

The Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution on 26 November 1949.

That date is now observed as Constitution Day.

The Constitution came into force on 26 January 1950.

The choice of 26 January was deeply symbolic.

Two decades earlier, the national movement had observed 26 January 1930 as the day of Purna Swaraj, or complete independence.

Thus, the Republic deliberately connected the constitutional present with the nationalist aspirations of the freedom struggle.

The journey from colonial subject to constitutional citizen had reached its formal conclusion.

REPUBLIC DAY: INDIA BECOMES A REPUBLIC

At midnight on 14-15 August 1947, India had become independent.

But it remained a Dominion within the Commonwealth, with the British monarch as its formal head of state and the Governor-General representing the Crown.

On 26 January 1950, that transitional arrangement ended.

The Constitution came into force.

India became a sovereign democratic republic.

Rajendra Prasad became the first President of India.

The transformation was profound.

India was no longer governed under an imperial constitutional framework.

Its supreme legal authority now came from a Constitution created by representatives of the Indian people.

The Republic therefore represented something larger than a change in ceremony.

It marked a change in the source of political legitimacy.

The Crown was gone.

The citizen stood at the centre of the new political order.

Why 26 January?

The date was deliberately chosen to honour the earlier declaration of Purna Swaraj.

On 26 January 1930, Indians had pledged themselves to complete independence.

Twenty years later, the Constitution transformed that aspiration into a functioning republic.

The symbolism was unmistakable.

The freedom struggle had demanded sovereignty.

The Constitution gave sovereignty institutional form.

The First Republic Day

The first Republic Day celebrations were held in New Delhi on 26 January 1950.

The ceremony was modest compared with the grand spectacle that Republic Day would eventually become.

Over the decades, the day evolved into one of India's most important national occasions, combining military ceremony, cultural expression, technological achievement and a display of India's diversity.

The Republic Day parade became a visual representation of the country itself.

Its armed forces symbolised national security.

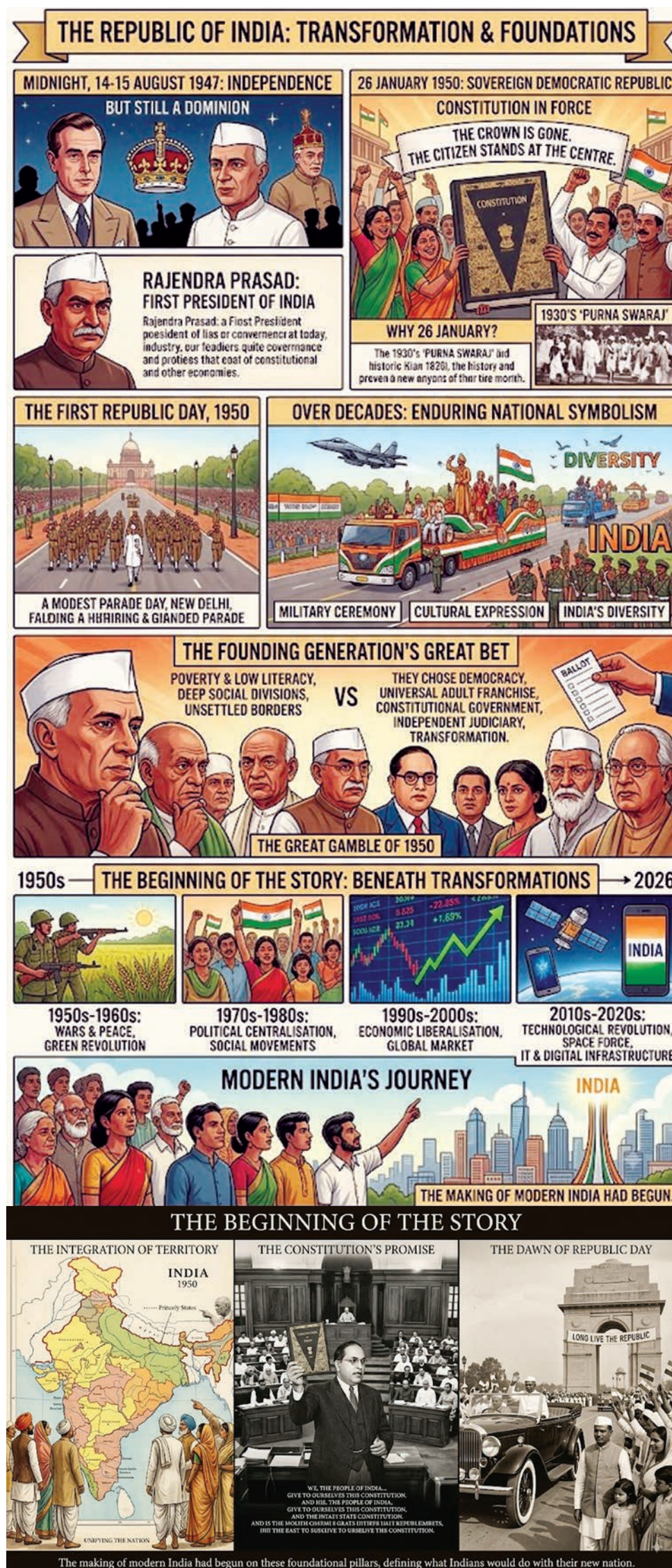
Its tableaux represented different states and cultural traditions.

Its schoolchildren and performers represented a new generation.

Its ceremonial traditions connected the modern republic with the historical memory of the freedom struggle.

THE FOUNDING GENERATION'S GREAT BET

The men and women who built the early republic faced a fundamental



The India that emerged in 1950 was very different from the India of 2026. The country would go through wars and peace, food shortages and the Green Revolution, state-led industrialisation and economic liberalisation, political centralisation and federal assertion, social movements and technological revolutions. Illustrations: Google Gemini

dilemma.

- India was poor.
- Its institutions were young.
- Its population was vast.
- Its social divisions were deep.
- Its borders were unsettled.
- Its literacy rate was low.
- Yet its founders chose democracy.
- They chose elections rather than authoritarian rule.
- They chose universal adult franchise rather than restricted voting.
- They chose constitutional government rather than rule by decree.
- They chose federalism rather than excessive centralisation.
- They chose an independent judiciary rather than unchecked executive power.
- And they chose a Constitution that sought not merely to preserve the society they inherited but to transform it.
- That was the great gamble of 1950.
- The subsequent history of India—from elections and economic planning to wars, social movements, technological transformation, liberalisation and the expansion of the middle class—would repeatedly test that founding choice.
- But the institutional framework survived.

THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY

The India that emerged in 1950 was very different from the India of 2026.

The country would go through wars and peace, food shortages and the Green Revolution, state-led industrialisation and economic liberalisation, political centralisation and federal assertion, social movements and technological revolutions.

New states would be created.

New political parties would emerge. The economy would change fundamentally.

Cities would expand.

India would move from dependence on imported food to becoming a major agricultural producer, from a largely agrarian economy to a diversified industrial and services economy, and from limited technological capacity to a major force in space, information technology, pharmaceuticals and digital infrastructure.

But beneath these transformations lies the same foundational framework created in the republic's earliest years.

The integration of territory created the political India.

The Constitution created the institutional India.

Republic Day gave that constitutional order its enduring national symbolism.

The next chapters of the story would be about what Indians did with these foundations.

The making of modern India had begun.

POLITICAL INDIA

Democracy, Power and the Making of a Political Nation

When India became independent in 1947, it inherited a state but had to build a democratic political system almost from the ground up. The country was vast, poor, deeply diverse and still recovering from Partition. Its political institutions had been created for colonial administration, not popular government. Yet India's founding generation made a remarkable choice: democracy would not be postponed until the country became richer, more educated or more stable. It would begin immediately.

Over the next eight decades, Indian politics became a story of continuity and disruption. Jawaharlal Nehru established the early traditions of parliamentary democracy and institution-building. Congress dominated the first decades, but the rise of regional parties, social movements and new political forces gradually transformed the party system. Wars with China and Pakistan altered the country's understanding of national security. Indira Gandhi's centralisation of power culminated in the Emergency, followed by the historic electoral verdict of 1977. The 1980s and 1990s brought coalition governments, Mandal politics and the rise of regional forces. Economic liberalisation in 1991 changed the aspirations and expectations of voters. The BJP's emergence as a major national force eventually produced a new era of majority governments.

Through these changes, however, one institution remained at the heart of the political system: the voter.

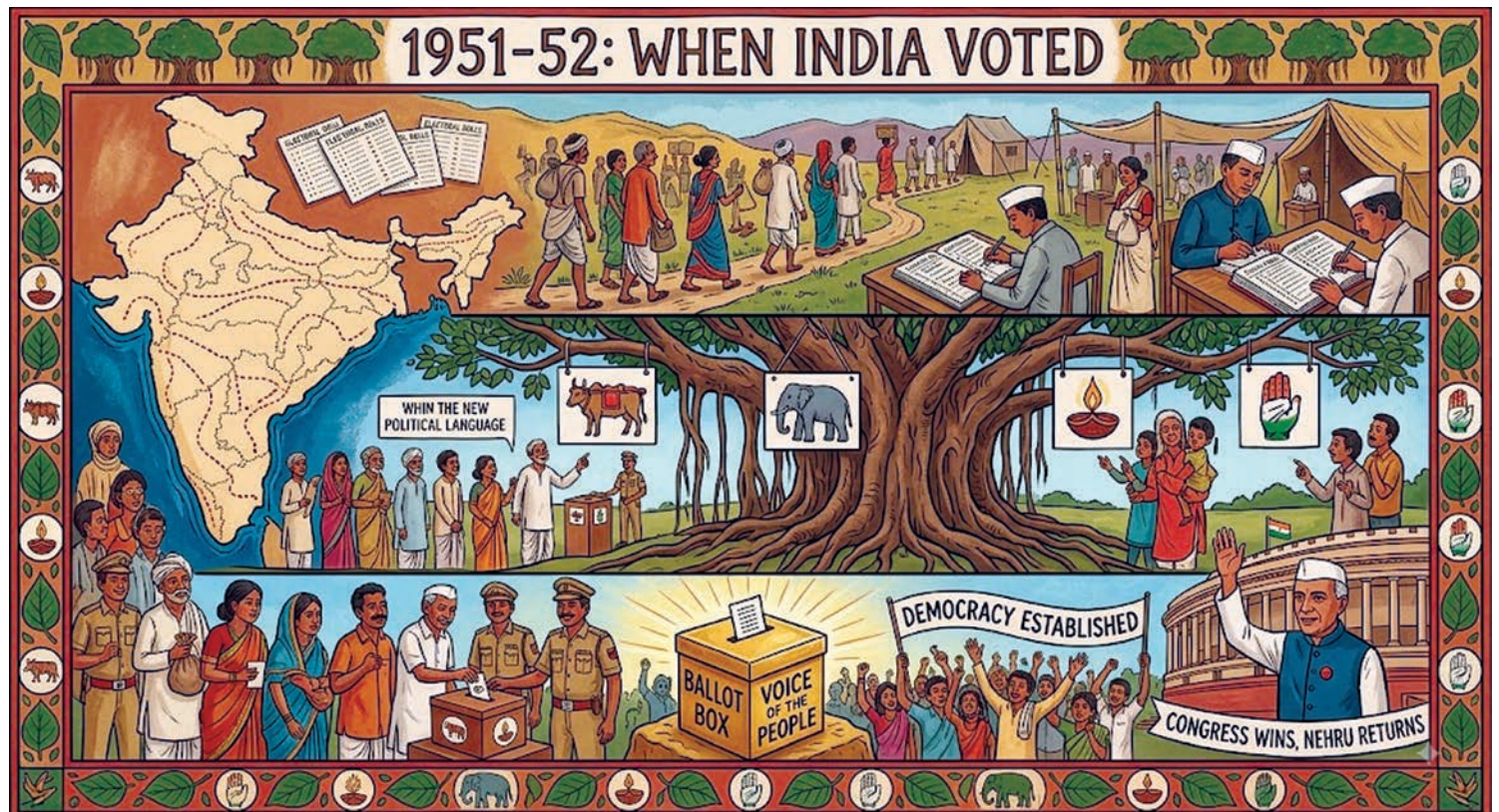
Nehru's India: Building Democracy from the Ground Up

The first years of the republic were dominated by the enormous challenge of building a functioning nation-state. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, believed that political democracy, economic development and scientific modernization had to advance together.

The institutions established during these years became the framework within which Indian politics would operate for generations. Parliament was given a central role in national life. The judiciary was expected to function independently. The Election Commission was established to supervise elections. The civil services were reorganized to serve an independent India. Universities, scientific institutions, research laboratories and public-sector enterprises became instruments of national development.

Nehru's political vision was shaped by several ideas: parliamentary democracy, secular citizenship, economic planning, scientific temper and an independent foreign policy. He believed that India had to modernize without losing its democratic character.

This was an extraordinary



Held between 1951 and 1952, the election involved an electorate of extraordinary size. Most Indians had never voted before. Literacy was low, communications were difficult and millions lived in remote rural areas. Illustration: Google Gemini

experiment. Many newly independent countries moved towards military rule or authoritarian government. India did not. Its leaders accepted that governments would derive legitimacy from elections and that political opposition was a legitimate part of public life.

The system was not perfect. Congress dominated politics, the bureaucracy became powerful and economic controls sometimes produced inefficiency. Yet the basic democratic framework survived.

That achievement would become one of the defining legacies of the republic's first generation.

1951-52: When India Voted

Nothing demonstrated the ambition of the new republic more clearly than its first general election.

Held between 1951 and 1952, the election involved an electorate of extraordinary size. Most Indians had never voted before. Literacy was low, communications were difficult and millions lived in remote rural areas.

Yet the Election Commission undertook the enormous task of creating electoral rolls, establishing polling stations and transporting ballot boxes across the country.

The election also required a new political language. For millions who could not read, party symbols became essential. The symbols on the ballot helped voters identify their preferred candidates and parties.

The result was a landmark in world history.

India had not waited for universal education or prosperity before introducing universal adult suffrage. Ordinary Indians were given the right

to determine who would govern them.

The Congress won a commanding victory, and Nehru returned as prime minister. But the most important winner was the democratic system itself.

The first election established a principle that would define the republic: political power would ultimately be decided by the ballot box.

Language, Identity and the Reorganization of States

The political map created at independence did not remain unchanged.

One of the earliest major challenges came from demands for states based on language. In a country where language was closely linked with identity, culture and regional history, many people believed that administration should reflect linguistic realities.

The death of Potti Sriramulu after a prolonged fast demanding a separate Telugu-speaking state brought the issue to the national forefront. Andhra State was created in 1953.

The movement prompted a broader examination of India's internal boundaries. The States Reorganization Commission studied the issue, and the States Reorganization Act of 1956 redrew much of the map.

The process continued. Maharashtra and Gujarat were created in 1960. Punjab was reorganised in 1966, leading to the creation of Haryana and changes in the boundaries of Punjab. Later decades brought the creation of several new states, including Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Telangana.

The reorganization of India demonstrated the flexibility of the

Union.

Regional identity did not necessarily have to threaten national unity. By accommodating linguistic aspirations within the constitutional framework, India showed that federalism could become a means of managing diversity rather than suppressing it.

The map of India changed.

The idea of India did not.

The Congress Era

For the first three decades after independence, the Congress dominated national politics.

Its strength came from its history as the principal organization of the freedom struggle, its extensive grassroots network and its ability to accommodate different ideological and social groups.

Congress was more than a conventional political party. It was a broad political coalition containing socialists, conservatives, centrists, regional leaders and competing interest groups.

Opposition parties existed and regularly contested elections, but Congress remained the central force of Indian politics.

This dominance gave the early republic political stability. It also created a distinctive form of politics in which many ideological battles were fought inside Congress itself.

Over time, however, this system began to weaken.

New social groups demanded political representation. Regional identities became stronger. Opposition parties expanded their influence.

The era of one-party dominance would eventually give way to a more competitive political system.

1962: THE WAR THAT CHANGED INDIA'S STRATEGIC THINKING

The early republic had hoped that diplomacy and peaceful coexistence could provide the foundation for relations with its neighbors.

The relationship with China shattered that confidence.

Border disputes and deteriorating relations culminated in the 1962 war. India's military performance was deeply disappointing, and the defeat generated a national reassessment of defense policy.

The country began strengthening its armed forces and defense infrastructure.

The war also changed the political atmosphere.

Foreign policy could no longer be viewed separately from military preparedness. India's leaders increasingly recognised that national sovereignty required both diplomatic strength and credible defence capabilities.

The experience would influence Indian strategic thinking for decades.

1965 and 1971: War, Security and National Confidence

The conflict with Pakistan in 1965 reinforced the importance of military preparedness.

Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri became associated with the slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan", linking the security of the country with the productivity of its farmers.

The war ended through the Tashkent Agreement in January 1966, but Shastri died shortly afterwards.

Five years later came the war that transformed India's regional position.

Political repression and conflict in East Pakistan produced a massive refugee crisis in India. Tensions escalated, and in December 1971 India entered the war.

The conflict ended with the surrender of Pakistani forces in East Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh.

The victory transformed Indira Gandhi's political standing.

India had demonstrated its military strength, and the war became one of the defining moments of the country's post-independence history.

Indira Gandhi: The Centralization of Power

Indira Gandhi became prime minister in 1966 and gradually emerged from the shadow of the Congress establishment.

Her political rise was accompanied by a growing emphasis on direct popular mobilization.

The 1969 split in Congress marked a decisive turning point. Indira Gandhi increasingly presented herself as the champion of the poor and disadvantaged, using the slogan "Garibi Hatao" as a powerful political message.

Bank nationalization and other measures strengthened her image as a leader willing to challenge established economic interests.

The 1971 election produced a major victory, followed later that year by India's military success in the Bangladesh war.

But alongside her political

achievements came an increasing concentration of authority around the prime minister's office.

The Congress organization became more centralized.

The balance between leader, party and institutions changed.

That transformation would reach its most controversial point in 1975.

The Emergency: When Democracy Was Suspended

On 25 June 1975, India entered a period that remains the darkest chapter in its democratic history.

The Emergency curtailed civil liberties, imposed press censorship and led to the arrest of opposition leaders and political activists. The government defended the decision as necessary to preserve national stability, while critics regarded it as a fundamental assault on democratic freedoms.

The period also witnessed serious abuses of state power, including coercive sterilisation drives and forced evictions in some areas.

The Emergency demonstrated that democratic institutions could not be taken for granted.

Parliamentary democracy existed, but institutions could be weakened when political authority became excessively concentrated.

Yet the eventual restoration of elections produced one of the most important demonstrations of democratic resilience in Indian history.

In 1977, the people were given the opportunity to pass judgment.

They did.

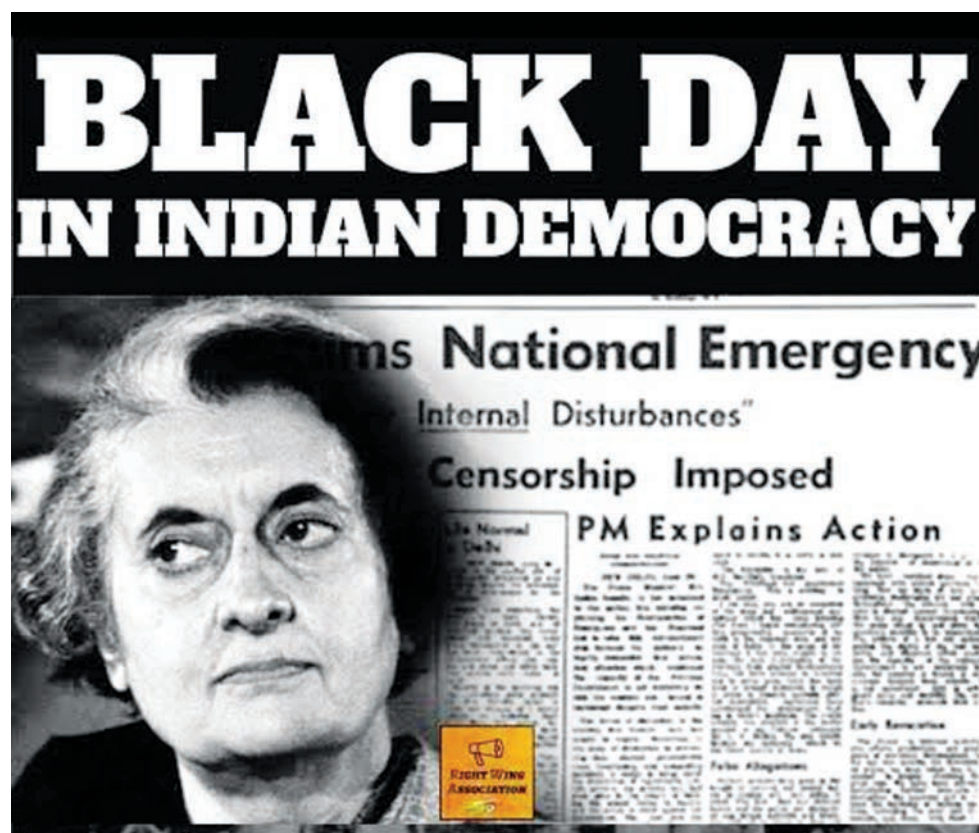
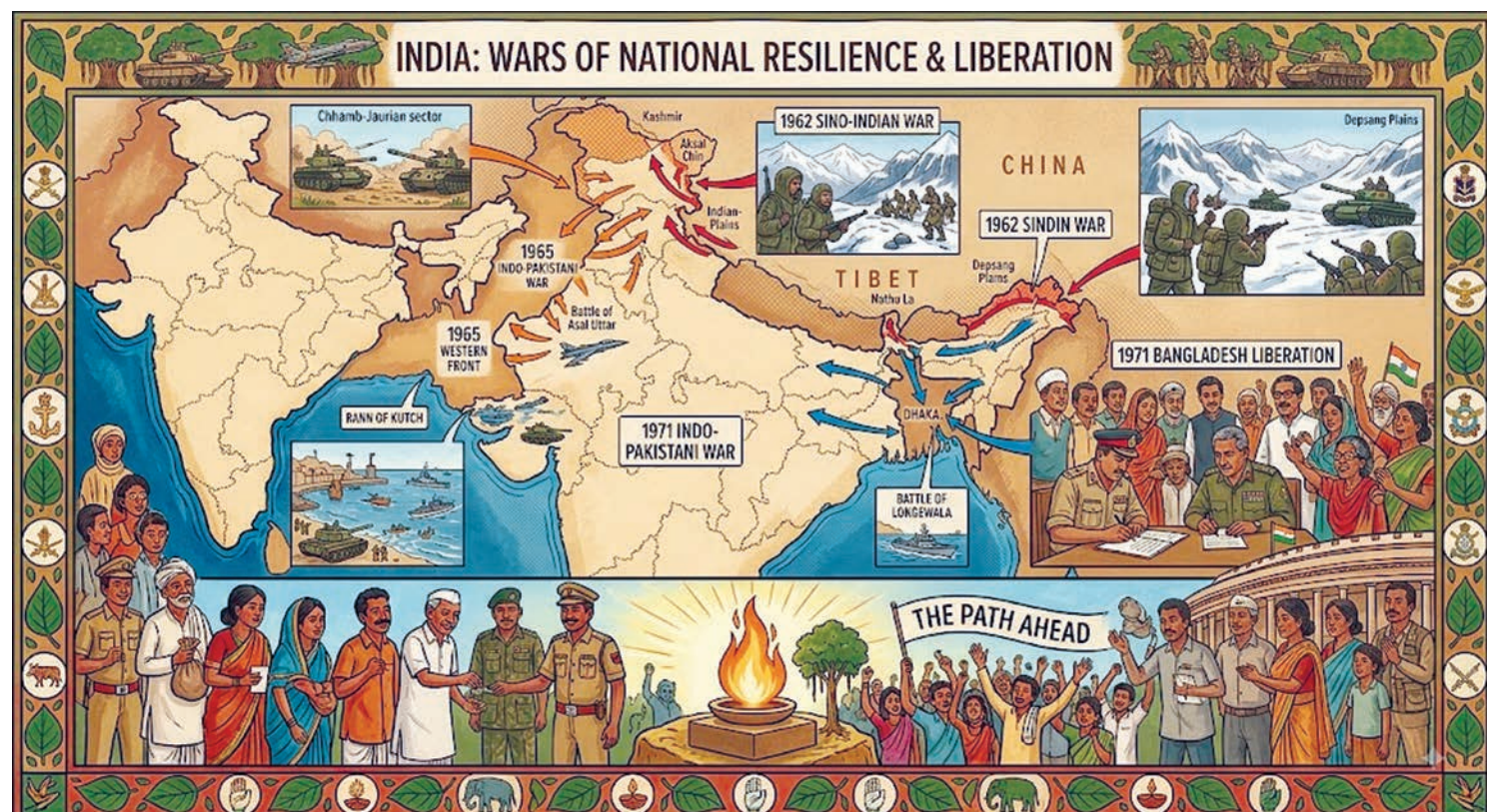
1977: The Voter Delivers a Verdict

The 1977 general election changed Indian politics.

The Congress was defeated at the national level for the first time since independence.

The Janata Party, formed from several opposition groups, came to power, and Morarji Desai became prime minister.

The government struggled with



internal divisions and eventually collapsed. But its historical significance went far beyond its relatively brief tenure.

The election demonstrated that no political party was permanently entitled to govern India.

The voter could remove even the most powerful government.

The ballot box had become an instrument of democratic accountability.

The political system would never again be quite the same.

The Rise of Coalition India

The decades that followed witnessed increasing political fragmentation.

The Congress remained a major force, but regional parties and new social movements became increasingly influential.

The 1989 election opened a prolonged period of coalition politics at the

Centre. Governments increasingly depended on alliances among parties with different ideological and regional interests.

This period also saw the rise of identity-based political mobilization.

The implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations intensified debates over caste, representation and reservations. At the same time, the Ram Janmabhoomi movement contributed to the expansion of the BJP.

Regional parties gained unprecedented importance.

The politics of Delhi increasingly depended on what happened in Lucknow, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Patna, Mumbai and other state capitals.

Coalition politics therefore transformed Indian federalism in practice.

The states became more powerful political actors.

1991: THE POLITICAL MEANING OF ECONOMIC CHANGE

The economic crisis of 1991 marked another watershed.

India faced a severe balance-of-payments crisis and was forced to reconsider the economic model that had dominated the first four decades after independence.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh introduced sweeping reforms.

Industrial licensing was reduced.

Trade barriers were lowered.

Private enterprise received greater freedom.

Foreign investment was encouraged.

The reforms changed the economy, but their political consequences were equally profound.

A new middle class expanded.

Urban aspirations grew.

Private enterprise became increasingly important.

Telecommunications and information technology transformed economic life.

The voter increasingly expected not only political freedom but jobs, better roads, electricity, education, housing, consumer choice and economic opportunity.

Politics was entering the age of aspiration.

Regional Parties Redraw the Political Balance

As the Congress system weakened, regional parties emerged as powerful political forces.

In Tamil Nadu, the Dravidian parties transformed state politics. In Andhra Pradesh, the Telugu Desam Party became a major regional force. In Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, parties representing different caste and social constituencies changed the political balance. Maharashtra, West Bengal, Odisha, Punjab and other states developed their own powerful political formations.

Regional parties brought new voices into national politics.

They also forced national governments to negotiate.

The era when Delhi could dominate the political system without substantial consultation with state leaders was disappearing.

India was becoming more politically federal.

The rise of regional parties also represented a broader democratization of political power.

Groups that had historically been underrepresented increasingly found political platforms of their own.

The BJP's Rise

The emergence of the BJP as a major national force fundamentally transformed Indian politics.

The party expanded rapidly from the late 1980s, drawing strength from organizational growth, ideological mobilization and the Ram Janmabhoomi movement.

Its rise changed the national political competition.

In 1996, the BJP emerged as the largest party in the Lok Sabha. Although its first government lasted only briefly, the party subsequently



PM PV Narasimha Rao with Finance Minister Manmohan Singh and others.

built a durable coalition under Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The National Democratic Alliance demonstrated that the BJP could govern a diverse country through coalition politics.

The 1998 and 1999 elections established the party as a central force in national government.

The Vajpayee years coincided with significant developments in infrastructure, telecommunications and India's strategic capabilities, including the nuclear tests of 1998.

The political centre of gravity had shifted.

Congress was no longer the natural default party of national government.

From Coalition Governments to Majority Rule

The first decade of the 21st century was dominated by coalition politics.

The United Progressive Alliance came to power in 2004 and returned in 2009, with Manmohan Singh serving as prime minister.

The period witnessed high economic growth during much of the 2000s and the expansion of major welfare programs. The Right to Information Act and the rural employment guarantee program became important elements of the policy landscape.

But the government also faced controversies over corruption, policy-making and coalition constraints.

In 2014, the political system entered another new phase.

The BJP won a majority in the Lok Sabha under Narendra Modi.

It was the first time since 1984 that a single party had secured a majority on its own.

The party returned with another majority in 2019.

The political system had therefore moved through a remarkable cycle: from Congress dominance to fragmentation, from fragmentation to coalition government, and from coalition politics to a new era of majority governments.

The Digital Political Age

The political India of the 21st century is also a profoundly different communications environment.

Political campaigns that once depended on newspapers, posters, public meetings and radio have expanded into television, smartphones and social media.

Leaders can communicate directly with millions of citizens.

Political messaging travels instantly. Campaigns can be national, regional and hyperlocal at the same time.

Digital politics has increased political engagement but has also intensified concerns about misinformation, polarization and the quality of public debate.

The modern voter is therefore exposed to an unprecedented volume of

political information.

The challenge is no longer simply access to information.

It is determining what information deserves trust.

The Indian Voter: The Real Constant

Political parties have changed.

Governments have fallen.

New states have emerged.

Ideologies have evolved.

Economic policies have been transformed.

But the Indian voter has remained at the centre of the system.

The first-time voters of 1951-52 belonged to a largely rural and economically poor country. Today's electorate is larger, younger in many respects, more urban, more connected and exposed to vastly greater political information.

Yet the Indian voter cannot be reduced to a single political category.

Voting behavior varies according to region, caste, community, class, age, gender, economic circumstances, leadership preferences and local issues.

A national election and a state election can produce very different outcomes because voters often distinguish between levels of government.

This complexity is one of the defining features of Indian democracy.

India does not have one political conversation.

It has hundreds of conversations taking place simultaneously.

Institutions and the Democratic Test

Elections are the most visible expression of Indian democracy, but democracy is larger than elections.

Its foundations also include Parliament, the judiciary, the Election Commission, the federal system, an independent civil service, the media, political parties and civil society.

Every generation has tested these institutions.

The Emergency demonstrated how vulnerable democratic freedoms can become when political power is concentrated.

The 1977 election demonstrated the ability of voters to restore political accountability.

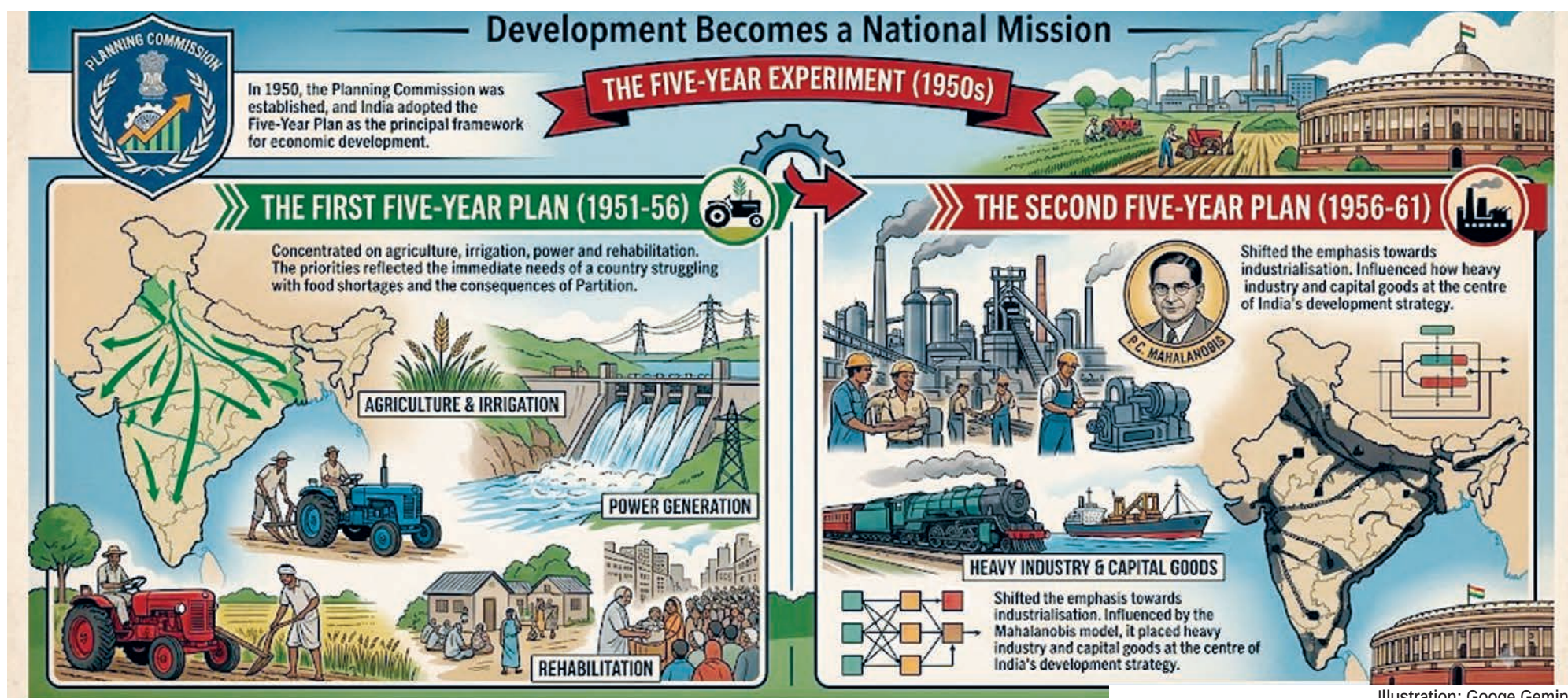
Coalition governments demonstrated that power could be dispersed across parties and regions.



United we stand: Manmohan Singh with Sonia Gandhi and other leaders of the UPA after the alliance completed three years in power in May 2007 | PTI

ECONOMIC INDIA

From Scarcity to Scale: The Making of a Modern Economy



When India became independent in 1947, political freedom arrived in a country facing enormous economic challenges. The colonial economy had left behind low industrial capacity, widespread poverty, weak infrastructure, limited access to education and healthcare, and an agriculture sector heavily dependent on the monsoon. Partition further disrupted markets, production and trade, while millions of refugees needed rehabilitation.

The economic journey of independent India was therefore never simply about increasing national income. It was about building the foundations of a modern economy almost from scratch. The early republic chose planning, public investment and state-led industrialisation. Dams, steel plants, power projects and scientific institutions became symbols of a country determined to overcome underdevelopment. The Green Revolution eventually transformed India's food economy.

But the same development model created an elaborate system of controls. The Licence Raj restricted private enterprise and protected domestic industries from global competition. By 1991, an economic crisis forced a fundamental change of direction. Liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation opened the economy to greater competition and international markets.

The decades since have witnessed an extraordinary transformation. Information technology connected India to the global economy. A large middle class emerged. Roads, airports, railways and digital networks expanded. Mobile phones and digital payments changed

everyday economic life.

Yet the story remains unfinished. India still faces the challenges of employment, inequality, agricultural productivity, manufacturing, regional disparities and sustainable growth.

The economic history of independent India is therefore a story not merely of growth, but of experimentation, reform, resilience and aspiration.

THE ECONOMY INDIA INHERITED IN 1947

Freedom in a Poor Economy

The India that became independent in 1947 was predominantly rural and poor. Agriculture employed the overwhelming majority of the population, but productivity remained low. Irrigation facilities were limited, farming depended heavily on the monsoon, and modern inputs such as fertilisers, improved seeds and mechanised equipment were not widely available.

Industrial development existed, but it was limited in scale and concentrated in a few sectors and regions. India had important textile, mining, steel, plantation and manufacturing industries, but it lacked the broad industrial base required to support rapid economic transformation.

Infrastructure presented another major challenge. Railways existed, but much of the transport system had been designed around colonial economic and administrative requirements. Electricity generation was limited, roads were inadequate and modern communications were still in their infancy.

The human-development picture was equally difficult. Literacy was low, life expectancy was poor and access to healthcare was severely limited.

Partition made the situation even

more complicated. Agricultural regions, markets, industries and transport routes were divided by the new international border. Millions of refugees had to be rehabilitated and provided with homes and livelihoods.

India therefore began its economic life as an independent country with enormous needs and limited resources.

The Development Challenge

The question confronting the leaders of the new republic was fundamental: how could India transform itself from a poor, largely agrarian economy into a modern industrial nation?

The answer was not left entirely to the market.

The state would play a central role.

The government would invest in infrastructure, industry, agriculture, science and education. It would guide economic development and attempt to direct scarce resources towards sectors considered essential for national transformation.

The objective was economic independence as much as economic growth.

PLANNING INDIA: THE FIVE-YEAR EXPERIMENT

Development Becomes a National Mission

In 1950, the Planning Commission was established, and India adopted the Five-Year Plan as the principal framework for economic development.

The First Five-Year Plan, covering 1951-56, concentrated on agriculture, irrigation, power and rehabilitation. The priorities reflected the immediate needs of a country struggling with food shortages and the consequences of Partition.

The Second Five-Year Plan shifted the

emphasis towards industrialisation. Influenced by the Mahalanobis model, it placed heavy industry and capital goods at the centre of India's development strategy.

The philosophy was clear. India needed to develop the capacity to manufacture machines, equipment and industrial goods rather than remain dependent on imports.

Large public-sector enterprises were established. Steel plants, engineering companies, power stations, mining projects and research institutions became the building blocks of the new economy.

Planning also sought to spread industrial development beyond the traditional commercial centres. Public investment was used to create economic activity in regions that had previously lacked major industries.

The State as Builder

The government became not merely a regulator but a producer, investor and planner.

Public-sector enterprises entered industries ranging from steel and coal to heavy engineering, petroleum, telecommunications and transport.

The model was particularly suited to projects requiring enormous capital and long gestation periods.

However, the system gradually became bureaucratic.

Permissions multiplied.

Government controls expanded.

Public enterprises were not always efficient. Competition remained limited.

The planning system succeeded in creating an industrial and scientific foundation, but it also created a regulatory structure that would eventually become an obstacle to faster growth.

DAMS, STEEL AND HEAVY INDUSTRY

Building the Industrial Nation

The physical symbols of early economic planning were enormous.

Dams rose across rivers.

Steel plants emerged in new industrial centres.

Power stations expanded.

Factories producing machinery and industrial equipment were established.

For Nehru and the leaders of the early republic, these projects represented more than economic infrastructure. They represented India's determination to become a modern industrial nation.

The Bhakra-Nangal project became one of the most prominent symbols of the new development philosophy, providing irrigation and power while demonstrating the technological ambitions of the young republic.

Steel plants at Bhilai, Rourkela and Durgapur became landmarks of industrialisation.

The public sector became a vehicle through which the government could build strategic industries that private capital was then unable or unwilling to finance on the required scale.

The Price of Development

The industrialisation drive also exposed difficult questions.

Large projects displaced communities.

Land acquisition affected farmers and tribal populations.

Forests and ecosystems were transformed.

Rehabilitation was often inadequate.

Over time, these issues generated powerful environmental and social movements.

India's development story therefore carried a continuing tension: how could the country modernise rapidly without imposing disproportionate costs on vulnerable communities and the environment?

THE GREEN REVOLUTION: HOW INDIA DEFEATED HUNGER

If industrialisation was one great challenge of the early republic, food security was another.

India had experienced severe food shortages and depended heavily on imports. A growing population made the problem more urgent.

The Green Revolution changed the situation.

High-yielding varieties of wheat and rice were introduced alongside irrigation, fertilisers, pesticides, improved agricultural practices and greater access to credit.

The transformation was particularly rapid in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh.

Agricultural production increased dramatically.

India gradually moved away from chronic dependence on imported grain.

The achievement was much more than an agricultural success.

It was a matter of national sovereignty.

A country unable to feed its own population was vulnerable to international pressure. Food security therefore became a pillar of economic independence.

An Uneven Transformation

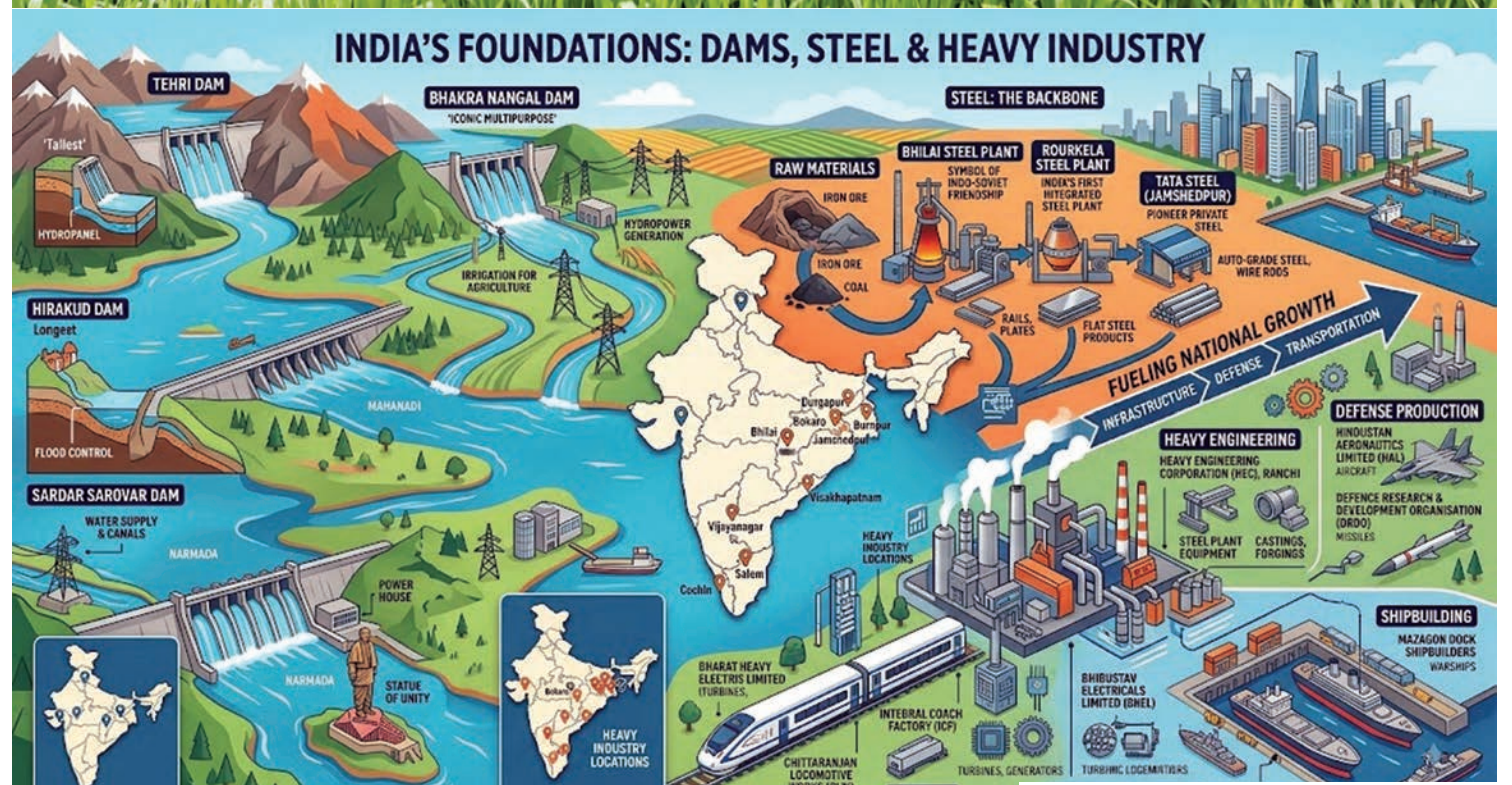


Illustration: Google Gemini

The Green Revolution did not benefit every part of India equally.

Regions with irrigation and access to markets and agricultural inputs gained more rapidly than rain-fed areas.

Larger farmers were often better placed to adopt mechanisation and modern inputs.

Over time, concerns also emerged over groundwater depletion, soil degradation and excessive chemical use.

Yet the overall transformation was undeniable.

India had moved from the fear of famine towards a position of food-grain self-sufficiency.

THE LICENSE RAJ

The Economy of Permissions

The economic model of the pre-1991 era gradually became associated with the term Licence Raj.

Businesses required government licences and permissions for many activities. Imports were heavily regulated. Foreign investment faced strict restrictions. Industrial expansion could require official approval.

The philosophy behind the system was rooted in the circumstances of the time.

India had limited foreign exchange and scarce capital. The government wanted to prevent monopolies, protect domestic industries, promote self-reliance and ensure that investment followed national priorities.

But the system became increasingly complicated.

A company wanting to expand production could encounter multiple layers of regulation.

Import restrictions protected domestic producers but reduced competitive pressure. Businesses could

find themselves spending considerable time navigating government procedures.

Innovation and productivity suffered in some sectors.

Consumers often had fewer choices and faced higher prices.

The protected economy helped create domestic industrial capabilities, but it also insulated many industries from international competition.

Protection and Its Limits

By the 1980s, the weaknesses of the system were becoming increasingly visible. Indian companies needed greater freedom to invest.

Consumers needed greater choice.

Industry needed access to modern technology. The economy needed stronger integration with global markets.

1991: THE ECONOMIC REVOLUTION

The Crisis

In 1991, India confronted one of the most serious economic crises in its post-independence history.

Foreign-exchange reserves had fallen sharply. The country faced difficulties financing imports and meeting its external obligations.

The crisis exposed structural weaknesses that had accumulated over decades. Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh responded with a programme of economic reform that fundamentally altered India's economic direction.

The changes were significant.

Industrial licensing was dismantled across large sections of the economy.

Trade restrictions were reduced.

Private enterprise received greater freedom. Foreign investment was encouraged. The economy began opening itself to international competition. The old system did not disappear overnight, but its foundations were being dismantled.

Liberalisation

Liberalisation meant reducing the controls that had restricted businesses for decades. Companies gained greater freedom to enter industries, expand capacity and compete. The government increasingly moved away from directly controlling production and towards regulating markets. Competition became a more important force.

Privatisation

The state also began reducing its ownership in selected public-sector enterprises. The objective was to improve efficiency, raise resources and increase the role of private capital.

Privatisation remained politically contested and proceeded gradually rather than through one sweeping programme.

Globalisation

India's relationship with the global economy changed profoundly.

Foreign companies entered the Indian market. Indian companies expanded abroad. Trade increased. Services exports grew. Capital and technology became more accessible. The reforms created the conditions for the rapid growth that would characterise much of the following decades.

The Long-Term Transformation

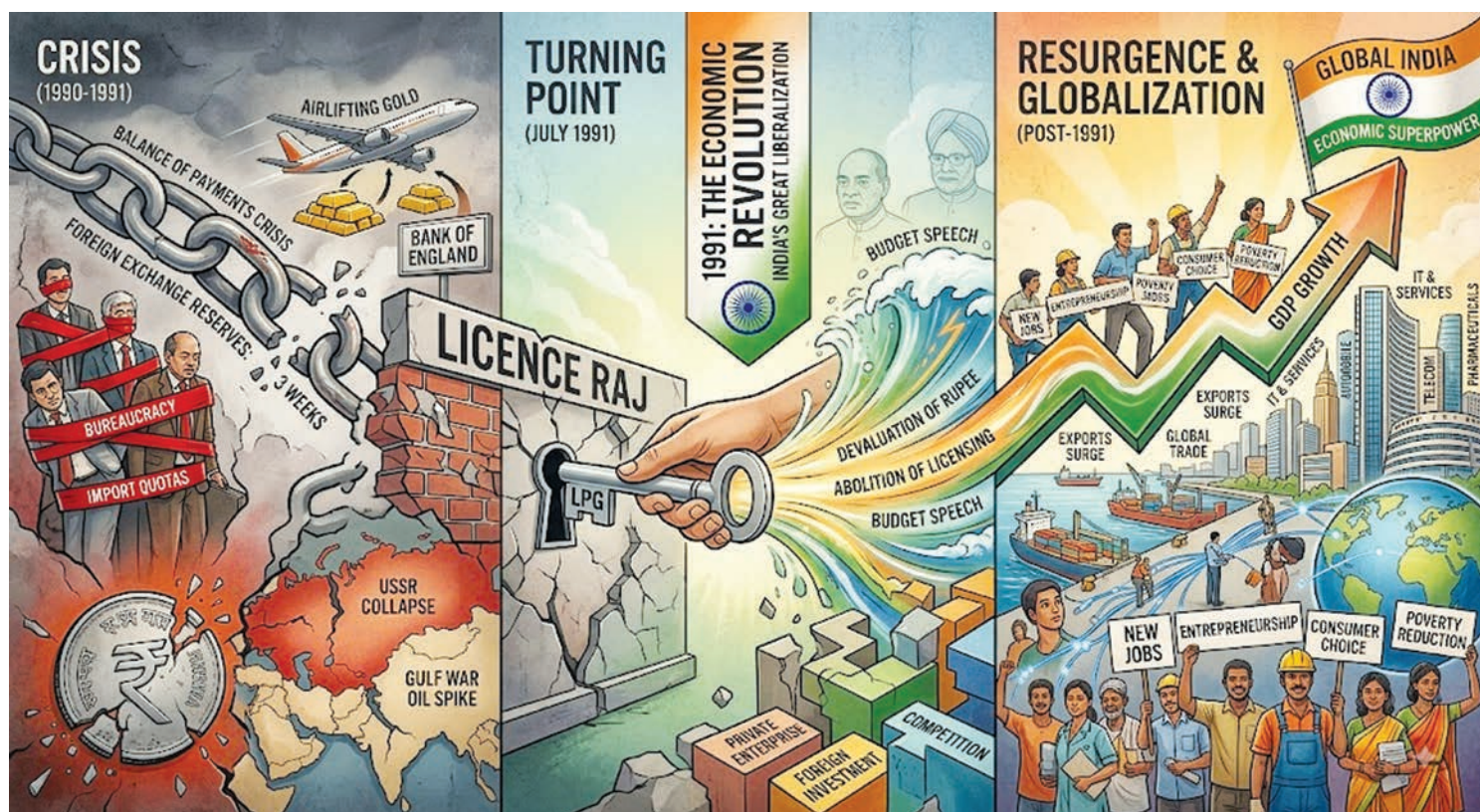
The post-1991 economy produced new opportunities and new challenges. A large private sector emerged. Consumer markets expanded. Information technology became a global Indian strength. The middle class grew. Urbanisation accelerated.

But the benefits were uneven.

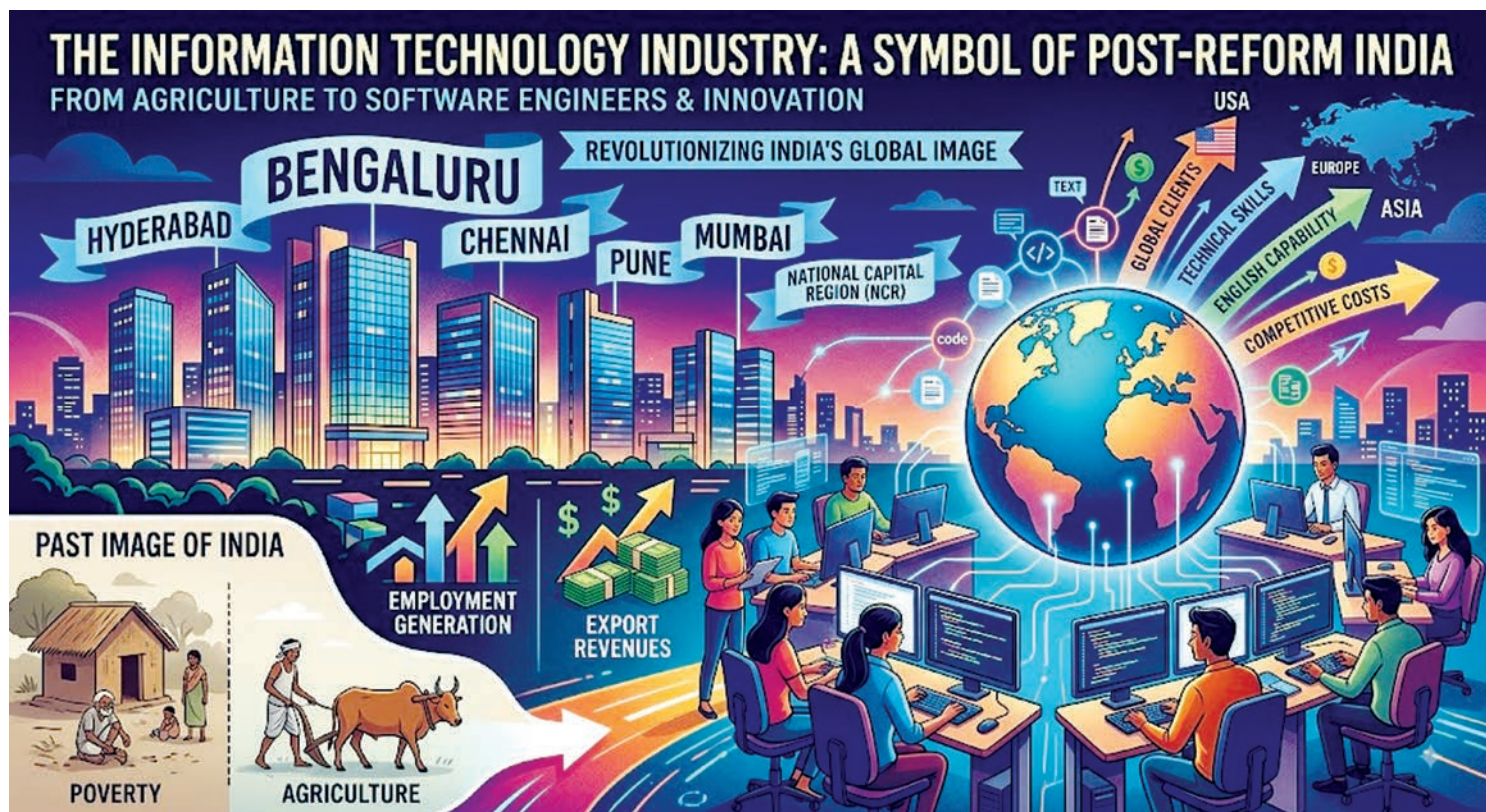
Agriculture did not transform at the same pace as services.

Informal employment remained dominant. Regional disparities persisted.

Income and wealth became increasingly concentrated in some sectors and sections of society. The significance of 1991 therefore lies not in the idea that every economic problem was solved.



Liberalisation meant reducing the controls that had restricted businesses for decades. Companies gained greater freedom to enter industries, expand capacity and compete. Illustrations: Google Gemini



It lies in the fact that India changed the fundamental rules under which its economy operated.

INDIA'S IT REVOLUTION

The information technology industry became one of the most powerful symbols of post-reform India.

Indian software companies began serving international clients, initially benefiting from a combination of technical skills, English-language capability and competitive costs.

Bengaluru became the best-known centre of India's technology economy, while Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune, Mumbai and the National Capital Region also emerged as major technology hubs.

The IT industry created employment and generated export revenues.

It also changed India's global image.

For decades, India had been associated primarily with poverty and

agriculture.

Now it increasingly became associated with software engineers, technology companies and innovation.

Technology and Aspiration

The IT revolution transformed educational aspirations. Engineering and computer science became highly sought-after fields.

A new generation of professionals entered global companies.

Indian technology firms became international players.

The industry later expanded into fintech, digital platforms, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity and startup entrepreneurship. Technology became not merely an industry but a major part of India's economic identity.

THE RISE OF THE INDIAN MIDDLE CLASS

Economic liberalisation and rising

incomes produced a major social transformation: the expansion of India's middle class.

The change could be seen in everyday life.

Television ownership expanded.

Motorcycles and cars became more accessible.

Private schools and hospitals grew.

Air travel became available to a larger population.

Shopping centres, restaurants and consumer brands spread across urban India.

Later, smartphones and online commerce transformed consumption once again.

The new middle class also changed political expectations.

People wanted better roads, reliable electricity, improved public transport, cleaner cities, better schools, quality healthcare and more employment opportunities.

FROM CASH TO DIGITAL: INDIA'S PAYMENTS REVOLUTION

A Country Goes Digital

One of the most striking economic changes of the 21st century has been the rapid expansion of digital payments.

India had long depended heavily on cash.

The spread of mobile phones, bank accounts, digital identity systems and financial technology began changing that pattern.

The Unified Payments Interface became particularly important.

Consumers could transfer money instantly through mobile applications and QR codes.

Small businesses could accept digital payments without expensive traditional payment infrastructure.

Street vendors, shopkeepers, professionals and consumers increasingly became part of a digital financial ecosystem.

The transformation was significant because it brought technology into everyday economic life.

A transaction that once required cash could now take place instantly through a mobile phone.

Beyond Payments

Digitalisation has extended beyond payments.

Online commerce, digital banking, electronic government services, financial technology and digital platforms have transformed the relationship between citizens, businesses and the state.

The challenge now is ensuring that digital growth remains inclusive.

Connectivity, digital literacy, cybersecurity and consumer protection are becoming increasingly important components of economic policy.

INDIA'S INFRASTRUCTURE STORY

Economic growth requires infrastructure.

The early republic built dams, power stations, rail networks and industrial complexes.

The contemporary economy is building expressways, airports, ports, metro systems, logistics corridors and digital networks.

Road connectivity has expanded significantly.

Highways increasingly link industrial centres, agricultural regions and major cities.

Modern airports have transformed domestic travel.

Metro systems have become essential to urban mobility in major cities.

Ports are being expanded to support growing international trade.

The railways remain central to India's economic life while undergoing major modernisation.

Electricity generation and transmission capacity have expanded dramatically compared with the early decades of independence.

Infrastructure has therefore become one of the most visible expressions of India's economic transformation.

The Next Infrastructure Challenge

The challenge is no longer simply to build more.

India must build efficiently, sustainably and inclusively.

Cities must expand without becoming



environmentally unsustainable.

Roads and railways must improve logistics without creating excessive ecological costs.

Infrastructure must reach smaller towns and rural areas, not merely major metropolitan centres.

The quality of infrastructure will increasingly determine India's ability to compete globally.

INDIA AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

India's relationship with the global economy has changed dramatically since independence.

The early republic emphasised self-reliance and import substitution.

The post-1991 period brought deeper integration with global trade and investment.

Indian companies expanded overseas.

Foreign companies entered Indian markets. Services exports became a major source of foreign exchange.

Information technology established India as a global services hub.

The country's large domestic market

became another major advantage.

Today, India is increasingly important in global conversations about manufacturing, technology, pharmaceuticals, energy, services and supply chains.

The Manufacturing Challenge

Yet manufacturing remains one of India's most important economic challenges.

A country of India's size needs millions of productive jobs.

Manufacturing can potentially absorb workers moving out of agriculture while creating opportunities across skill levels.

India therefore continues to seek greater investment, stronger supply chains, better logistics and improved manufacturing capabilities.

The opportunity is enormous.

A large domestic market, expanding infrastructure, a sizeable workforce and growing technological capabilities provide India with the potential to become a much larger manufacturing economy.

The challenge is turning that potential

into sustained, broad-based employment.

THE NEXT ECONOMIC INDIA

India enters the next phase of its economic journey with strengths that would have been difficult to imagine in 1947.

It has a large and increasingly integrated domestic market, a globally competitive services sector, major technological capabilities, expanding infrastructure and a growing role in the world economy.

But the questions have changed.

The challenge is no longer simply how to produce enough.

It is how to produce more, better and more inclusively.

Can India create enough high-quality employment for its enormous workforce?

Can manufacturing become a larger engine of job creation?

Can farmers participate more effectively in economic growth?

Can poorer states close the gap with richer ones?

SOCIAL INDIA

From Scarcity to Aspiration: The Making of a Changing Society

After Independence, the challenge before the new republic was not only to build a political democracy or an economic system. It was also to transform the lives of its people. Poverty was widespread, literacy was low, healthcare facilities were inadequate and social inequality was deeply embedded in everyday life. Caste shaped opportunity and social relations, women faced severe restrictions, and millions of people lived in villages with limited access to schools, hospitals, roads and markets.

Over the next eight decades, India experienced one of the world's most extensive social transformations. Schools and universities multiplied, literacy expanded, life expectancy increased, cities grew, women entered professions and public life, and historically marginalised communities gained greater constitutional protection and political representation. A large middle class emerged, while science and technology reshaped agriculture, communication, healthcare and everyday life.

Yet modernisation has not erased India's old inequalities. Caste continues to influence social and political life, gender disparities persist, tribal communities continue to negotiate development and identity, and access to quality education and healthcare remains uneven.

Social India is therefore neither a simple story of progress nor one of continuing deprivation. It is a story of change, contestation and aspiration-of a society constantly negotiating between its inherited structures and its modern ambitions.

THE INDIA OF 1947: POVERTY, ILLITERACY AND INEQUALITY

India's independence came after decades of colonial rule, but political freedom could not immediately change the social conditions of ordinary Indians.

The new republic inherited a society in which poverty was widespread and educational opportunities were severely limited. Most Indians lived in rural areas and depended directly or indirectly on agriculture. Villages often lacked proper roads, schools, healthcare facilities, sanitation and reliable access to markets.

Illiteracy was one of the most serious obstacles to social transformation. Education remained inaccessible to large sections of the population, particularly women and disadvantaged communities.

Healthcare presented an equally difficult challenge. Infectious diseases, malnutrition, poor sanitation and limited medical facilities contributed to high mortality.

Social inequality added another dimension. Caste hierarchy had shaped Indian society for centuries, while untouchability and exclusion denied



Illustrations: Google Gemini

millions basic dignity and opportunity.

The Constitution attempted to establish a new social foundation.

Equality before the law became a constitutional principle. Untouchability was abolished. Universal adult franchise gave every adult citizen an equal vote.

This was revolutionary.

A person who had historically been denied social equality was now constitutionally recognised as an equal citizen.

The State as an Instrument of Social Change

The new government understood that constitutional promises would have little meaning without institutions and programs capable of improving people's lives. Schools were expanded.

Hospitals and primary-health centers were established.

Reservations were introduced for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Community development programs sought to improve rural life.

Universities and technical institutions were established.

The welfare state became an important instrument of social transformation.

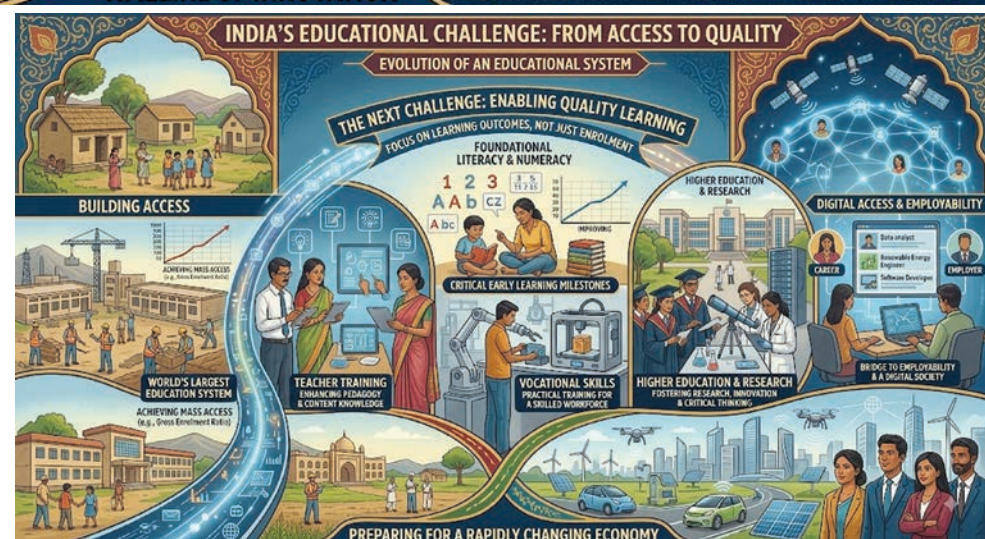
India's challenge was therefore larger than economic development.

It was an attempt to change the conditions under which generations of Indians lived.

EDUCATION: FROM A FEW INSTITUTIONS TO MASS EXPANSION

At independence, education was available to only a relatively small section of society.

The republic began expanding the school system while simultaneously



creating institutions capable of producing scientists, engineers, doctors, administrators and teachers.

This produced a distinctive two-track educational strategy.

India sought mass education for its population while also creating centres of excellence.

The Indian Institutes of Technology became symbols of technical education.

Universities expanded.

Medical colleges multiplied.

Research institutions were created.

Over time, primary and secondary schooling reached millions of children who would previously have had little opportunity to study.

The Girl Who Went to School

Perhaps the most important social transformation in education has been the expansion of girls' education.

For generations, social expectations, poverty and early marriage limited educational opportunities for many girls.

The expansion of schools, scholarships, welfare programs and

changing social attitudes gradually altered the situation.

Educated women entered professions, government service, science, medicine, journalism, business and politics.

Education became one of the most powerful mechanisms through which traditional social expectations began to change.

From Access to Quality

India's educational challenge has evolved.

The central question is no longer simply how to bring children into classrooms. It is whether they receive quality learning.

Teacher training, foundational literacy and numeracy, vocational skills, higher education, digital access and employability have become increasingly important.

India has built one of the world's largest education systems.

The next challenge is to make that system capable of preparing citizens for an economy and society undergoing rapid technological change.

80 Years of Freedom,
Pride & Unity
Happy Independence Day
India!
From Gobind, Sonia,
Ameed & Pooja Bathija



Tanya Indrani Bathija
Foundation

GB Network Enterprise

DUNKIN'



AMERICA RUNS ON DUNKIN' SM



Bathija Builders, Group, Inc.

WOMEN AND THE MAKING OF MODERN INDIA

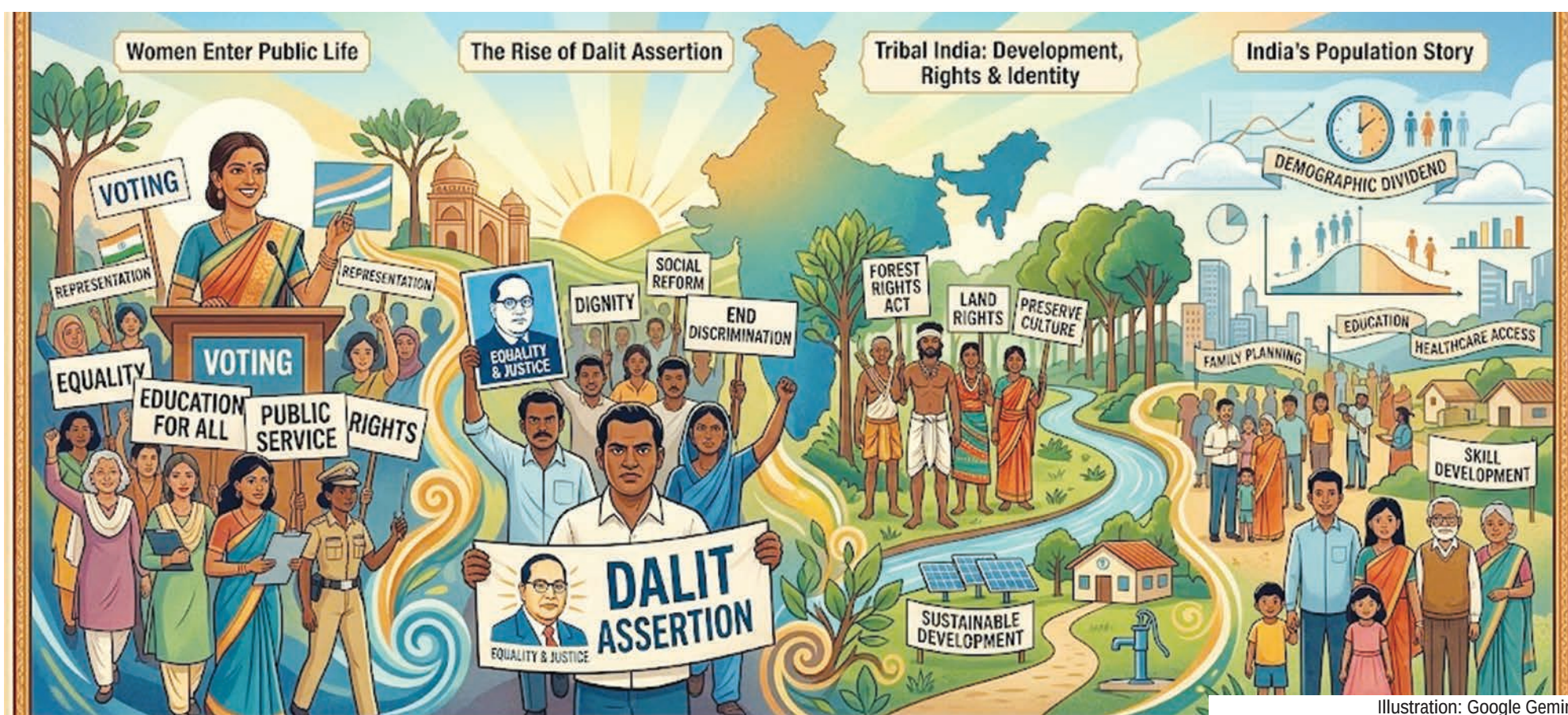


Illustration: Google Gemini

The Transformation of Half the Nation

No account of modern India can be complete without examining the changing position of women.

At independence, women faced significant barriers in education, employment, property ownership and political participation.

The Constitution established equality, and subsequent legal and social reforms gradually widened women's rights.

Women entered schools and universities in increasing numbers.

They became doctors, teachers, lawyers, engineers, scientists, civil servants, entrepreneurs, journalists, soldiers and political leaders.

The transformation was particularly visible in urban India, but changes also reached rural communities.

Women Enter Public Life

Indian women were voters from the beginning of the republic.

Universal adult franchise did not distinguish between male and female citizens.

Over time, women's participation in politics expanded further through local-government institutions.

Reservations in panchayats and municipalities brought millions of women into grassroots governance.

For many, political office became a first experience of public leadership.

This process created a new generation of women leaders who participated in decisions concerning roads, water, education, sanitation and local development.

The Unfinished Gender Revolution

Despite enormous progress, equality remains incomplete.

Women continue to face violence, unequal domestic responsibilities, discrimination and barriers to economic participation.

The question is no longer whether

women can enter India's public and economic life.

They already have.

The question is whether social structures will allow them to participate on equal terms.

The future of India's development is therefore inseparable from the future of its women.

THE DALIT MOVEMENT AND THE QUEST FOR EQUALITY

The struggle against caste discrimination is one of the central stories of modern India.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar became the most influential constitutional and political voice of this struggle.

He argued that political democracy could not survive without social democracy.

The Constitution reflected this principle. Untouchability was abolished.

Equality before the law was guaranteed. Discrimination on specified grounds was prohibited.

Reservations were established to improve representation and opportunity for historically disadvantaged communities. These measures marked a fundamental transformation in the relationship between the state and caste.

The Rise of Dalit Assertion

Constitutional safeguards were followed by a broader social and political awakening. Dalit movements challenged discrimination through literature, journalism, political organizations and grassroots activism.

Political parties representing Dalit interests gained influence in several states. Dalit literature became an important intellectual and cultural force, challenging traditional representations of caste and society. The political system itself changed.

Groups historically excluded from power could now organise, vote,

contest elections and demand representation.

Equality and Its Limits

Yet legal equality has not eliminated social discrimination. Caste violence, exclusion and unequal access to resources remain realities in parts of India. The struggle for equality therefore continues. But the constitutional transformation remains historic.

A society once organized through inherited hierarchy was attempting to rebuild itself around the idea of equal citizenship.

TRIBAL INDIA: DEVELOPMENT, RIGHTS AND IDENTITY

India's tribal communities represent extraordinary diversity in language, culture, geography and social organization.

Many communities traditionally maintained close relationships with forests and natural resources.

The post-independence development process brought roads, schools, hospitals, electricity and markets into many tribal regions. But it also brought displacement.

Dams, mines, industries, infrastructure projects and conservation initiatives sometimes affected traditional livelihoods and access to land. For tribal communities, therefore, development could have contradictory meanings.

It could bring education, healthcare and connectivity while simultaneously threatening traditional livelihoods and cultural identity.

The Struggle for Rights

Over time, tribal movements increasingly demanded recognition of land, forest and community rights.

Political representation and constitutional protections provided important institutional mechanisms.

The debate over tribal development

remains one of India's most difficult policy questions.

The issue is not simply whether roads should reach remote communities.

It is also who decides where those roads are built, who owns the land, who benefits from natural resources and how cultural identities are protected.

For tribal India, development must increasingly be understood as a partnership rather than simply an administrative project.

INDIA'S POPULATION STORY

Population has been one of the defining forces of modern India.

At independence, India's population was a little over 300 million.

It subsequently expanded rapidly, creating enormous demands for food, housing, employment, education and healthcare.

Population growth became a major concern of policymakers.

India was among the earliest countries to establish a national family-planning program.

Over time, fertility rates began falling, particularly as education, urbanization and incomes increased.

The demographic picture has therefore changed.

India now has a very large working-age population.

This creates the possibility of a demographic dividend.

But demographic advantage is not automatic.

Young people need education, skills, healthcare and productive employment.

If these opportunities are unavailable, a large young population can instead create economic and social pressures.

India's population story has therefore entered a new phase.

The challenge is no longer simply controlling population growth.

It is converting demographic scale into human capital.

URBANISATION: FROM TOWNS TO MEGACITIES

INDIA MOVES TO THE CITIES | BUILDING THE CITIES OF TOMORROW | HEALTH INDIA: FROM EPIDEMICS TO UNIVERSAL ASPIRATIONS



Illustration: Google Gemini

India Moves to the City

Independent India was overwhelmingly rural.

The India of the 21st century is increasingly urban.

Cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Pune and Ahmedabad have become centers of employment, education, technology, finance and culture.

Urbanization has created enormous opportunities.

A young person moving from a village to a city may gain access to universities, hospitals, technology and employment opportunities that were previously unavailable.

Cities have also become laboratories of social change.

People from different regions, languages and communities live and work together.

Traditional social boundaries can become less rigid.

But urbanisation has also produced major challenges.

Traffic congestion, pollution, water shortages, waste management and inadequate housing have become everyday problems.

Informal settlements exist alongside modern office districts and residential complexes.

Building the Cities of Tomorrow

India's future will depend heavily on the quality of its cities.

Urban planning must provide affordable housing, efficient public transport, clean air, water, sanitation and reliable public services.

The goal cannot simply be to create larger cities. It must be to create

cities in which people can live with dignity.

THE INDIAN MIDDLE CLASS: THE GREAT SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The economic changes that accelerated after 1991 produced a major social transformation.

Millions of Indians experienced rising incomes and new forms of consumption.

Television, automobiles, private education, smartphones, air travel, shopping malls and online commerce gradually became part of a wider middle-class experience.

The transformation was psychological as much as material.

For earlier generations, economic security often meant a government job, modest housing and savings.

The new middle class increasingly sought professional careers, entrepreneurship, international opportunities and higher standards of living.

A New Political Expectation

Economic aspiration also changed the relationship between citizens and government.

People increasingly demanded better infrastructure, cleaner cities, reliable electricity, improved schools and more efficient public services.

The middle class became an important political constituency. But the growth of the middle class did not eliminate poverty. India continued to contain enormous differences in income, wealth and access to services.

The great social transformation therefore created a society of rising aspirations alongside persistent

inequalities.

CASTE, COMMUNITY AND THE CHANGING SOCIAL ORDER

Modernization has not erased caste.

Instead, it has changed the way caste operates. Urbanization and education have weakened some traditional structures.

Economic mobility has allowed individuals to move beyond occupations associated with inherited social status.

Inter-caste interaction has increased in workplaces and educational institutions.

Yet caste continues to influence marriage, political mobilization, social networks and access to opportunity.

Democracy has produced an interesting paradox.

The Constitution treats citizens as equals. Elections, however, have encouraged communities to organize around identity in order to demand political representation and resources.

Caste has therefore become both a structure challenged by democracy and a political identity strengthened by democratic mobilization.

Community and Citizenship

Religion, language and regional identity similarly remain important.

India's modern social order is not a simple replacement of tradition by modernity.

Instead, inherited identities interact with constitutional citizenship, market forces, education, urbanization and technology.

The result is a society that is

constantly changing but rarely abandoning its past completely.

HEALTH INDIA: FROM EPIDEMICS TO UNIVERSAL ASPIRATIONS

At independence, India faced a formidable public-health burden.

Infectious diseases were widespread.

Sanitation was poor. Medical facilities were limited. Maternal and infant mortality were high.

The expansion of vaccination, sanitation, public-health programs, hospitals and medical education gradually changed the situation.

Life expectancy increased substantially.

India also developed a major pharmaceutical industry.

Its ability to manufacture affordable generic medicines and vaccines eventually made it an important player in global healthcare.

A New Health Challenge
India's health burden has now changed.

Infectious diseases remain important, but non-communicable diseases have become increasingly significant.

Diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and other chronic conditions now affect millions.

At the same time, malnutrition and unequal healthcare access remain concerns. The country therefore faces a double challenge: controlling traditional public-health problems while managing the diseases of a rapidly urbanizing and ageing society.

The aspiration has shifted from merely preventing premature death to providing affordable, high-quality healthcare throughout life.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION



Illustration: Google Gemini

The transformation of India has always been linked to its ability to use science and technology to solve national problems.

From agricultural research and heavy engineering to satellites, software and digital payments, technology has repeatedly expanded the possibilities available to Indian society.

The foundations were laid during the first decades of the republic.

NEHRU'S SCIENTIFIC TEMPER

Jawaharlal Nehru believed that science was central to India's modernization.

The republic therefore invested in research laboratories, universities, technical institutes and scientific organizations.

The Indian Institutes of Technology became centers of advanced technical education.

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research developed a network of laboratories.

Scientific research expanded into agriculture, medicine, engineering, atomic energy and other fields.

The objective was not simply to create technological products.

Nehru saw scientific thinking as a way of building a modern society based on reason, evidence and experimentation.

That institutional investment became one of the foundations for later achievements.

India's atomic program, space program, agricultural research and

technology industry all benefited from the scientific infrastructure created during these formative decades.

THE ATOMIC INDIA STORY

Homi Bhabha and the Nuclear Vision

India's nuclear program was closely associated with physicist Homi J. Bhabha. The Atomic Energy Commission was established in 1948, reflecting the new republic's determination to develop advanced scientific capabilities.

Nuclear technology was seen as important for energy, scientific research and strategic autonomy.

India built research reactors and developed expertise across the nuclear fuel cycle.

The country's first nuclear test took place at Pokhran in 1974.

A second series of tests was conducted in 1998.

The nuclear program subsequently became an important component of India's strategic posture.

At the same time, India continued developing civilian nuclear-energy capabilities.

The story reflects a broader feature of Indian scientific policy: the pursuit of strategic autonomy through domestic technological capability.

INDIA REACHES FOR SPACE

India's space program began with a development-oriented vision.

Vikram Sarabhai believed that space technology should address

practical national needs. Satellites could support communications, weather forecasting, education, agriculture and resource management.

The Indian Space Research Organization became the institutional centre of the program.

Aryabhata, India's first satellite, was launched in 1975.

The country gradually developed its own launch vehicles.

The SLV program represented an important early step.

The PSLV later became one of India's most successful launch vehicles and established the country's reputation as a reliable space-launch provider.

Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan

India's ambitions then expanded beyond practical satellite applications.

Chandrayaan-1, launched in 2008, became India's first lunar mission and contributed important scientific evidence concerning water molecules on the Moon.

The Mars Orbiter Mission, popularly known as Mangalyaan, demonstrated India's ability to reach Mars.

In 2023, Chandrayaan-3 achieved a historic soft landing in the Moon's southern polar region.

The achievement represented decades of institutional investment in space science and engineering.

Gaganyaan and Beyond

India's ambitions now extend to

human spaceflight.

Gaganyaan seeks to demonstrate India's capability to send Indian astronauts into space.

The space programme has thus travelled an extraordinary distance—from a development-oriented satellite programme to lunar exploration and human-spaceflight ambitions.

FROM THE GREEN REVOLUTION TO THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION

India's technological transformation has occurred through several major waves.

The Green Revolution used agricultural science to increase food production.

The White Revolution transformed dairy production.

The space program expanded communication and remote-sensing capabilities.

The IT revolution created a globally competitive services industry.

The digital revolution connected citizens, businesses and government services.

Each technological transformation addressed a specific national challenge.

Food insecurity required agricultural science.

Geographical isolation required communications.

Economic opportunity required computing and telecommunications.

Financial exclusion created space for digital banking and payments.

Technology therefore became a tool of development rather than merely a symbol of modernity.

THE IT REVOLUTION AND INDIA'S SOFTWARE POWER



Illustration: Google Gemini

The Software Nation

India's IT industry became one of the most successful examples of the country's post-liberalization transformation.

Companies such as TCS, Infosys and Wipro helped establish India as a global centre for software services.

Bengaluru became internationally associated with India's technology economy, while Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune, Mumbai and the National Capital Region also developed major technology clusters.

Indian professionals became part of global technology networks.

The industry created millions of direct and indirect employment opportunities and generated significant export earnings.

Beyond Outsourcing

The technology sector has evolved considerably.

India is now home to startups, fintech companies, software-product firms and deep-tech ventures.

Indian engineers and entrepreneurs increasingly build products for global markets.

Artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity and digital platforms are creating new opportunities.

The IT revolution therefore did more than generate export revenues.

It helped create a new generation of Indians whose professional lives were connected directly to the global economy.

DIGITAL INDIA

India's digital transformation has been built around several interconnected developments.

Aadhaar created a large-scale digital identity infrastructure.

The expansion of bank accounts increased financial inclusion.

Smartphones brought digital services into the hands of hundreds of millions of people. UPI transformed payments.

Government services increasingly moved online.

Together, these developments created what has increasingly been described as India's digital public infrastructure.

The significance lies in the scale and openness of the system.

Digital platforms can be used by banks, businesses, government agencies and startups. A small merchant can accept digital payments.

A citizen can access government services online. A consumer can transfer money instantly.

A business can build new services on top of digital infrastructure.

The Challenge of Inclusion

Digital transformation also creates risks. Not everyone has equal access to devices or reliable connectivity.

Digital literacy remains uneven.

Cybersecurity and data protection are increasingly important.

The next stage of Digital India must therefore ensure that technology expands opportunity without creating new forms of exclusion.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND INDIA'S NEXT TECHNOLOGICAL FRONTIER

Artificial intelligence is emerging as the next major technological transformation.

AI is already influencing software development, healthcare, finance, manufacturing, education, agriculture, media and government services.

India enters this era with important advantages.

It has a large technology workforce, strong engineering talent, a growing research ecosystem and one of the world's largest digital populations.

AI could help farmers make better

decisions, assist doctors in diagnosis, personalise education, improve logistics and increase industrial productivity.

It could also create entirely new businesses.

The Risks of the AI Revolution

The opportunities are accompanied by serious questions.

Automation could alter employment patterns. AI systems can reproduce bias.

Synthetic media can accelerate misinformation. Personal data can be misused.

The country will need appropriate rules for safety, privacy, accountability and responsible innovation.

From Consumer to Creator

The larger ambition is to ensure that India does not remain only a consumer of advanced technologies.

The country will need investment in computing infrastructure, semiconductor manufacturing, research laboratories, advanced education and scientific talent.

If the first decades of independent India were devoted to building scientific institutions, and the later decades to building digital capabilities, the coming era may be about creating frontier technologies.

EIGHT DECADES OF CHANGE

The India of 1947 and the India of 2026 are separated by an extraordinary social transformation.

A largely illiterate society built one of the world's largest education systems.

A country with limited healthcare facilities developed a vast medical infrastructure and a globally significant pharmaceutical industry.

Women moved into universities, professions, public institutions and

political life.

Dalit movements transformed the politics of equality and representation.

Tribal communities continued to assert their rights and identities amid rapid development.

Cities grew into economic and cultural centres.

A large middle class emerged.

Science and technology changed the way Indians farmed, travelled, communicated, worked and paid.

The country moved from radio to television, from landlines to smartphones, from cash to instant digital payments, and from limited access to information to an era in which billions of digital interactions take place every day.

Yet social transformation has never been uniform.

India continues to contain extraordinary differences between regions, communities, classes and generations.

The task ahead is therefore not simply to modernise further.

It is to make modernisation more inclusive. The next India will need better schools, healthier citizens, more productive cities, greater opportunities for women, stronger social protection and deeper inclusion of historically disadvantaged communities.

Technology will be central, but technology alone cannot solve social problems. The ultimate measure of progress will remain human.

The great social question for the next decades is whether India's extraordinary economic and technological transformation can translate into greater equality of opportunity, dignity and quality of life for every citizen.

That is the unfinished story of Social India.

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

From Non-Alignment to Strategic Autonomy: India and the World

Illustration: Google Gemini



India's foreign policy since independence has been shaped by a central paradox. The country emerged in 1947 determined to protect its sovereignty and avoid becoming an instrument of any great power, yet it was born into a world increasingly divided between competing blocs. The Cold War, wars with neighbours, the rise of China, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, globalisation, terrorism, the emergence of the United States as the dominant power and the rise of a multipolar world have repeatedly forced India to rethink how it engages with the outside world.

The broad principle, however, has remained remarkably consistent: India seeks strategic space to make its own decisions. Under Jawaharlal Nehru, that principle was expressed through non-alignment. In the post-Cold War period, it evolved into what is now commonly described as strategic autonomy. India has developed partnerships with countries that may themselves be rivals, while avoiding formal military alliances.

India's foreign policy today is consequently neither isolationist nor alliance-driven. It is an increasingly active form of multi-alignment: cooperation with the United States and Europe in technology and security; deep defence and energy ties with Russia; intense competition and engagement with China; neighborhood diplomacy across South Asia and the Indian Ocean; and a growing role in the Global South. The journey from 1947 to the present is therefore not a story of abandoning old principles. It is a story of adapting them to a changing world.

NON-ALIGNMENT: INDIA'S THIRD WAY

When India became independent, the international system was dominated by two superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union.

Washington and Moscow were competing for political influence, military alliances and ideological legitimacy across the world. India had little interest in becoming part of that confrontation.

Jawaharlal Nehru believed that newly independent countries should retain the freedom to determine their own policies.

Non-alignment was therefore not intended to mean neutrality in every international dispute.

India could take a position on an issue while refusing to become permanently attached to either bloc.

This distinction was important.

India opposed colonialism and apartheid, supported national liberation movements and frequently advocated disarmament and peaceful coexistence.

The Bandung Spirit

The emergence of Asian and African countries from colonial rule created a new diplomatic constituency.

The 1955 Bandung Conference became a landmark in the development of Afro-Asian solidarity.

India worked alongside leaders such as Indonesia's Sukarno, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito and Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah in developing a diplomatic space for countries that did not want their foreign policies dictated by the superpowers.

The Non-Aligned Movement formally emerged in 1961. India became one of its principal voices.

Non-Alignment and National Interest

Non-alignment also served India's practical interests.

India needed economic assistance, technology and military equipment from multiple sources. Remaining outside military blocs gave New Delhi greater diplomatic flexibility. But non-alignment was never without contradictions.

India developed increasingly close defence and strategic relations with the Soviet Union, particularly from the 1970s onward. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1971 reflected the strategic circumstances of the time.

Yet India continued to resist the idea of becoming a formal Soviet ally.

The larger principle survived:

India would cooperate with major powers without surrendering its freedom of decision.

INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBORS

For India, foreign policy has always begun with its neighborhood.

India shares land borders with Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, while Sri Lanka and the Maldives lie in its immediate maritime neighbourhood. Afghanistan, though not sharing a border with present-day India, has historically remained an important part of India's wider regional strategic environment. The neighborhood has therefore been central to India's security calculations.

Pakistan: The Most Enduring Security Challenge

India's relationship with Pakistan has been shaped by the legacy of Partition.

The two countries fought wars in 1947-48, 1965 and 1971, while the 1999 Kargil

conflict further demonstrated the volatility of the relationship.

The central disputes have included Jammu and Kashmir, terrorism, cross-border militancy and military confrontation.

India and Pakistan have also experienced periods of dialogue.

The Simla Agreement of 1972 and the Lahore Declaration of 1999 represented attempts to establish a framework for peaceful relations.

Yet terrorism and security concerns have repeatedly disrupted diplomatic engagement.

India's position in recent years has emphasised that terrorism and dialogue cannot proceed simultaneously without addressing the security threat.

China: Competition and Cooperation

China represents India's most consequential long-term strategic challenge. The two countries share a long and disputed border.

The 1962 war left a deep imprint on Indian strategic thinking.

For decades thereafter, both sides attempted to maintain peace along the border while expanding economic relations. Trade increased dramatically.

However, the military standoff that began in eastern Ladakh in 2020 fundamentally altered the relationship.

Border tensions remain a central concern. At the same time, China is India's largest or among its largest trading partners depending on the year and measurement, making the relationship economically complex.

India's China policy therefore combines military preparedness, diplomatic engagement, economic risk management and broader partnerships with other countries.

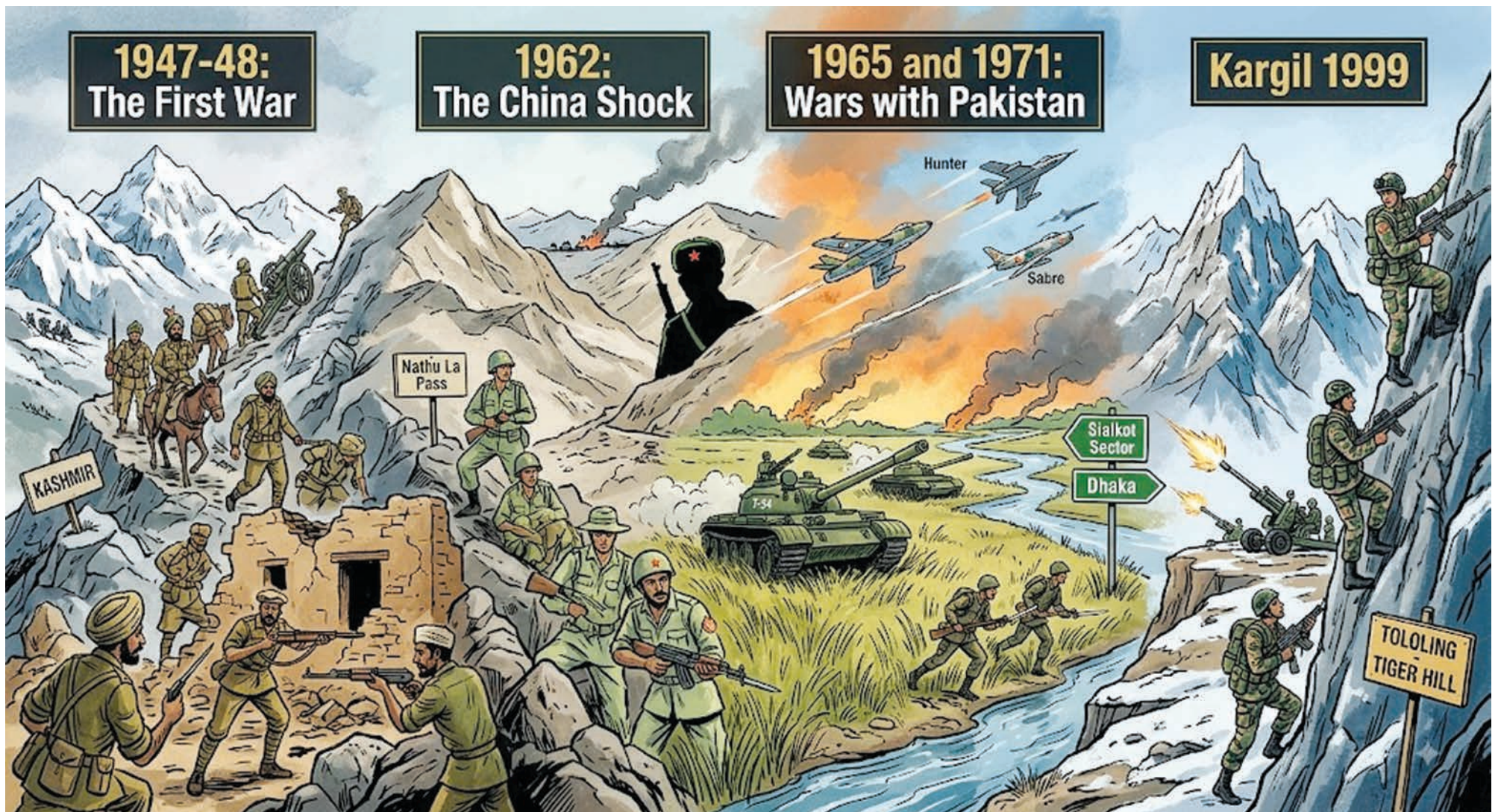


Illustration: Google Gemini

Bangladesh: From Conflict to Partnership

The creation of Bangladesh in 1971 transformed India's eastern neighbourhood.

India supported the Bangladesh liberation struggle and played a decisive military role in the 1971 war.

The relationship subsequently developed across trade, connectivity, energy, security and river-water cooperation.

Bangladesh has become one of India's most important partners in South Asia.

Connectivity projects linking India's Northeast with Bangladesh have also acquired major strategic significance.

Nepal and Bhutan

India's relationship with Nepal is shaped by geography, history, culture, economic ties and extensive people-to-people connections.

Yet the relationship has also experienced political tensions, including disagreements over borders and perceptions of Indian influence.

Bhutan has traditionally enjoyed a particularly close relationship with India.

Hydropower cooperation, economic assistance and security coordination form important pillars of the partnership.

Sri Lanka and the Indian Ocean

Sri Lanka occupies a strategically vital position close to major Indian Ocean shipping routes.

India's relationship with Colombo

includes trade, investment, security and cultural connections.

The experience of India's intervention during the Sri Lankan civil war in the late 1980s remains an important chapter in the bilateral relationship.

Today, maritime security and India's concern about growing external strategic influence in Sri Lanka have acquired greater importance.

The Maldives and the Indian Ocean

The Maldives is strategically important because of its location near major Indian Ocean sea lanes.

India has provided assistance during political, economic and humanitarian crises.

The relationship has also reflected the changing balance of regional politics, including the growing involvement of China.

For India, the Maldives is not simply a small island neighbour.

It is part of the strategic geography of the Indian Ocean.

The Neighbourhood First Approach

India has increasingly emphasised a Neighbourhood First approach.

The objective is to strengthen connectivity, trade, energy links, development partnerships and security cooperation.

But India's neighbourhood diplomacy faces competition from other powers, domestic political sensitivities within neighbouring countries and historical

perceptions of Indian dominance.

The challenge is therefore to be the region's largest power without appearing to behave like a hegemon.

INDIA'S WARS AND STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION

1947-48: The First War

Independent India's first major security crisis came almost immediately after Partition.

Conflict erupted over Jammu and Kashmir in 1947.

The war established Pakistan as India's principal military adversary for decades and brought Kashmir to the centre of Indian security policy.

1962: The China Shock

The war with China in 1962 was a turning point.

India's military preparedness proved inadequate, and the conflict exposed serious weaknesses in defence planning.

The experience transformed Indian strategic thinking.

Defence spending increased.

The armed forces expanded.

Mountain warfare capabilities received greater attention.

The country began to approach national security with a more realistic assessment of military power.

1965 and 1971: Wars with Pakistan

The 1965 war with Pakistan further

reinforced the importance of military preparedness.

The 1971 war was fundamentally different.

India supported the Bangladesh liberation movement and eventually intervened militarily.

The war resulted in the creation of Bangladesh and represented one of India's most decisive military victories.

The experience reinforced India's confidence in its ability to shape regional outcomes.

Kargil 1999

The Kargil conflict demonstrated that even in the nuclear age, limited conventional conflict remained possible.

India's military response was carefully calibrated to remain within the Line of Control.

The war reinforced the importance of intelligence, surveillance, high-altitude warfare and military preparedness.

From Conventional Wars to New Security Threats

India's security concerns have expanded beyond traditional warfare.

Terrorism, cyber threats, drones, maritime insecurity, space security and disinformation now form part of the strategic landscape.

The military has therefore been adapting from an essentially land-focused security model towards a more integrated approach involving land, sea, air, space and cyber capabilities.

PAKISTAN: FROM PARTITION TO A NEW ERA OF STRATEGIC CONFRONTATION


India's relationship with Pakistan has been the most enduring and difficult security challenge of the republic's history. Born out of the trauma of Partition in 1947, the relationship has been marked by wars, territorial disputes, cross-border terrorism, diplomatic initiatives and repeated breakdowns in dialogue.

The first India-Pakistan war began in 1947-48 over Jammu and Kashmir. Another war followed in 1965, while the 1971 conflict transformed the map of South Asia with the creation of Bangladesh. The Kargil conflict of 1999 demonstrated that even after both countries became declared nuclear powers, limited conventional warfare remained possible.

In the decades that followed, terrorism and cross-border militancy became the defining features of India's security concerns with Pakistan.

Uri: A Turning Point in India's Response

The September 2016 terrorist attack on an Indian Army camp at Uri in Jammu and Kashmir, in which 19 soldiers were killed, became an important turning point.

India subsequently announced that its forces had conducted "surgical strikes" across the Line of Control against terrorist launch pads. The operation marked a significant change in the public articulation of India's counter-terrorism doctrine.

The message was that terrorist attacks originating across the Line of Control could result in a direct military response.

The episode was followed by a period in which India's response to terrorism increasingly emphasised deterrence and the costs of cross-border attacks.

Pulwama and Balakot

The February 2019 suicide bombing in Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir, in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed,

triggered another major escalation.

India conducted an air strike on what it described as a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp at Balakot in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The episode was significant because it demonstrated that India's response to terrorism could extend beyond the Line of Control.

The subsequent aerial confrontation between India and Pakistan brought the dangers of escalation between two nuclear-armed states into sharp focus.

At the same time, the episode reinforced a transformation in India's security doctrine: terrorism was increasingly being treated not simply as a law-and-order problem but as a national-security challenge requiring military, diplomatic and intelligence responses.

Pahalgam: Terrorism Returns to the Centre

The terrorist attack in Pahalgam in April 2025 marked another grave moment in India-Pakistan relations. The attack, which targeted civilians and resulted in the deaths of 26 people, generated widespread outrage across India.

New Delhi attributed responsibility to Pakistan-based militant networks and announced a series of measures against Pakistan.

The attack became the immediate backdrop to the most significant India-Pakistan military confrontation in years.

Operation Sindoor

In May 2025, India launched Operation Sindoor, striking what it described as terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir following the Pahalgam attack.

The operation represented another stage in the evolution of India's

counter-terrorism posture.

Unlike earlier responses that were primarily associated with cross-border strikes or a limited military action, Operation Sindoor was presented by India as a broader demonstration of its determination to respond to terrorism at its source.

The military confrontation that followed involved missile, drone and other attacks and raised concerns about escalation between two nuclear-armed neighbours.

The episode also highlighted how warfare in South Asia is changing. Traditional ground forces remain important, but precision weapons, drones, air defence systems, intelligence, surveillance and information warfare have become increasingly central to military strategy.

Operation Sindoor therefore belongs to a larger evolution that began with the 2016 Uri response and continued through the 2019 Balakot strike.

From Dialogue to Deterrence

India's Pakistan policy has consequently evolved through several stages.

The early decades were dominated by conventional wars and the Kashmir dispute. The later decades increasingly centred on terrorism and cross-border militancy. India's responses since Uri have placed greater emphasis on deterrence and the possibility of direct military retaliation.

Diplomacy has not disappeared.

India has repeatedly maintained that peaceful relations with its neighbours remain desirable, but it has increasingly linked meaningful engagement with the need for an environment free from terrorism.

The challenge is particularly complex because India and Pakistan are both nuclear-armed states.

Any military confrontation carries risks beyond the immediate battlefield.

This has made crisis management, communication and international diplomacy important even as India's military posture has become more assertive.

A Relationship Still Defined by Unresolved Questions

Kashmir remains the central territorial dispute, but the relationship now encompasses a much wider range of issues: terrorism, border security, water, trade, military modernisation, nuclear deterrence and regional geopolitics.

For India, Pakistan remains an immediate security concern, but the strategic environment has also changed dramatically.

China's growing relationship with Pakistan, developments along India's northern borders and the changing geopolitics of the Indian Ocean have made the India-Pakistan relationship part of a much larger regional equation.

The story from Uri to Pulwama and Balakot, and from Pahalgam to Operation Sindoor, illustrates a fundamental transformation in India's approach: from primarily absorbing terrorist attacks and pursuing diplomatic pressure towards a policy that places greater emphasis on deterrence, retaliation and the direct cost of terrorism. Yet the ultimate objective remains the same as it was at independence—lasting peace and security in the subcontinent. For India, the difficult task is to combine firmness against terrorism with responsible management of escalation, while keeping open the possibility of a future in which relations with Pakistan are defined not by violence and confrontation but by stability and peace.

FROM NON-ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

The Cold War Ends

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 transformed India's international environment.

The old Cold War structure disappeared. India simultaneously faced an economic crisis and a rapidly changing global order. Foreign policy had to adapt.

The language of non-alignment gradually became less central.

The concept of strategic autonomy emerged as a more appropriate description of India's approach.

The principle remained similar: India should preserve the freedom to make independent decisions.

But the world had changed.

India was no longer simply trying to avoid choosing between two superpowers.

It was attempting to engage with several centers of power simultaneously.

The Era of Multi-Alignment

India could cooperate with the United States while maintaining defense ties with Russia.

It could participate in the Quad while remaining a member of BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

It could deepen relations with Israel while maintaining strong partnerships with Arab countries.

It could develop ties with Europe while expanding engagement with Southeast Asia.

This approach is sometimes described as multi-alignment.

The objective is not to balance every country against another.

It is to create a broad network of partnerships that increases India's strategic options.

INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES: FROM DISTANCE TO PARTNERSHIP

India and the United States began the post-independence era with significant differences.

During the Cold War, Washington's alliances with Pakistan and India's close relationship with the Soviet Union complicated bilateral relations.

The relationship began changing substantially after the end of the Cold War. Economic reforms opened India further to global markets.

The two countries increasingly discovered common interests in trade, technology and security.

The Nuclear Turning Point

The 2005 India-US civil nuclear agreement became a major milestone.

The agreement helped bring India into the global civilian nuclear framework despite its position outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

It also reflected a larger strategic transformation.

Washington increasingly viewed India as an important partner in the Indo-Pacific.



Illustration: Google Gemini

The Indo-Pacific Partnership

Defense cooperation expanded dramatically. The two countries conduct military exercises, share strategic information and cooperate on maritime security.

India joined the Quad with the United States, Japan and Australia.

Technology has become another major pillar. Semiconductors, critical technologies, space, telecommunications, artificial intelligence and defense manufacturing are increasingly important areas of cooperation. The relationship is no longer simply about balancing China.

It has developed into a broad strategic partnership.

Yet India continues to preserve its autonomy.

New Delhi has not entered a formal military alliance with Washington.

The relationship therefore represents the essence of India's contemporary foreign policy:

deep partnership without formal alignment.

INDIA AND THE WORLD: THE RISE OF A GLOBAL POWER

India's international profile has expanded alongside its economy and population. The country is now an important participant in global trade, technology, finance, energy, climate diplomacy and security discussions.

India's membership of the G20, BRICS, SCO, Quad and other forums reflects its increasingly multi-dimensional diplomacy. Its growing economic weight has strengthened its influence.

Its large diaspora has also become an important bridge between India and the rest of the world.

The Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific has become central to India's strategic outlook.

India supports a free, open, inclusive and rules-based maritime order.

The Indian Ocean is particularly important.

India's geography places it near some of the world's busiest maritime trade routes. The country has therefore invested in naval capabilities, maritime domain awareness, coastal security and partnerships with Indian Ocean states.

Act East

India's engagement with Southeast Asia has also expanded.

The Act East Policy built upon earlier efforts to strengthen relations with ASEAN and the wider Asia-Pacific.

Connectivity, trade, defence and cultural links have become increasingly important. India's Northeast has acquired greater strategic relevance as a bridge to Southeast Asia.

West Asia

India's relationship with West Asia has evolved significantly.

The Gulf region is crucial for energy supplies, trade and the Indian diaspora.

India maintains important relations with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman and other Gulf countries.

At the same time, India has developed a strong strategic partnership with Israel. Maintaining relationships across these competing regional interests requires careful diplomacy.

INDIA AT THE UNITED NATIONS**AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH**

India was among the founding participants in the United Nations system.

Its foreign policy has consistently emphasised sovereignty, peaceful coexistence, development and opposition to colonialism.

India has contributed extensively to UN peacekeeping operations.

Indian troops and personnel have served in numerous missions around the world.

For decades, India has also advocated reform of the UN Security Council.

New Delhi argues that the existing structure does not adequately reflect the geopolitical realities of the 21st century.

India seeks a permanent seat on an expanded Security Council.

The Global South

India has increasingly positioned itself as a voice for developing countries. Issues such as food security, energy access, climate finance, development funding and technology transfer have become central to this diplomacy.

During India's G20 presidency in 2023, the African Union was admitted as a permanent member of the grouping. India also convened the Voice of Global South Summit, seeking to bring developing-country concerns into wider global discussions. This reflects an evolution of India's traditional developing-world diplomacy.

India no longer sees itself merely as a representative of poorer nations.

It increasingly seeks to act as a bridge between developed and developing economies.

INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, CHINA, RUSSIA AND OTHER MAJOR POWERS

The United States: Technology and Strategic Partnership

The United States has become one of India's most important strategic partners.

Defence cooperation, advanced technology, investment, education, space, clean energy and trade have deepened the relationship.

The two countries increasingly cooperate on Indo-Pacific security and emerging technologies.

Yet disagreements remain, including over trade, tariffs, immigration, human-rights concerns and India's continued defence relationship with Russia.

The relationship is therefore strong but not without friction.

China: The Central Strategic Challenge

China is simultaneously India's largest neighbour, a major economic partner and its principal long-term strategic competitor.

The unresolved boundary dispute remains the core security problem.

The 2020 border crisis transformed the relationship.

India has increased military infrastructure along the frontier and strengthened strategic partnerships with other countries.

At the same time, economic interdependence remains substantial.

India's China policy will therefore require a delicate balance between deterrence, diplomacy and economic resilience.

Russia: A Relationship That Survived the Cold War

India's relationship with Russia has deep historical roots.

The Soviet Union was a major defense supplier and political partner during the Cold War.

That relationship survived the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Russia remains important to India's defense capabilities, nuclear energy cooperation and space collaboration.

India's continued purchase of Russian oil after the outbreak of the Ukraine war also demonstrated the extent to which national-interest calculations shape its foreign policy.

At the same time, India's relationship with Russia has become more complicated as Moscow's ties with China have deepened and Russia's relationship with the West has deteriorated.

India therefore seeks to preserve its longstanding relationship with Moscow while simultaneously diversifying its defence and technology partnerships.

EUROPE, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA AND THE WIDER WORLD



Illustration: Google Gemini

India's foreign policy has expanded far beyond traditional relationships.

Japan has become an important partner in infrastructure, technology, investment and Indo-Pacific security.

Australia has emerged as a major strategic partner, particularly in the Quad framework.

The European Union and individual European states are important economic, technological and strategic partners.

France has developed a particularly significant relationship with India spanning defence, nuclear energy, space and the Indian Ocean.

Germany and other European economies are important trade and technology partners.

India's engagement with Africa has also expanded through development partnerships, capacity building, trade and health cooperation.

The larger pattern is clear:

India is building a web of relationships rather than depending on a single strategic centre.

INDIA'S STAND ON RECENT CONFLICTS AND WARS

Ukraine: Dialogue, Diplomacy and National Interest

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 presented India with one of its most difficult foreign-policy challenges.

India did not join Western sanctions against Russia and repeatedly called for dialogue and diplomacy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public statement to Russian President Vladimir Putin that "this is not an era for war" became one of the most widely cited expressions of India's position.

India has simultaneously maintained close relations with Ukraine and Western countries. Its approach has been driven by several considerations: longstanding defence ties with Russia, energy security, concerns about global food and commodity prices, and the principle of maintaining strategic autonomy.

India has sought to position itself not as a military participant but as a country capable of supporting diplomatic efforts towards peace.

The Middle East and Israel-Gaza War

The conflict following the October 7, 2023 attacks by Hamas and Israel's subsequent military campaign in Gaza has posed another diplomatic challenge.

India condemned the Hamas attacks and emphasised Israel's right to security while also calling for humanitarian assistance and a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

India has therefore attempted to balance its growing strategic relationship with Israel with its longstanding relationships with Arab countries and its support for Palestinian statehood.

This balancing act reflects the complexity of India's West Asia policy.

The Indo-Pacific and Strategic Competition

India's approach to the Indo-Pacific

has been shaped heavily by strategic competition between the United States and China.

India supports freedom of navigation, respect for international law and peaceful resolution of disputes.

At the same time, it avoids describing its partnerships as an anti-China alliance.

The Quad's focus on maritime security, technology, resilient supply chains, disaster response and other areas reflects this broader approach.

India seeks a stable balance of power rather than a new bloc-based Cold War.

THE NEW LANGUAGE OF INDIAN DIPLOMACY

India's foreign policy has acquired several new dimensions in recent years.

Strategic autonomy remains the central principle. Multi-alignment describes the expanding network of partnerships.

Neighborhood First reflects the priority given to South Asia.

Act East represents India's engagement with Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Think West reflects the growing importance of West Asia.

The Indo-Pacific has become a central strategic theatre.

The Global South has become an increasingly important diplomatic constituency.

Together, these ideas describe a country that is no longer simply reacting to the international system. It is attempting to shape it.



THE MANY INDIAS: LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, CINEMA, SPORT & A GLOBAL CULTURAL IDENTITY

In 1947, India inherited a civilization whose cultural boundaries had never neatly coincided with political ones. Languages crossed provinces, religious traditions overlapped, music travelled across regions, stories moved from one generation to another, and artistic traditions survived centuries of political change. The Republic therefore did not begin with the task of creating an Indian culture. It began with the much more complex task of giving political expression to a culture that was already extraordinarily diverse.

Over the next eight decades, that diversity would not disappear. It would acquire new forms.

Radio created national audiences. Cinema became one of the country's most powerful shared experiences. Television brought mythology, news, sport and entertainment into millions of homes. Liberalization and satellite broadcasting opened the door to global cultural influences. The internet and smartphones subsequently transformed Indians from consumers of culture into creators and distributors of it.

Literature expanded beyond established traditions to embrace the experiences of Dalits, women, tribal communities, migrants and a rapidly urbanizing middle class. Indian art moved between classical inheritance and modern experimentation. Cricket became more than a sport and emerged as a powerful expression of popular identity. India's Olympic journey, though slower to develop, gradually produced a new generation of sporting heroes.

And beyond India's borders, another India was taking shape.

The Indian diaspora carried food, faith, music, languages, festivals and traditions to almost every part of the world. Over time, it also became an important economic, professional and diplomatic bridge between India and other countries.

The cultural history of independent India is therefore not simply a story of preservation. It is a story of adaptation. India entered independence with an ancient cultural inheritance and has spent the following decades constantly reinventing the ways in which that inheritance is expressed.

A Nation That Speaks in Many Voices

Perhaps nowhere is India's diversity more visible than in its languages.

The Constitution's Eighth Schedule now contains 22 languages, including Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Maithili, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.

But the constitutional list represents only part of India's linguistic landscape. Across the

country, hundreds of languages and speech varieties continue to be used in homes, villages, towns and communities.

Language in India has never been simply a means of communication. It is a repository of memory. It carries songs, legends, religious traditions, jokes, proverbs, family histories and local knowledge.

To speak a particular language is often to inherit a particular way of seeing the world.

The challenge before independent India was therefore immense. How could a modern republic create a sense of national belonging without demanding cultural uniformity?

The answer was not always easy, and language politics produced some of the most passionate movements of the early Republic. Yet the eventual experience demonstrated that Indian unity did not require linguistic sameness.

The Linguistic Map of the Republic The reorganization of states along linguistic lines was among the most consequential decisions of early independent India.

The creation of Andhra State in 1953, following the death of Potti Sriramulu after his fast for a separate Telugu-speaking state, demonstrated the depth of linguistic sentiment. The States Reorganization Act of 1956 subsequently transformed India's internal political map.

Maharashtra and Gujarat followed in 1960. Punjab was reorganized in 1966, while later decades witnessed the creation of further states reflecting geographical, ethnic, administrative and cultural aspirations.

This process could have weakened the Union. Instead, it helped strengthen it.



Illustration: Google Gemini

By allowing linguistic identities to find legitimate political space within the federal system, India demonstrated that regional pride and national identity need not be opposites.

Literature as a Conversation

Indian literature after independence became a vast conversation about a changing society.

The trauma of Partition left a deep imprint on writers across languages. The village, the refugee camp, the industrial town, the expanding metropolis and the immigrant community all became subjects of literature.

Writers explored caste, poverty, gender, political power, migration, loneliness, modernity and the conflict between inherited traditions and new aspirations.

Indian literature in English gained an increasingly international audience, but the story of Indian writing cannot be told through English alone. Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, Urdu, Punjabi, Assamese and other literary traditions continued to produce powerful poetry, fiction, drama and criticism.

Translation gradually became one of the great cultural bridges of modern India.

The result is a literary India that does not speak with one voice. It speaks through many voices-and its richness lies precisely in that plurality.

INDIAN CINEMA: FROM RAJ KAPOOR TO THE GLOBAL SCREEN

If language created India's cultural diversity, cinema created one of its most powerful shared spaces.

At independence, the Indian film industry was already established. Over subsequent decades it grew into one of the world's largest and most diverse cinematic ecosystems.

Hindi cinema became nationally influential, but it was never the only Indian cinema. Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Assamese and other film industries developed distinctive styles and powerful audiences.

Cinema crossed linguistic boundaries through music, stars and stories.

Raj Kapoor became one of the earliest Indian film personalities to acquire a major international following. His films combined romance, comedy and social commentary and travelled far beyond India's borders.

In the Soviet Union and parts of Eastern Europe, Indian cinema acquired an audience that associated its stars with a distinctive image of India's optimism, emotion and popular culture.

Cinema thus became an early form of Indian soft power.

Parallel Cinema and the Search for Reality

Alongside commercial cinema grew a different tradition.

Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal, Adoor Gopalakrishnan and others demonstrated that Indian cinema could explore poverty, social inequality, alienation, politics and human complexity without relying on conventional commercial formulas.

This parallel tradition gave Indian cinema international artistic credibility while commercial cinema continued to reach mass audiences.

The Superstar Era

The 1970s brought Amitabh Bachchan and the emergence of the "angry young man"-a screen persona that reflected social frustrations in a period marked by political and economic uncertainty.

The 1990s produced another transformation.

Liberalisation, satellite television and the growth of the urban middle class created new audiences and new aspirations. Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan and others became global stars, while Indian films increasingly explored migration, family, consumerism and life between India and the West.

The Regional Breakthrough

In the 21st century, the boundaries between India's film industries have become increasingly porous.

Films from Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada cinema have achieved national and international audiences on a scale that would have been difficult to imagine in earlier decades.

Streaming platforms have accelerated the process.

A film no longer needs to be remade into another language to reach another region. Subtitles and dubbing can take a story from one corner of India to another and increasingly from India to the world.

Cinema has therefore become a cultural map of modern India: multilingual, ambitious, contradictory and increasingly global.

THE SOUND OF INDIA: MUSIC, RADIO AND CULTURAL CHANGE

For the first decades of independence, radio was one of the most important cultural institutions in India.

All India Radio brought news, music, drama, educational programmes and cultural broadcasts into homes across the country.

For millions of Indians, it was the first electronic connection to a national public sphere.

Film music became especially powerful.

A song recorded in Mumbai could be heard in a village in Punjab, a town in Assam or a household in Kerala. Music often travelled across linguistic barriers more easily than spoken language.

Classical India Finds a Global Audience

The Republic inherited two major classical traditions-Hindustani and Carnatic music-along with hundreds of regional and folk traditions.

Artists such as Ravi Shankar, Bismillah Khan, M.S. Subbulakshmi, Ali Akbar Khan and Bhimsen Joshi became cultural ambassadors.

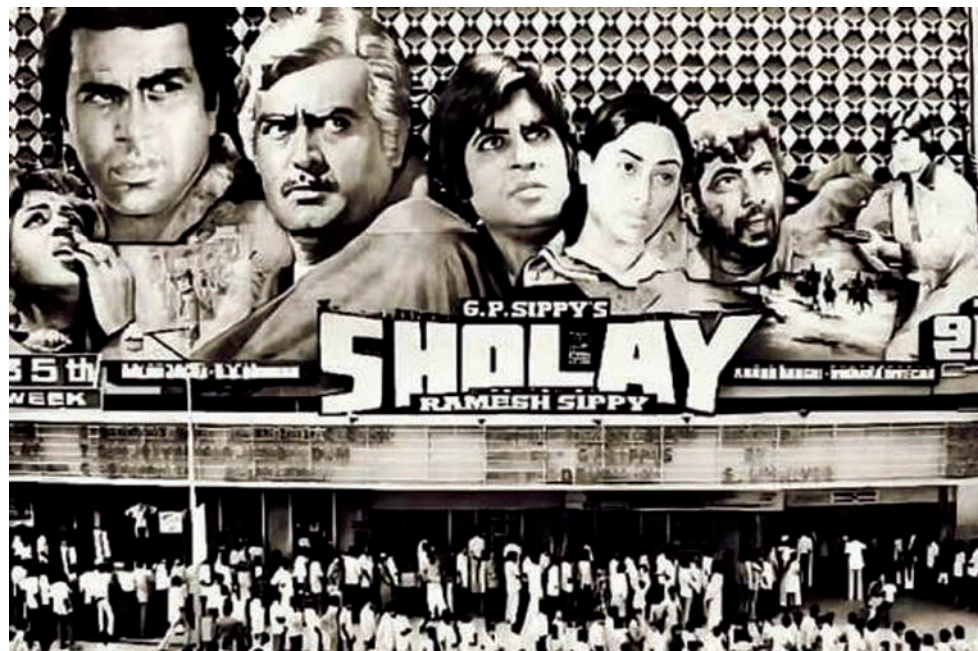
Ravi Shankar's international collaborations, particularly his association with Western musicians, helped introduce Indian classical music to new audiences.

Indian music was no longer confined to Indian concert halls.

It had entered the global cultural conversation.

From Cassette to Streaming

The cassette revolution brought music into millions of homes and cars.



Later came CDs, music television, digital downloads and streaming.

Each technological change altered who could make and consume music.

The smartphone completed the transformation. A young musician today can record a song, release it online and find listeners in cities thousands of kilometres away without passing through traditional gatekeepers.

Indian music has consequently become more fragmented and more democratic. Film songs remain immensely influential, but independent music, folk fusion, devotional music, hip-hop, electronic music and regional-language artists have found new audiences.

The sound of India is now almost impossible to contain within one industry or one genre.

INDIAN LITERATURE AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Independence changed the questions Indian writers asked.

The first generation confronted Partition, displacement, poverty and the enormous challenge of building a modern nation.

Later writers examined industrialisation, urbanisation, political conflict, caste, gender, migration and changing family structures.

Literature became a space where the promises and failures of the Republic could be examined.

The Rise of New Voices

The post-independence literary landscape increasingly included voices that had previously received limited space in mainstream literary culture.

Dalit literature challenged caste hierarchies and forced readers to confront experiences of exclusion.

Women's writing explored patriarchy, domestic life, sexuality, work and autonomy.

Tribal writers, writers from the Northeast and authors from marginalised communities expanded the idea of what constituted the Indian literary experience.

Indian Writing in English

Indian English literature developed into an important global cultural phenomenon.

R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao established an early tradition.

Later generations-including Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and many others-brought Indian experiences to international readers.

But the international success of English-language writing should not obscure the continuing vitality of India's regional literatures.

The true literary India is multilingual.

Its greatest achievement may be that stories written in different languages increasingly find ways to meet one another through translation.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE REPUBLIC

Independent India inherited temples, mosques, forts, palaces, Buddhist monuments, colonial buildings and countless vernacular traditions.

The Republic added another architectural layer.

Chandigarh represented one of the most ambitious experiments in modernist urban planning. Designed principally by Le Corbusier and his team, the city became a symbol of a newly independent India looking towards modernity.

New universities, scientific institutions, government buildings and cultural centres adopted modern architectural ideas.

Modern Indian Art

Indian artists faced a similar question: how could a modern Indian art emerge without simply imitating the West?

M.F. Husain, S.H. Raza, F.N. Souza, Tyeb Mehta and others developed distinctive modernist vocabularies while drawing, in different ways, from Indian history, mythology and visual traditions.

Meanwhile, folk and tribal art received growing institutional and commercial attention.

Madhubani, Warli, Gond and numerous other traditions moved from local contexts into galleries, museums, design studios and international markets.

The boundaries between "traditional" and "modern" became increasingly fluid.

The Architecture of a Changing India

Today's India contains extraordinary architectural contrasts.

Ancient temples stand near metro stations. Mughal monuments coexist with glass towers. Colonial buildings share urban landscapes with modern airports, technology parks and high-rise residential complexes.



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TELEVISION, SATELLITE INDIA AND THE INFORMATION REVOLUTION

The Age of Doordarshan

Television began modestly in India, initially serving educational and experimental purposes.

Its reach expanded gradually until Doordarshan became a central institution of national life.

Programmes such as Hum Log, Buniyaad, Ramayan and Mahabharat created shared experiences for millions.

The broadcast of Ramayan and Mahabharat demonstrated television's remarkable power to turn a country of enormous diversity into a simultaneous audience.

Satellite India

The 1990s changed everything.

Private satellite television brought an explosion of channels into Indian homes.

News became continuous.

Entertainment became specialized.

Regional-language television expanded.

Advertising and consumer culture became increasingly powerful.

Television reflected the economic and social changes taking place outside the screen.

From Broadcast to Participation

The internet then broke the old media hierarchy.

The audience became a producer.

A smartphone became a camera, television, newspaper, radio, publishing house and broadcasting station.

Social media transformed the speed at which cultural trends could travel.

The old model was one-to-many.

The digital model is many-to-many.

India's cultural conversation consequently became faster, noisier and more participatory.

CRICKET AND THE MAKING OF A SPORTING NATION

Cricket is more than India's most popular sport. It is one of the country's most powerful cultural institutions.

The transformation accelerated after India's 1983 World Cup victory under Kapil Dev.

The triumph over the West Indies at Lord's demonstrated that India could defeat the dominant cricketing power of the era. It changed the country's sporting imagination.

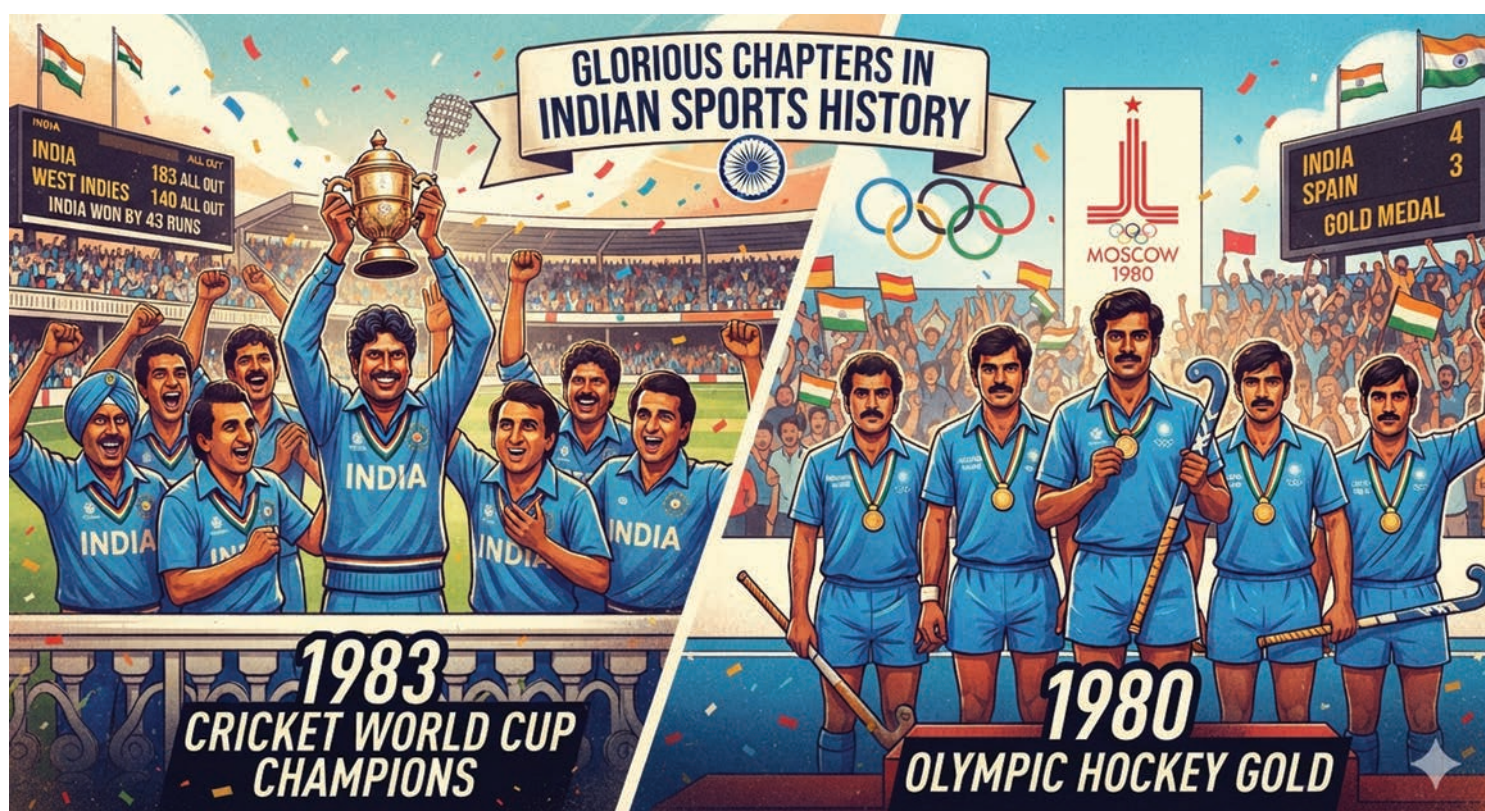
Sachin and the Television Generation

Sachin Tendulkar's emergence in the 1990s coincided with satellite television and economic liberalisation.

Cricket became a huge commercial industry.

Players became celebrities. Advertising transformed the economics of the sport. Television rights became extraordinarily valuable.

The Indian Premier League took the process further, combining cricket with



entertainment, franchise ownership and global participation.

Beyond Cricket

Cricket's dominance has sometimes overshadowed other sports, but India's sporting culture has broadened.

Badminton, wrestling, shooting, boxing, athletics, weightlifting and other disciplines have produced international champions. The challenge for the next generation is to convert India's enormous enthusiasm for sport into a wider sporting ecosystem.

INDIA'S OLYMPIC JOURNEY

India's early Olympic story was dominated by hockey.

The country produced extraordinary hockey teams and legends such as Dhyan Chand.

For decades, however, individual Olympic success remained limited.

The situation gradually changed.

Karnam Malleswari, Leander Paes, Abhinav Bindra, Sushil Kumar, Mary Kom, Saina Nehwal, P.V. Sindhu, Mirabai Chanu and Neeraj Chopra helped create a new Olympic culture.

Bindra's gold medal in shooting at Beijing 2008 was India's first individual Olympic gold.

Neeraj Chopra's athletics gold at Tokyo 2020 was another landmark, demonstrating the emergence of Indian excellence beyond traditional sporting disciplines.

Women Change the Sporting Narrative

One of the most important developments has been the rise of Indian women athletes.

From Mary Kom and Saina Nehwal to P.V. Sindhu, Mirabai Chanu and numerous others, women have increasingly become the faces of India's sporting ambitions.

Their achievements have challenged older assumptions about women's participation in competitive sport. India's Olympic journey is still a work in progress, but the expectations have changed dramatically. Participation is no longer enough. The ambition is now to compete for medals across a wider range of sports.



THE INDIAN DIASPORA

The Other India

Perhaps the most remarkable development in India's cultural journey has taken place beyond India's borders.

There is another India scattered across the world—not a political India, but a cultural India made up of families, communities, businesses, professionals, students, artists and successive generations of people with Indian ancestry or connections.

Their histories are not identical.

Some communities descend from Indians who left the subcontinent during the colonial period as indentured labourers. Others emerged through migration to East Africa, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean and other regions.

The post-independence era produced another great wave of migration.

Professionals, students, entrepreneurs, workers and families moved to the Gulf, Europe, North America, Australia and elsewhere. Together, these different migrations created one of the world's most extensive overseas Indian networks.

From Indentured Labor to Professional Migration

The history of the diaspora contains both hardship and achievement.

During the colonial period, Indians were transported as indentured labourers to plantations in places such as Mauritius, Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and parts of Africa.

They carried with them languages, religious traditions, food practices, songs and social customs.

These communities gradually developed distinctive identities of their own. Post-independence migration followed a different trajectory.

Doctors, engineers, academics, scientists, entrepreneurs and students became increasingly prominent in countries such as the United States, Canada, Britain and Australia.

The Gulf became another major destination, particularly for Indian workers across a broad spectrum of occupations.

The result is a diaspora that is extraordinarily diverse in class, language, religion, profession and historical experience.

Culture Travels With People

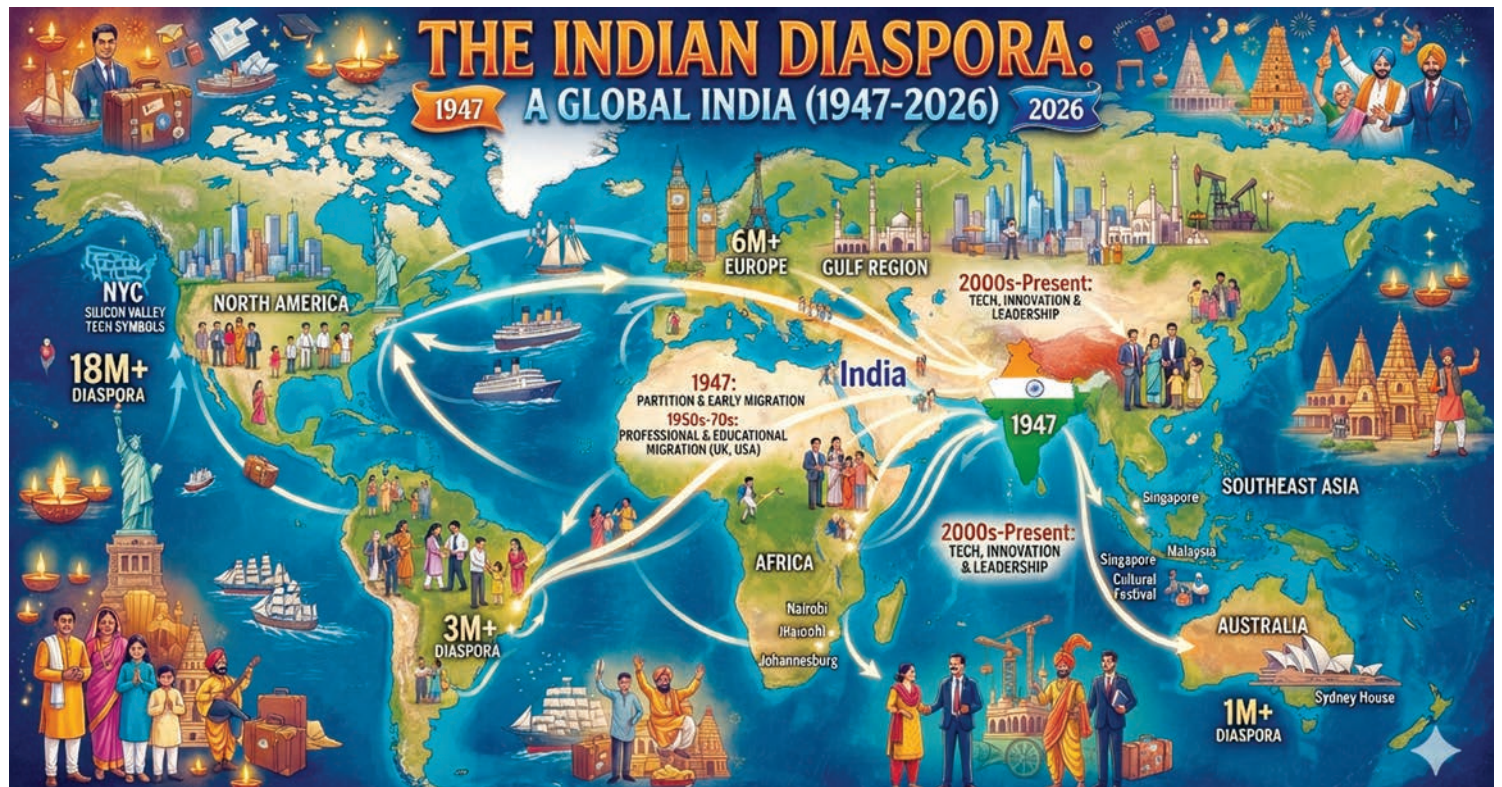
Migration did not mean cultural disappearance. Indians carried their cultural practices with them.

A family festival could recreate a connection with the homeland thousands of kilometres away.

Temples, gurdwaras, mosques, churches, cultural associations and community organisations became centres of social life. Indian restaurants introduced regional cuisines to new audiences. Classical dance schools taught Bharatanatyam, Kathak and other forms outside India. Yoga became a global phenomenon. Bollywood films created audiences across continents.

Indian music found listeners far beyond the diaspora itself.

Diwali, Holi, Vaisakhi, Navratri, Eid and other festivals increasingly became



visible in multicultural cities around the world. In this sense, the diaspora did not merely preserve Indian culture. It helped transform Indian culture into a global cultural presence.

The Rise of the Second and Third Generation

The second and third generations of the diaspora have created a more complicated relationship with India.

They may speak English, French, Spanish or another local language more fluently than an Indian language.

They may have been born thousands of kilometres from India.

Yet food, family traditions, films, music, religion and festivals can provide powerful connections to ancestral roots.

For younger generations, identity is often layered.

They can be simultaneously British and Indian, American and Indian, Canadian and Indian, Australian and Indian, or part of other national identities.

The diaspora has therefore demonstrated that cultural identity does not have to be geographically confined.

The Global Indian Professional

The transformation of the diaspora has also been visible in professional life.

Indian-origin professionals have become prominent in technology, medicine, finance, academia, science, business and public administration.

The rise of Indian-origin leaders in major global corporations and political institutions has further increased India's visibility. But the significance of this phenomenon goes beyond individual success. Professional networks connect Indian institutions with universities, technology companies, hospitals, investors and research centres around the world. The diaspora can consequently function as a bridge for knowledge and capital as well as culture.

The Economic Link

The diaspora has also become an important economic connection between India and the world. Remittances sent by overseas Indians support millions of households and contribute to India's foreign-exchange earnings.

Diaspora communities also invest in Indian businesses, property, technology ventures, education and philanthropy.

The relationship has evolved from one in which migrants primarily sent money home to one involving investment, entrepreneurship, research, technology transfer and professional networks.

India's engagement with its overseas communities has become correspondingly more organised.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and the Institutional Connection

India formally recognised the importance of its overseas community through initiatives such as Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

Celebrated on January 9, the event commemorates Mahatma Gandhi's return to India from South Africa on January 9, 1915.

The Ministry of External Affairs describes the occasion as a platform for the overseas Indian community to engage with India and build mutually beneficial connections.

Over the years, the institutional relationship has expanded through diaspora engagement, consular services, cultural program, investment initiatives and the Overseas Citizen of India framework.

The idea is no longer simply to maintain an emotional relationship with people of Indian origin. It is to create a global network.

The Diaspora and India's Soft Power

The overseas Indian community has also become an important source of India's soft power.

A person who experiences Indian food in London, watches an Indian film in Toronto, attends a Diwali celebration in New York, learns yoga in Sydney or listens to Indian classical music in Paris encounters a version of India

without necessarily travelling to India.

The diaspora becomes an informal cultural ambassador.

This does not mean that all overseas Indians represent India's official position. Diaspora communities have their own political views and identities, and they are citizens or residents of the countries where they live.

But collectively, they have made India more visible in global society.

India and Its Diaspora: A Two-Way Relationship

The relationship is not one-directional.

India influences the diaspora, but the diaspora also influences India.

Ideas about education, entrepreneurship, technology, social organization and professional culture travel back to India.

Migrants return with skills and experience.

Families maintain transnational connections.

Young people move between countries for education and employment.

Technology has made these relationships almost instantaneous.

A generation ago, an overseas Indian family might wait weeks for a letter from home.

Today, a video call can connect several generations within seconds.

The diaspora has therefore become part of the everyday geography of modern India.

A Global Indian Identity

The most significant transformation is perhaps psychological.

For much of the early post-independence period, migration could be understood primarily as separation.

Today, migration is increasingly understood as connection.

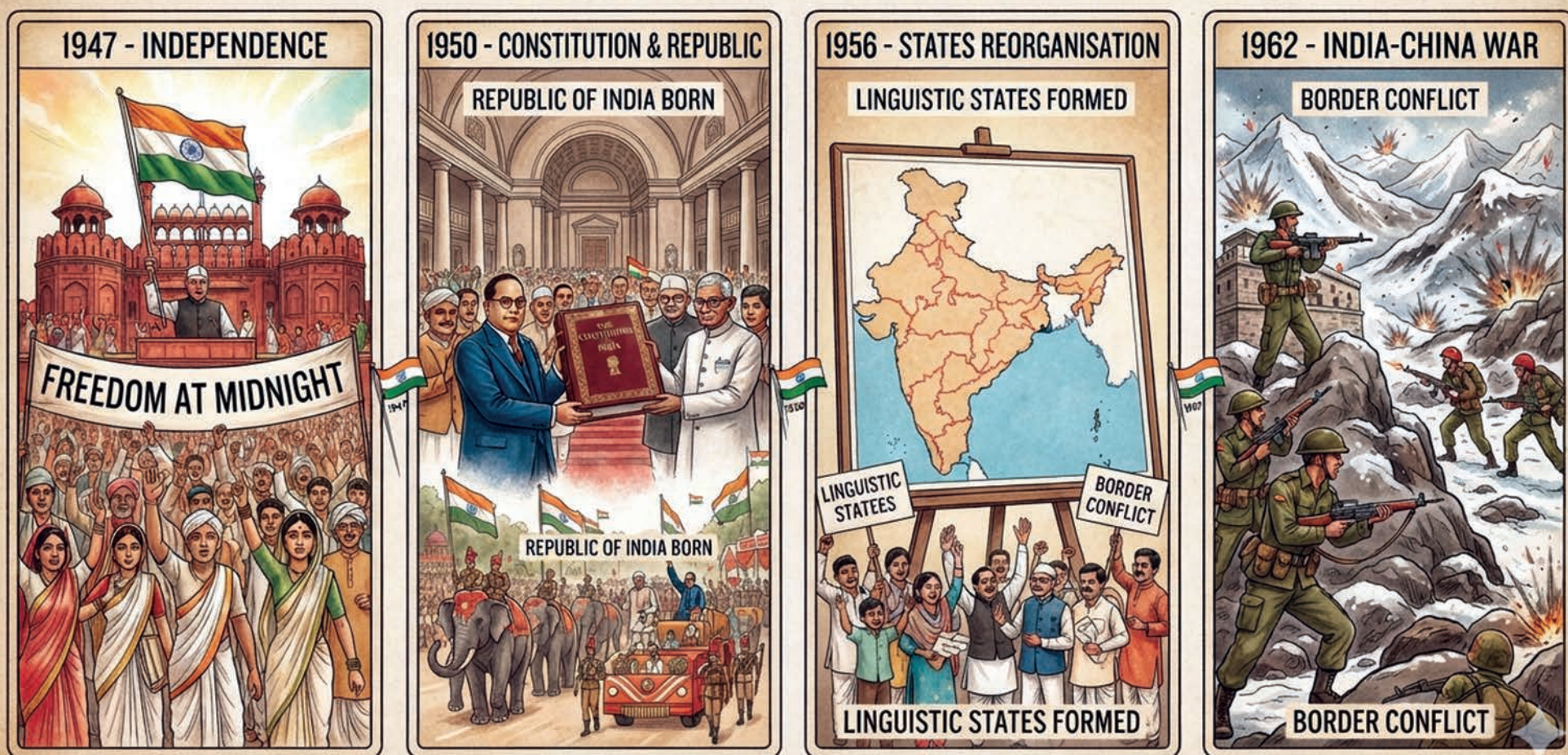
The Indian family can live in Delhi, have a son in California, a daughter in Dubai and relatives in London, while maintaining a common cultural life through phones, video calls, festivals and social media.

The concept of the Indian homeland has consequently expanded.

INDIA'S LANDMARK MOMENTS

Eight decades of a republic in motion

INDIA'S JOURNEY: 1947-1962 (From Independence to War)



India's journey since Independence has never been a straight line. It has been marked by triumphs and tragedies, wars and peace, political upheavals and economic transformations, scientific breakthroughs and social movements. Every decade has added a new layer to the idea of India.

From the midnight of August 15, 1947, when a newly independent nation stepped out of colonial rule, to the emergence of a young, digitally connected generation demanding accountability in 2026, India's story is one of constant reinvention. The country has survived partition, food shortages, wars, political crises, financial upheavals, communal violence, terrorism, natural disasters and a once-in-a-century pandemic. At the same time, it has built democratic institutions, expanded its economy, strengthened its strategic capabilities, embraced technology and emerged as one of the world's most consequential powers.

The following chronology captures some of the moments that fundamentally altered the direction of the Indian republic.

1947 - INDEPENDENCE

The birth of a free nation

At midnight on August 15, 1947, India emerged from nearly two centuries of British colonial rule. Jawaharlal Nehru's famous "Tryst with Destiny" speech captured the mixture of hope,

responsibility and uncertainty surrounding the birth of the new nation.

Independence, however, arrived amid the trauma of Partition. British India was divided into India and Pakistan, triggering one of the largest and most violent migrations in modern history. Millions crossed the new borders, while communal violence claimed countless lives.

The task before the leaders of independent India was extraordinary: to transform a deeply diverse, impoverished and recently divided society into a functioning democratic nation-state.

Independence was therefore not an ending. It was the beginning of the republic's greatest experiment.

1950 - CONSTITUTION AND REPUBLIC

On January 26, 1950, India's Constitution came into force and the country became a sovereign democratic republic. Dr Rajendra Prasad became the first President, while the Constitution established the framework of parliamentary democracy, fundamental rights, an independent judiciary and a federal system.

The Constitution was more than a legal document. It was a statement of national purpose.

It sought to reconcile enormous differences of language, religion, caste, region and culture within a single political framework. Universal adult franchise gave citizens the right to participate in government regardless of

wealth, education, caste or gender.

For a newly independent country, this was an audacious democratic gamble.

1951-52 - FIRST GENERAL ELECTION

Democracy goes to the people

India's first general election was one of the largest democratic exercises the world had seen. Conducted between October 1951 and February 1952, it involved hundreds of millions of citizens, many of whom had never voted before.

The logistical challenge was immense. Election officials travelled through mountains, forests, villages and remote settlements. Ballot boxes had to reach people living in some of the most inaccessible parts of the country.

The election demonstrated that democracy in India would not remain confined to constitutional texts or parliamentary chambers. It would be rooted in the ordinary citizen.

The result gave the Indian National Congress a commanding mandate, but the larger victory belonged to the idea of representative government.

1956 - STATES REORGANISATION

Drawing India's internal map

Language became one of independent India's earliest tests of federalism.

The demand for states based largely on linguistic identity grew during the 1950s and produced intense political mobilisation. The death of Potti Sriramulu after a prolonged fast

accelerated the creation of Andhra State in 1953.

The States Reorganisation Act of 1956 subsequently redrew the country's internal boundaries on linguistic lines.

Far from destroying national unity, the reorganisation helped accommodate India's diversity within the Union. It established an important principle: Indian unity did not require uniformity.

Over subsequent decades, new states would continue to emerge, reflecting changing administrative, cultural and political aspirations.

1962 - INDIA-CHINA WAR

A shock to the young republic

The 1962 war with China was a profound military and psychological shock for India.

Border disputes, competing territorial claims and deteriorating relations culminated in a conflict in October-November 1962. Indian forces faced serious logistical and preparedness challenges in the high Himalayas.

The defeat forced a reassessment of national security policy. Defence preparedness, military infrastructure and strategic planning acquired a new urgency.

The war also altered India's understanding of its neighbourhood and contributed to a long-term transformation of the country's defence posture.

1965 - INDIA-PAKISTAN WAR**Another test of national resilience**

Barely three years later, India was at war again, this time with Pakistan.

The 1965 conflict spread across multiple theatres, including Jammu and Kashmir and the international border in Punjab and Rajasthan. Indian and Pakistani forces fought major battles involving tanks, aircraft and ground troops.

The war ended with a ceasefire followed by the Tashkent Declaration in January 1966.

The conflict reinforced the centrality of national security in Indian politics and strengthened the image of the armed forces as a crucial pillar of the republic.

1969 - BANK NATIONALISATION**Banking becomes an instrument of development**

In July 1969, the government nationalised 14 major commercial banks.

The decision reflected the belief that banking resources should serve broader developmental objectives rather than being concentrated primarily in large industrial and commercial interests.

Nationalisation helped expand formal banking into rural and underserved areas and became a defining symbol of the economic philosophy of the era.

It also marked the growing role of the state in directing India's economic development.

The debate over state control versus market forces would continue for decades - and eventually culminate in the dramatic reforms of 1991.

1971 - BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR**India and the birth of Bangladesh**

The crisis in then East Pakistan in 1971 transformed South Asian geopolitics.

Following a brutal military crackdown in East Pakistan, millions of refugees crossed into India. India eventually intervened militarily in December 1971 after hostilities expanded into a full-scale war.

The conflict ended with the surrender of Pakistani forces in Dhaka and the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation.

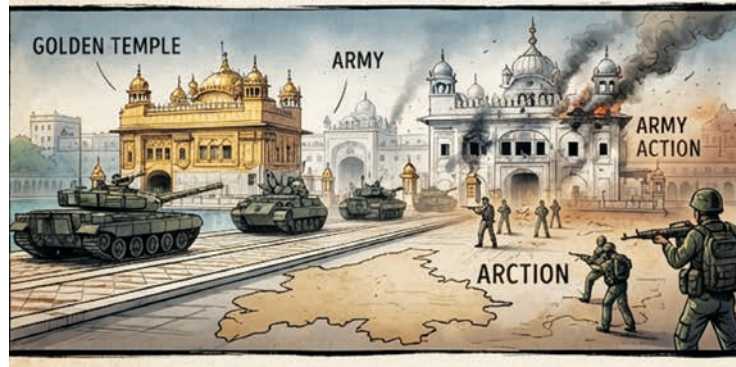
For India, the war represented a major strategic and military victory. It also demonstrated the importance of regional geopolitics, humanitarian pressures and military preparedness.

The image of India as a major South Asian power was permanently strengthened.

1974 - POKHRAN-I**India enters the nuclear age**

On May 18, 1974, India conducted its first nuclear test at Pokhran in Rajasthan.

The operation, known as "Smiling Buddha," demonstrated India's technological capability and

1969 - BANK NATIONALISATION**1984 - OPERATION BLUESTAR**

fundamentally altered its strategic position.

India described the test as a peaceful nuclear explosion, while the international community reacted with concern over nuclear proliferation.

The test began a long journey toward India's emergence as a declared nuclear weapons state. It also contributed to the development of indigenous capabilities in nuclear science, engineering and strategic technology.

1975-77 - THE EMERGENCY**Democracy's darkest interruption**

On June 25, 1975, the government imposed a state of Emergency, citing threats to national security and political stability.

Civil liberties were curtailed, political opponents were arrested, press freedoms were restricted and constitutional institutions came under intense pressure. The period remains one of the most contested chapters in independent India's political history.

In March 1977, elections were held. The Congress suffered a historic defeat and the Janata Party came to power.

The Emergency left a lasting lesson about the fragility of democratic freedoms and the importance of institutional checks and balances.

It also demonstrated something equally significant: India's voters could remove a powerful government through the ballot box.

1984 - OPERATION BLUESTAR AND ITS AFTERMATH**A traumatic turning point**

The early 1980s witnessed escalating violence and political instability in Punjab. In June 1984, the Indian Army launched Operation Blue Star at the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar to remove armed militants who had fortified themselves inside the complex.

The operation caused heavy casualties and extensive damage to the Akal Takht and other structures within the complex. For Sikhs across India and abroad, the events had profound religious and emotional consequences.

The assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by two of her Sikh bodyguards on October 31, 1984, was followed by horrific anti-Sikh violence, particularly in Delhi and other parts of northern India.

The events of 1984 remain deeply embedded in India's collective memory. They continue to raise questions about political violence, communal justice, state power, accountability and reconciliation.

1984 - BHOPAL GAS TRAGEDY**The industrial disaster that changed India**

In December 1984, a catastrophic gas leak at the Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal killed thousands and exposed hundreds of thousands of people to toxic chemicals.

The Bhopal disaster became one of the world's worst industrial catastrophes.

Beyond the immediate loss of life, its legacy included long-term health and environmental consequences and a prolonged struggle by survivors for compensation, accountability and remediation.

Bhopal transformed public debate about industrial safety, corporate responsibility, environmental regulation and the rights of communities living near hazardous industries.

1991 - ECONOMIC LIBERALISATION**The old economic order gives way**

By 1991, India faced a severe balance-of-payments crisis. Foreign exchange reserves had fallen dangerously low, while the country confronted high fiscal pressures and economic

uncertainty.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh responded with a package of reforms that dismantled many of the controls associated with the old economic system.

Industrial licensing was reduced, trade barriers were lowered, foreign investment was encouraged and the private sector received greater room to operate.

The reforms did not transform India overnight. But they changed the direction of the economy.

Over the following decades, India witnessed the rapid growth of information technology, telecommunications, services, private enterprise and a new urban middle class.

1991 became one of the great dividing lines in modern Indian economic history.

1992 - BABRI MASJID DEMOLITION**A rupture in India's political and social landscape**

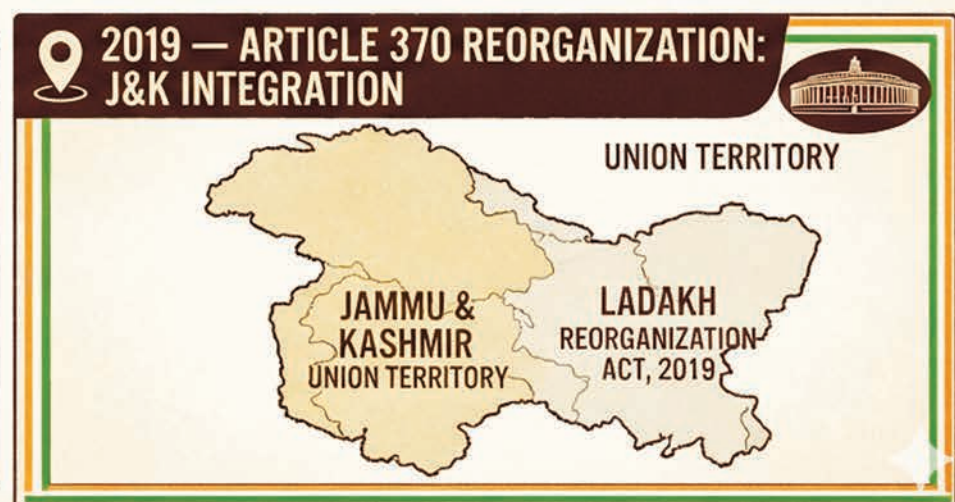
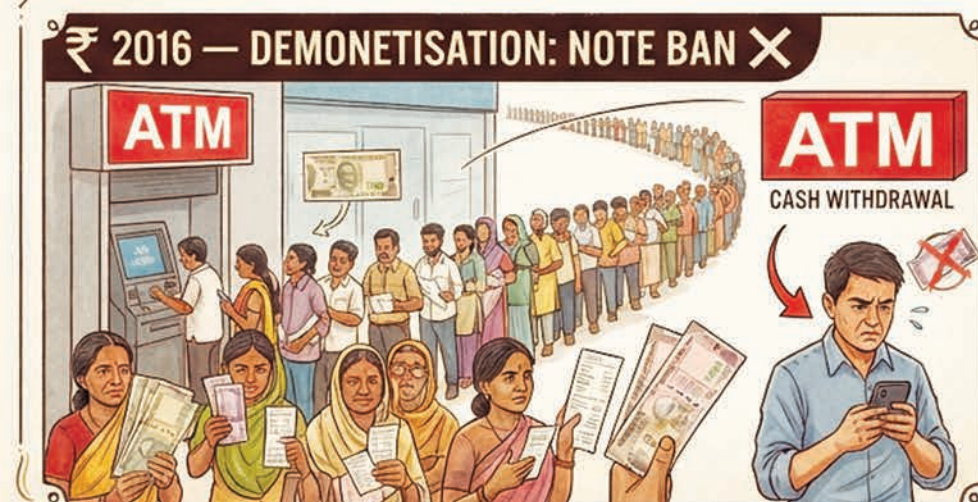
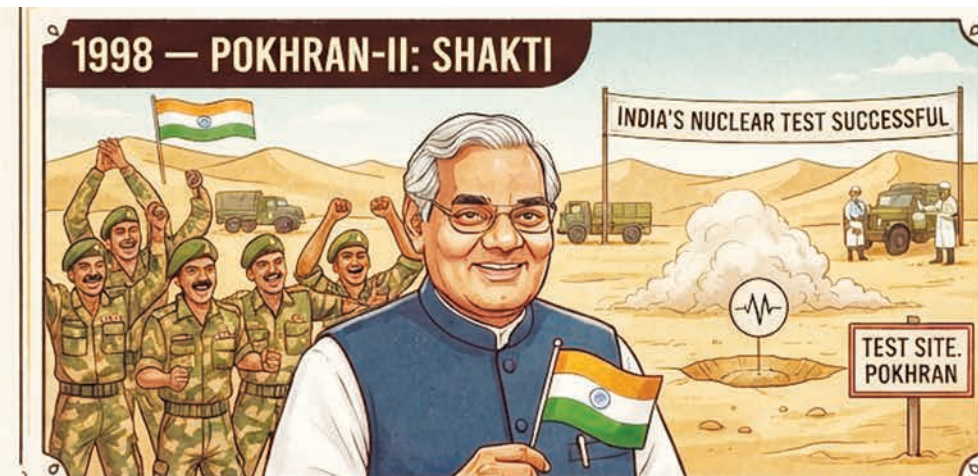
On December 6, 1992, the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya was demolished by kar sevaks amid a massive mobilisation over competing claims concerning the site.

The demolition triggered communal violence in several parts of the country and intensified debates over secularism, religious identity, minority rights and the character of the Indian state.

The Ayodhya dispute would remain one of the defining political issues of the next three decades.

The Supreme Court's 2019 judgment eventually cleared the way for construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site while directing that an alternative plot be provided for a mosque.





1998 - POKHRAN-II

India declares its nuclear capability

In May 1998, India conducted a series of nuclear tests at Pokhran.

The tests transformed India's strategic posture. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government subsequently declared India a nuclear weapons state.

The move attracted international sanctions and criticism, but India maintained that nuclear capability was necessary for national security.

The tests marked the beginning of a new phase in India's strategic relationship with the United States and other major powers. Over time, India moved from nuclear isolation toward deeper integration with the global nuclear order.

1999 - KARGIL WAR

The mountains become a battlefield

In the summer of 1999, Indian forces fought Pakistani troops and infiltrators occupying strategic heights in the Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir.

The conflict unfolded at extreme altitudes and involved some of the most difficult mountain warfare undertaken by the Indian military.

Operation Vijay eventually restored Indian control over the occupied positions. The war produced a powerful wave of national solidarity and reinforced public confidence in the armed forces. It also prompted a major review of intelligence, surveillance and defence preparedness.

Kargil became one of the defining national-security episodes of post-liberalization India.

2000 - NEW MILLENNIUM, NEW STATES

India reorganizes itself again

The turn of the millennium brought more than technological optimism. It also brought a fresh reorganization of India's federal map. Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand were created in 2000, following long-standing

movements for separate statehood.

Their formation reflected a recurring Indian pattern: political unity could coexist with demands for smaller administrative units and stronger regional identities.

The new millennium therefore began with India simultaneously becoming more global and more regionally differentiated.

2008 - INDIA-US CIVIL NUCLEAR AGREEMENT

From nuclear outsider to strategic partner

The India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement marked a historic transformation in India's relationship with the global nuclear order. After decades of restrictions following India's nuclear tests, the agreement opened the door to greater international civilian nuclear cooperation. It was also much more than a nuclear deal. It symbolized the emergence of a broader strategic partnership between India and the United States.

The agreement reflected a larger geopolitical shift: India was increasingly being viewed not as a country to be contained but as a major power whose cooperation mattered.

2014 - POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

The beginning of a new political era

The 2014 general election produced a decisive political transformation.

The Bharatiya Janata Party won a majority on its own in the Lok Sabha, giving Narendra Modi a clear mandate to form the government.

The result ended a long period in which coalition politics had dominated national government and ushered in a new era of centralised political leadership, strong electoral campaigning and an increasingly powerful role for social media.

The political landscape changed dramatically. Issues ranging from

nationalism and welfare delivery to development, corruption, governance and identity became central to electoral politics.

The 2014 election would prove to be the beginning of a political era rather than merely another change of government.

2016 - DEMONETISATION

A radical economic experiment

On November 8, 2016, the government announced the withdrawal of existing Rs 500 and Rs1,000 banknotes from legal tender. The stated objectives included tackling unaccounted wealth, counterfeit currency and terror financing while encouraging a transition toward formal and digital payments. The announcement triggered enormous disruption. Citizens queued outside banks and ATMs, businesses faced cash shortages and the informal economy experienced severe stress. At the same time, digital payments accelerated and India's financial ecosystem underwent rapid technological change. Demonetisation remains one of the most consequential and controversial economic decisions of the post-1991 era.

2017 - GST

One market, one indirect tax framework

The Goods and Services Tax came into effect on July 1, 2017.

GST replaced a complex collection of central and state indirect taxes with a unified framework.

The reform was intended to create a common national market, simplify taxation and improve compliance.

Its implementation was initially accompanied by technological and administrative difficulties, particularly for small businesses. Over time, however, GST became a central pillar of India's tax architecture. It represented another step in the long transformation from a fragmented regulatory economy toward a more integrated national

market.

2019 - ARTICLE 370 REORGANIZATION

A new constitutional and political map

On August 5, 2019, the Union government announced the effective abrogation of the special constitutional status associated with Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 and reorganized the former state into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

The decision represented one of the most consequential constitutional and political changes in independent India's history. Supporters argued that it would strengthen national integration, development and equal application of Indian laws. Critics raised concerns about federalism, civil liberties, political representation and the manner in which the change was implemented.

The Supreme Court upheld the core constitutional validity of the decision in December 2023 while directing that statehood for Jammu and Kashmir be restored at the earliest.

2020 - COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A nation brought to a standstill

The COVID-19 pandemic became one of the greatest disruptions in modern Indian history.

In March 2020, India imposed a nationwide lockdown to slow the spread of the virus. Streets emptied, businesses shut and millions of workers were suddenly stranded or forced to undertake long journeys home. The pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in healthcare, urban infrastructure and social protection while also demonstrating the resilience of communities, health workers, scientists and civil society. India subsequently launched one of the world's largest vaccination campaigns and became a major producer and supplier of vaccines.

**2023 - CHANDRAYAAN-3****India reaches the Moon's southern high latitudes**

On August 23, 2023, India achieved a landmark in space exploration when Chandrayaan-3 successfully landed on the Moon.

The achievement made India the first country to land successfully in the Moon's southern polar region and only the fourth country to achieve a soft lunar landing.

The mission represented years of scientific work by the Indian Space Research Organisation and became a powerful symbol of India's technological ambitions.

The image of the Vikram lander and Pragyan rover on the lunar surface captured a new confidence: India was no longer merely participating in the global space race. It was helping define it.

2023 - G20 PRESIDENCY**India takes the global stage**

India's G20 presidency placed the country at the centre of international diplomacy during a period of geopolitical tension.

The New Delhi summit in September 2023 produced the New Delhi Leaders'

Declaration and showcased India's effort to bridge differences between major powers and developing countries.

The inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20 was one of the major outcomes of the summit.

India used the presidency to highlight issues including digital public infrastructure, development, climate finance, food security and the concerns of the Global South.

The G20 presidency reflected a broader transformation in India's global identity: from a country primarily focused on development at home to one increasingly seeking to shape international debates.

2024 - GENERAL ELECTION**The third Modi mandate, with a changed political equation**

The 2024 general election once again demonstrated the unpredictability and scale of Indian democracy.

The Bharatiya Janata Party remained the single largest party but fell short of a parliamentary majority on its own. Narendra Modi returned as Prime Minister for a third consecutive term, this time heading a coalition government under the National Democratic Alliance.

The election also produced a stronger opposition presence in the Lok Sabha, altering the balance of parliamentary politics.

The result carried an important message: electoral dominance could coexist with a renewed role for coalition-building, parliamentary negotiation and opposition politics.

India's electorate had once again demonstrated that the ballot box remained the country's most powerful mechanism for political correction and continuity.

2025-26 - INDIA AT A NEW CROSSROADS**Security, technology, economy and the question of trust**

The years 2025 and 2026 have brought India into a more complicated phase of its rise.

The country's growing geopolitical weight has coincided with new security challenges, economic pressures and technological disruptions. India's relationship with the United States, China, Russia and its South Asian neighbours has become increasingly important to its strategic calculations.

The 2025 Pahalgam terror attack and

India's subsequent military response, Operation Sindoor, brought national security back to the centre of public debate. At the same time, India has continued to balance strategic autonomy with deeper partnerships with major global powers.

Economically, the country is trying to sustain high growth while creating enough productive employment for its enormous young population. Manufacturing, infrastructure, semiconductors, digital public infrastructure, artificial intelligence and green energy have emerged as key components of the next phase of development. But perhaps the most important question is social rather than economic: how does a young India maintain faith in its institutions?

That question has acquired new urgency as citizens increasingly encounter politics through smartphones, social media and algorithm-driven information ecosystems.

The India of the mid-2020s is more connected, more ambitious and more globally visible than at any previous point in its history. It is also more politically polarised, digitally saturated and impatient with institutions that appear slow to respond.



2026 - GEN Z PROTESTS



The movement centred around the self-styled Cockroach Janta Party, which grew from online satire into a nationwide youth mobilisation. Protests at Jantar Mantar escalated into a major confrontation with the political establishment, with thousands of young demonstrators taking part in marches and demanding accountability. Photo Credit: AP

A new generation finds its political voice

In 2026, a striking new chapter emerged in India's political life: the rise of a youth-led protest movement driven substantially by Generation Z.

The movement gathered around concerns including examination irregularities, paper leaks, education governance, unemployment and accountability. What began as a largely digital phenomenon spilled onto the streets of Delhi and other cities.

The movement centred around the self-styled Cockroach Janta Party, which grew from online satire into a nationwide youth mobilisation. Protests at Jantar Mantar escalated into a major confrontation with the political establishment, with thousands of young demonstrators taking part in marches and demanding accountability. The agitation ultimately contributed to the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in July 2026.

The protests were significant not merely because of their size, but because

of what they revealed about a changing political culture. A generation raised with smartphones and social media was demonstrating that digital citizenship could turn into street-level political mobilization.

The movement also exposed a deeper anxiety: for many young Indians, education is no longer simply a pathway to social mobility but a high-stakes competition in which examination failures, paper leaks and limited employment opportunities can determine the course of an entire life.

The protests have been interpreted differently - as a youth awakening, an issue-specific mobilization or an early indication of a broader generational shift. Analysts have cautioned against equating the movement with a wholesale political revolution, noting that its grievances are broad but its organizational structure remains fluid.

Yet its significance is difficult to ignore.

For decades, India's political

movements were organized primarily through parties, trade unions, student organizations, religious groups or civil-society networks. The 2026 youth movement demonstrated a different model: meme culture, social media, online communities and real-world protest operating together.

It also underlined a fundamental truth about democracy. Every generation eventually asks whether the institutions it inherits are capable of delivering the future it expects.

THE UNFINISHED JOURNEY

From 1947 to 2026, India has repeatedly reinvented itself.

The first generation of the republic fought to preserve unity. The next built institutions and pursued state-led development. Later generations demanded economic opportunity, political representation and greater individual choice. Liberalization opened the economy. Technology connected the country. Digital

payments transformed everyday commerce. Space missions altered perceptions of India's scientific capabilities. A new generation is now asking harder questions about jobs, education, accountability and institutional trust.

At 80, India is neither the country its founders inherited nor the country they imagined in exactly the same form.

It is something more complicated - and perhaps more remarkable.

It is a republic that has survived its contradictions by continuously negotiating them.

Its story has been one of unity and diversity, state power and individual freedom, tradition and modernity, poverty and aspiration, crisis and recovery. The next chapter will be written by a generation that has grown up not with the memory of Independence, but with the expectation of possibility.

That may be the most important landmark of all.



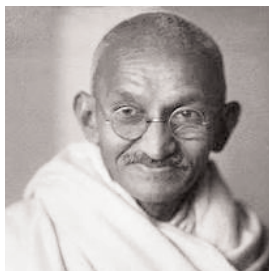
THE BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

India's transformation from a newly independent, impoverished and deeply divided country into one of the world's largest democracies and major economies was never the work of a single generation or a handful of leaders. It was built by politicians and constitutionalists, scientists and engineers, farmers and entrepreneurs, reformers and artists, administrators and institution-builders. Some shaped the Constitution. Others built dams, laboratories, universities, factories, cooperatives and public institutions. Some changed the way Indians voted, ate, travelled, communicated and did business. Others transformed the country's cultural imagination. Their philosophies were often radically different. Some believed in a powerful state; others championed private enterprise. Some emphasized social reform, others nationalism, science, technology or cultural renewal. Yet together they form a remarkable portrait of a country constructing itself.

THE ARCHITECTS OF THE REPUBLIC

1. MAHATMA GANDHI

Leader who transformed nationalism into mass movement

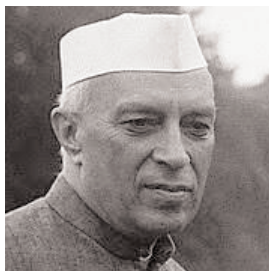


Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi transformed India's freedom struggle from an elite political campaign into a mass movement. His philosophy of satyagraha, non-violence and civil resistance brought millions of ordinary Indians into politics. From the Non-Cooperation Movement and Salt March to the Quit India Movement, Gandhi turned moral authority into a formidable political force. His vision of India extended beyond independence: he imagined a society rooted in village self-reliance, communal harmony and social equality. Gandhi's relationship with the modern state, industrialization and political power was often complicated, but his influence on India's national consciousness was immense.

Cooperation Movement and Salt March to the Quit India Movement, Gandhi turned moral authority into a formidable political force. His vision of India extended beyond independence: he imagined a society rooted in village self-reliance, communal harmony and social equality. Gandhi's relationship with the modern state, industrialization and political power was often complicated, but his influence on India's national consciousness was immense.

2. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Democracy, modern institutions and scientific temper

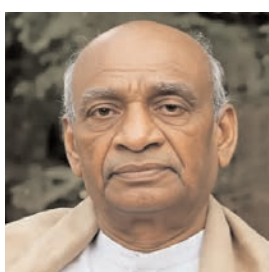


India's first Prime Minister was one of the principal architects of the country's early development model. Nehru championed parliamentary democracy, secularism, non-alignment and a strong public sector. He believed that modern India required scientific

institutions, universities, heavy industry and technological capability. Under his leadership, institutions such as the IITs and major scientific and industrial establishments emerged. His foreign policy sought strategic autonomy through the Non-Aligned Movement. Nehru's legacy remains debated, particularly regarding economic controls, China and Kashmir, but his contribution to establishing democratic and scientific institutions during the republic's formative years remains central to India's story.

3. SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

The integrator of India



Vallabhbhai Patel faced one of independent India's most urgent challenges: integrating hundreds of princely states into the Union. As Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, he combined political negotiation, persuasion and, where necessary, decisive action. His role in integrating Hyderabad, Junagadh and other princely territories helped create the territorial India we recognise today. Patel had earlier emerged as one of Gandhi's most effective organisational leaders during the freedom movement. His emphasis on administrative cohesion

and national unity profoundly influenced the early republic.

4. DR B.R. AMBEDKAR

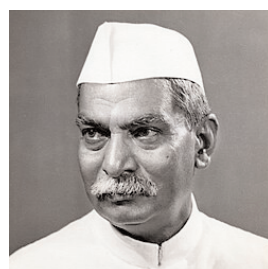
Architect of constitutional democracy and social justice



Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was among the most consequential thinkers of modern India. A jurist, economist, social reformer and political leader, he became chairman of the Constitution's Drafting Committee. Ambedkar believed political democracy could not survive without social democracy. The Constitution's guarantees of equality, fundamental rights and safeguards for historically disadvantaged communities reflected his commitment to justice and human dignity. His lifelong struggle against caste discrimination gave him a unique place in India's social and political history. Decades after his death, Ambedkar remains an influential intellectual figure across ideological and political boundaries.

5. DR RAJENDRA PRASAD

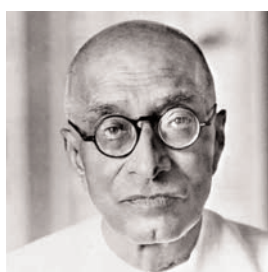
First President of the Republic



Dr Rajendra Prasad became India's first President when the republic was inaugurated in 1950. A close associate of Gandhi, he had played important roles in the freedom movement and served as president of the Constituent Assembly. As head of state, Prasad helped establish the conventions surrounding India's new presidency and constitutional system. His long tenure provided stability during the republic's formative years. Known for his simplicity and scholarship, he represented the generation of leaders who moved almost directly from the freedom struggle into the institutions of independent India.

6. C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

Nationalist, administrator and statesman



C. Rajagopalachari - popularly known as Rajaji - was a freedom fighter, lawyer, administrator and political thinker. He became the last Governor-General of independent India and later founded the Swatantra Party, advocating economic freedom and opposing excessive state control. His political journey demonstrated the ideological diversity of India's nationalist generation. A close associate of Gandhi,

Rajaji also wrote extensively on India's epics and philosophical traditions. His later advocacy of freer markets placed him decades ahead of the economic debate that would become mainstream after the 1991 reforms.

7. MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

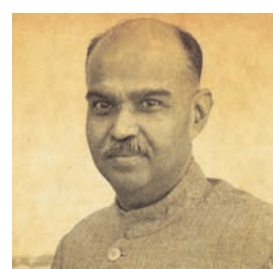
Education and national unity



A scholar, journalist, freedom fighter and Congress leader, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad became independent India's first Education Minister. He regarded education as fundamental to nation-building and played an important role in establishing institutions of higher learning and cultural development. A strong advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity, Azad opposed Partition and remained committed to an inclusive Indian nationalism. His tenure helped lay foundations for India's post-independence education system, while his intellectual legacy continues through institutions bearing his name.

8. SHYAMA PRASAD MUKHERJEE

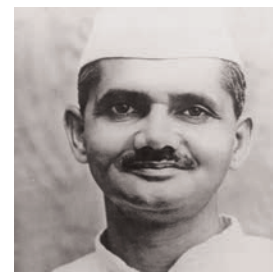
Nationalist politics and institution-building



Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was an influential nationalist politician who became India's first Industry and Supply Minister after Independence. He later founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which became an important predecessor to today's Bharatiya Janata Party. Mukherjee opposed what he saw as excessive concessions to Pakistan and raised strong objections to the special constitutional arrangements surrounding Jammu and Kashmir.

9. LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI

Simplicity, self-reliance and national resolve



Lal Bahadur Shastri became Prime Minister at a difficult moment. India faced food shortages and growing security pressures. During the 1965 India-Pakistan War, his leadership projected determination while his famous slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" connected national defence with agricultural self-reliance. Shastri encouraged citizens to conserve food and supported measures that would contribute to India's agricultural transformation. His tenure was brief, ending with his death in Tashkent in January 1966, but his image of modesty, integrity and resolve became deeply embedded in India's political memory.

10. INDIRA GANDHI

Centralization, war and transformation

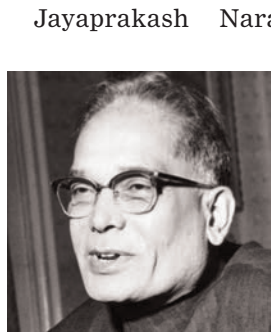


Indira Gandhi dominated Indian politics for much of the 1960s and 1970s. Her government nationalised major banks, abolished privy purses and presided over India's decisive role in the 1971 war that led to Bangladesh's creation. She also became associated with the Green

Revolution and a more centralised style of governance. Her imposition of the Emergency from 1975 to 1977 remains the most controversial chapter of her political career. Her assassination in 1984 triggered one of India's darkest periods of communal violence.

11. JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

The challenge to political power



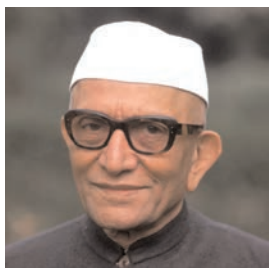
Jayaprakash Narayan, or JP, travelled an extraordinary ideological journey from socialism to becoming one of the strongest critics of Indira Gandhi's government. His call for "Total Revolution" mobilised students and opposition groups in the 1970s. During the Emergency, he became a symbol of resistance to authoritarianism.

His influence helped unite disparate opposition parties, eventually contributing to the formation of the Janata government in 1977. JP's legacy lies in his insistence that democracy required active citizens, not merely elections.

12. MORARJI DESAI

Head of first non-Congress government

Morarji Desai became Prime Minister in 1977, heading the Janata Party government that emerged after the Emergency. His victory represented the first peaceful transfer of power at the Centre from the Congress to a non-Congress formation. Desai's government sought to restore civil liberties and repair institutions weakened during the Emergency. Internal



possible.

13. ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

Coalition politics and economic transformation



Atal Bihari Vajpayee helped transform the BJP from an opposition force into the centre of a durable national coalition. His governments were associated with the 1998 nuclear tests, infrastructure expansion, telecommunications growth and economic reforms. The Golden Quadrilateral highway project symbolised his emphasis on connectivity.

Vajpayee also pursued peace initiatives with Pakistan while maintaining a firm security posture. His ability to manage a diverse coalition helped establish coalition politics as a central feature of India's national government in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

14. P.V. NARASIMHA RAO

The political architect of 1991 reforms



P.V. Narasimha Rao became Prime Minister in 1991 as India confronted one of its worst economic crises. His government launched sweeping economic reforms under Finance Minister Manmohan Singh. Rao provided the political leadership required to

dismantle significant parts of India's old licence-and-control system. His tenure also witnessed important foreign-policy changes and the difficult aftermath of the Babri Masjid demolition. Often understated in

ideological and leadership conflicts eventually fractured the Janata coalition. Yet the significance of his government extended beyond its relatively short tenure: it demonstrated that the Congress could be defeated nationally and that alternation of power was

political narratives, Rao's role was crucial in creating the political conditions for India's economic transformation.

15. MANMOHAN SINGH

Economist and reformer



Manmohan Singh played two defining roles in India's modern economic history. As a Finance Minister in 1991, he helped execute the reforms that opened India's economy. As Prime Minister from 2004 to 2014, he presided over a period of rapid economic growth and expanding global integration. His governments were associated with major social and economic initiatives, including the rural employment guarantee programme and the India-US civil nuclear agreement. Known for his quiet style and technocratic approach, Singh demonstrated how economic expertise could influence national policy at the highest level.

16. NARENDRA MODI

The politics and policy transformation of the 21st century



Narendra Modi emerged as one of the most consequential political figures of 21st-century India. Prime Minister since 2014, he has reshaped national politics around a combination of strong central leadership, nationalism, welfare delivery, infrastructure development and digital governance. Initiatives such as Digital India, Jan Dhan, UPI, GST and large-scale infrastructure programmes have altered the relationship between citizens, markets and the state. His governments have also pursued major constitutional and political changes, including the 2019 reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir. Supporters see his era as one of national transformation; critics raise concerns about institutional independence, social polarisation and political centralisation.

SCIENTISTS AND TECHNOLOGY BUILDERS

17. C.V. RAMAN

Science and India's intellectual tradition



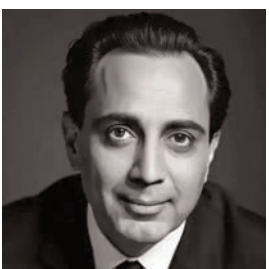
Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman became the first Asian Nobel laureate in the sciences when he received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930 for his discovery of the Raman Effect. His achievement demonstrated the intellectual capabilities of Indian science during the colonial period and

inspired generations of scientists. Raman later established institutions dedicated to scientific research and education. His career became an important part of India's effort to cultivate a strong indigenous scientific culture.

18. HOMI J. BHABHA

Building India's atomic-energy programme

Homi Jehangir Bhabha was the intellectual architect of India's atomic-energy programme. He founded the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research and played a central role in establishing the institutional structure for nuclear research. His vision was not limited to weapons: he saw atomic energy as an important



component of India's long-term industrial and scientific development. The Department of Atomic Energy and the institutions that followed owe much to his leadership.

19. VIKRAM SARABHAI

Father of India's space programme



Vikram Sarabhai believed that a developing country could use advanced technology to solve basic problems. He helped establish the foundations of India's space programme and promoted the use of satellites for education, communications and development. His vision eventually led to the creation of ISRO. Sarabhai understood space not as an expensive prestige project but as a tool for national development.

20. SATISH DHAWAN

Institution-building in space research



Satish Dhawan took charge of India's space programme after Sarabhai's death and transformed ISRO into a more mature organisation. He strengthened research, management and launch capabilities.

21. A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM

Missiles, space and the popularisation of science



A.P.J. Abdul Kalam became one of India's most beloved scientists and public figures. His work on India's space-launch and missile programmes earned him the nickname "Missile Man of India." He played important roles in the country's strategic technology programmes and later served as President from 2002 to 2007. His greatest popular influence, however, came through his advocacy of science, education and youth empowerment. Kalam turned the scientist into a national role model.

22. M.S. SWAMINATHAN

The Father of Green Revolution



M.S. Swaminathan was central to India's agricultural transformation. Working with farmers, scientists and policymakers, he helped introduce high-yielding crop varieties and modern agricultural practices that dramatically increased food

production. His work with Norman Borlaug and others contributed to India's Green Revolution. The transformation helped India move away from chronic food shortages and dependence on food imports. Swaminathan later advocated sustainable and environmentally responsible agriculture.

23. VERGHESE KURIEN

The White Revolution and cooperative India

Verghease Kurien transformed India's dairy sector through the cooperative model. His work with the



cooperatives could become powerful engines of rural development.

Kaira District Cooperative Milk Producers' Union helped create Amul, while Operation Flood turned India into one of the world's largest milk producers. Kurien's model placed farmers at the centre of the dairy economy and demonstrated that

ECONOMIC BUILDERS

24. J.R.D. TATA

Industrial India and aviation



J.R.D. Tata was one of the defining figures of India's industrial development. He became chairman of Tata Sons in 1938 and oversaw the expansion of the Tata group into a diversified industrial enterprise. A pioneering aviator, he founded Tata Airlines, which later became

Air India. He strongly believed that business carried social responsibilities and supported scientific, educational and cultural institutions. His career demonstrated how private enterprise could contribute to national development.

25. DHIRUBHAI AMBANI

Entrepreneurship and mass capitalism

Dhirubhai Ambani helped redefine Indian entrepreneurship. Beginning with a modest trading operation, he built Reliance into one of India's



largest business groups. His emphasis on scale, capital markets and mass shareholder participation helped change the relationship between ordinary Indians and corporate investment. His methods and business philosophy remain debated, but his impact on India's corporate landscape is undeniable.

26. N.R. NARAYANA MURTHY

The IT revolution and India's global services economy



N.R. Narayana Murthy became one of the principal faces of India's information-technology revolution. As a co-founder of Infosys, he helped establish a business model based on software

exports, professional management and global delivery. The growth of Infosys and its peers transformed Bengaluru into a global technology centre and created new opportunities for India's educated middle class. Murthy also became associated with debates about corporate governance and ethical business practices.

27. AZIM PREMJI

Technology entrepreneurship and philanthropy



Azim Premji transformed Wipro from a diversified consumer-products company into a global information-technology enterprise. His success reflected the rise of India's software industry and the growing ability of Indian companies to compete internationally. Premji

subsequently became one of India's most prominent philanthropists, directing substantial resources toward education and social development through the Azim Premji Foundation.

SOCIAL REFORMERS

28. JYOTIRAO PHULE

Challenging caste and social inequality



Jyotirao Phule was one of India's pioneering anti-caste reformers. He challenged Brahmanical social hierarchy and campaigned for education and dignity for oppressed communities. Along with Savitribai Phule, he established schools for girls and

marginalized communities. His writings and activism laid an intellectual foundation for later movements for social equality.

29. SAVITRIBAI PHULE

Education as emancipation



Savitribai Phule was among India's first pioneering women educators. At a time when women's education faced intense social opposition, she helped establish schools for girls and worked alongside Jyotirao Phule for the rights of women and marginalized communities. Her life

represented a radical proposition: education could challenge both patriarchy and caste hierarchy. Today she is recognized as a foundational figure in India's

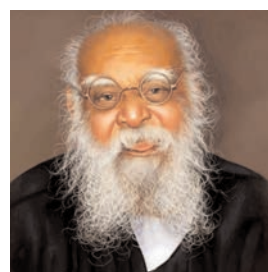
women's education movement.

30. PERIYAR E.V. RAMASAMY

Rationalism and the struggle against caste

Periyar E.V. Ramasamy became one of the most influential social reformers of southern India. Through the Self-Respect Movement, he challenged caste hierarchy, patriarchy and religious orthodoxy. His advocacy of rationalism and social equality profoundly influenced Tamil Nadu's political culture. Periyar's ideas also helped shape the broader Dravidian

movement.



31. VINOBA BHAVE

The Bhoodan movement

Vinoba Bhave was a close follower of Gandhi and the founder of the Bhoodan movement. Beginning in the 1950s, he travelled across India asking landowners to voluntarily donate land to landless villagers. The movement represented an attempt to pursue economic redistribution through non-violent persuasion rather than state coercion.



32. MOTHER TERESA

Compassion and care for the destitute

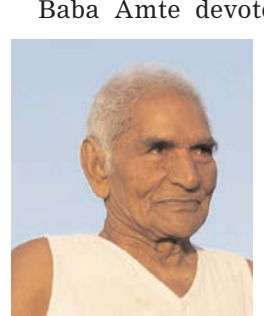


Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata and devoted her life to caring for people who were sick, abandoned and destitute. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. Her work inspired a global network of humanitarian institutions. At the same time, aspects of her methods and the organisation's practices have attracted

criticism and debate.

33. BABA AMTE

Service to the marginalized



Baba Amte devoted much of his life to people affected by leprosy and social exclusion. He founded Anandwan, a community where people affected by leprosy could live and work with dignity. His approach went beyond charity, emphasizing rehabilitation, self-reliance and social integration. He later became involved in environmental and

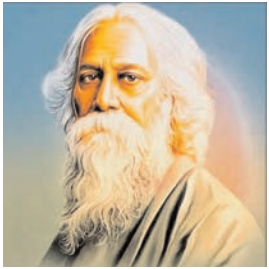
social movements.



CULTURAL BUILDERS

34. RABINDRANATH TAGORE

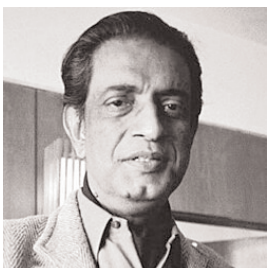
Literature, education and India's cultural imagination



Although Tagore died before Independence, his influence on modern India is foundational. The first Asian Nobel laureate in Literature, Tagore reshaped Bengali and Indian literature, music and education. He founded Visva-Bharati at Santiniketan as an experiment in international and holistic learning. His compositions became the national anthems of India and Bangladesh. Tagore's nationalism was deeply humanist: he warned against narrow nationalism while believing strongly in India's cultural richness.

35. SATYAJIT RAY

India's cinema enters the world



Satyajit Ray transformed Indian cinema into a globally respected art form. His Apu Trilogy introduced international audiences to an intimate, humanistic vision of Indian life. Ray worked across directing, writing, music, illustration and film design. His cinema combined extraordinary visual craftsmanship with deep observation of society and human relationships. He became one of the most celebrated filmmakers in world cinema.

36. PT RAVI SHANKAR

The sitar carries India to the world



Pandit Ravi Shankar became the most internationally recognised ambassador of Indian classical music. His collaborations with Western musicians, particularly George Harrison of The Beatles, introduced millions to the sitar and Hindustani music. Yet his career was rooted deeply in India's classical tradition. He demonstrated that Indian music could cross cultural boundaries without losing its identity.

37. M.S. SUBBULAKSHMI

The voice of Carnatic music



M.S. Subbulakshmi brought Carnatic classical music to audiences far beyond its traditional South Indian base. Her extraordinary voice, disciplined musicianship and devotional repertoire made her a cultural icon. She became the first musician to receive the Bharat Ratna and was the first Indian musician to perform at the United Nations General Assembly.

38. LATA

MANGESHKAR

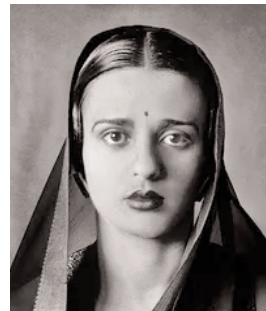
The voice of a nation



For more than seven decades, Lata Mangeshkar's voice became inseparable from Indian popular culture. She sang thousands of songs in numerous Indian languages and worked with generations of composers and filmmakers. Her voice accompanied India's emotional landscape - romance, patriotism, grief, devotion and celebration. Her rendition of "Aye Mere Watan Ke Logon" became especially associated with national remembrance.

39. AMRITA SHER-GIL

Modern Indian art finds a new language



Amrita Sher-Gil was one of the pioneers of modern Indian art. Educated in Europe but increasingly drawn toward Indian subjects, she developed a distinctive visual language combining European modernism with Indian themes. Her paintings of women, rural communities and everyday life challenged conventional representations of Indian society. Though she died at only 28, her influence on Indian modernism was profound.

MEN AND WOMEN WHO BUILT INDIA'S INSTITUTIONS

India's transformation was not accomplished by political leaders alone. Behind every major national achievement stood institutions - laboratories, universities, statistical systems, cooperatives, election machinery, telecommunications networks and infrastructure projects.

P.C. MAHALANOBIS

The statistician who helped plan India



Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis helped establish modern statistical science in India and played a major role in the country's planning process. He founded the Indian Statistical Institute and developed the Mahalanobis distance, an important statistical concept used internationally. His work demonstrated how statistics could become an instrument of national development and policymaking.

V.K.R.V. RAO

Building India's economic institutions



V.K.R.V. Rao was an economist and institution-builder who contributed significantly to India's post-Independence economic and educational landscape. He founded the Delhi School of Economics and helped establish institutions dedicated to development studies and social sciences. His work reflected the belief that India required indigenous economic expertise to understand and solve its developmental challenges.

SAM PITRODA

Connecting India



Satyanarayan Gangaram Pitroda, better known as Sam Pitroda, played a major role in India's telecommunications transformation during the 1980s. Associated with the creation and development of C-DOT, he helped promote indigenous telecom technology and expand infrastructure. His work became part of the technological foundation on which India's later digital revolution was built.

E. SREEDHARAN

The engineer who changed urban India



E. Sreedharan became synonymous with large-scale public infrastructure in India. As the driving force behind the Delhi Metro, he helped demonstrate that major urban transport projects could be delivered with professional management and tight execution. The success of the Delhi Metro became a model for other Indian cities and helped reshape public expectations about mass transit.

NANDAN NILEKANI

Building India's digital infrastructure

Nandan Nilekani has played a central role in India's digital transformation. As the founding chairman of the Unique Identification Authority of India, he helped oversee the development of Aadhaar, one of the world's largest biometric identification



economy.

systems. He later became an important advocate of digital public infrastructure and India's technology-driven transformation. His work helped shape the architecture of India's emerging digital

B.P. PAL

Modernizing Indian agricultural research



B.P. Pal was one of India's leading agricultural scientists and played a major role in strengthening agricultural research after Independence. Associated with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, he contributed to crop improvement and helped develop the scientific infrastructure that supported India's agricultural transformation.

SUKUMAR SEN

The man who made India's first election possible



Sukumar Sen was India's first Chief Election Commissioner and faced the extraordinary task of conducting the country's first general election in 1951-52. With millions of newly enfranchised citizens, limited infrastructure and widespread illiteracy, the challenge was unprecedented. Sen and his team developed innovative systems, including election symbols, to make voting accessible. His work established the administrative foundations of India's electoral democracy.

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THE ROAD AHEAD: THE CHALLENGES BEFORE THE REPUBLIC

From the fragile republic of 1947 to the ambitious India of 2026, the country has travelled an extraordinary distance. But the challenges before the nation have changed as dramatically as its fortunes. The task now is not simply to make India bigger or richer, but to make it more equal, capable, democratic, innovative and cohesive.

FROM A NATION OF SCARCITY TO NATION OF ASPIRATION

When India became independent in 1947, the country's challenges were immediate and elemental. Poverty was widespread, literacy was low, industry was limited, food production was inadequate and infrastructure was insufficient for a modern economy. Partition had left millions displaced and had deepened communal wounds. The new government had to integrate territories, establish democratic institutions, maintain national unity and create an economy capable of supporting a vast population.

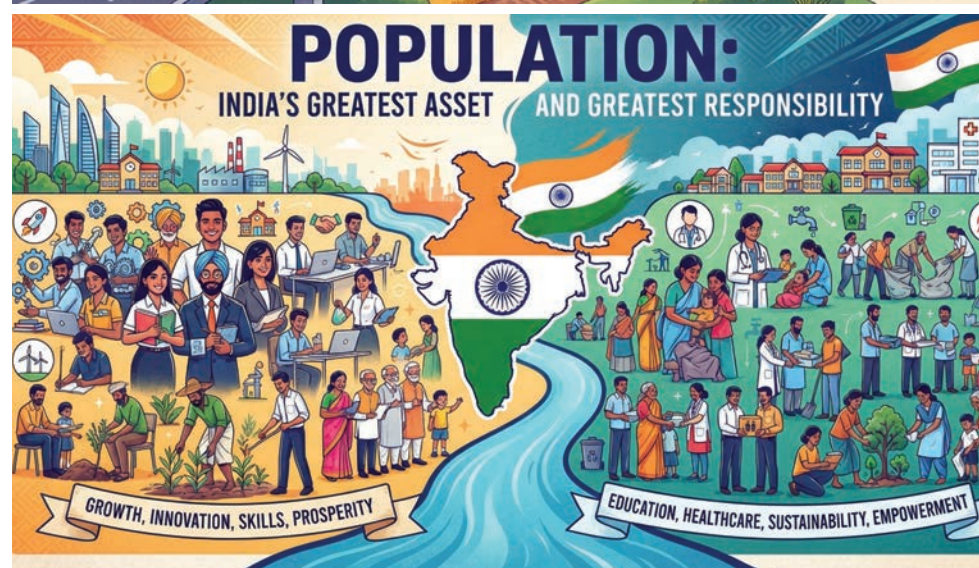
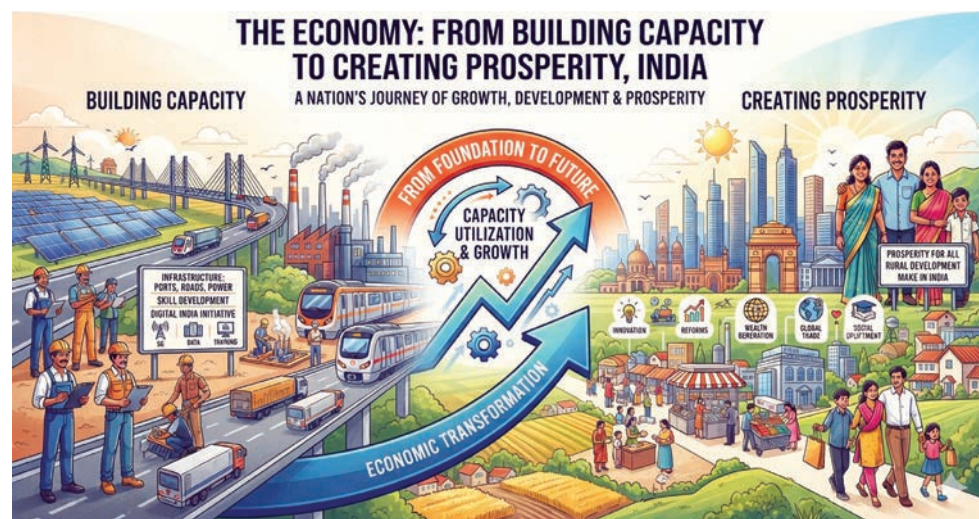
India in 2026 is almost unrecognisable by comparison. It is a major global economy, a nuclear power, a spacefaring nation and a significant centre of technology, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing and services. Millions of households have entered the middle class. Roads, airports, telecommunications and digital networks have expanded dramatically. Indian companies operate across the world, while Indian professionals occupy influential positions in global business, science and technology.

Yet development has produced a new set of expectations. In 1947, the central question was whether India could overcome poverty and survive as a democratic nation. In 2026, the question is whether India can convert its economic and technological strength into a better quality of life for all its citizens. The road ahead is therefore not about repeating the nation-building project of the past. It is about completing it.

THE ECONOMY: FROM BUILDING CAPACITY TO CREATING PROSPERITY

India's economic journey since Independence has been marked by several distinct phases. The early republic relied heavily on state-led planning, public-sector enterprises and investment in heavy industry. The system created important industrial and scientific capabilities, but excessive regulation and limited competition eventually constrained growth.

The economic reforms of 1991 marked a decisive change. Liberalization, deregulation, greater private-sector participation and integration with the global economy unleashed new possibilities. Information technology, telecommunications, financial services, pharmaceuticals,



automobiles and consumer industries expanded rapidly.

The India of 2026 therefore possesses an economic depth that would have been difficult to imagine in the first years of the republic.

But size alone does not guarantee prosperity.

India's next economic challenge is to ensure that growth generates sufficient productive employment and reaches a wider section of society. The country needs stronger manufacturing, globally competitive small and medium enterprises, modern agriculture, greater private investment and continued infrastructure development.

It must also confront regional disparities. Some cities and states have developed sophisticated industrial and service economies, while other regions continue to struggle with lower incomes, weaker infrastructure and fewer employment opportunities.

The economic challenge for the next two decades is consequently not merely to grow faster. It is to grow in a

way that produces more jobs, higher productivity and wider opportunity.

POPULATION: INDIA'S GREATEST ASSET AND GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY

In the early decades after Independence, India's rapidly growing population was viewed primarily as a development burden. Every additional generation meant more pressure on food, housing, schools, hospitals and employment.

That equation has changed.

India's large working-age population can now become one of its greatest economic advantages. A young workforce gives the country a huge domestic market, a large pool of talent and the possibility of sustained economic expansion.

But demographics become an advantage only when people have the capabilities to participate in the economy.

A young population without adequate education, skills and employment can become a source of frustration rather than prosperity.

This makes investment in human capital one of the most important priorities of the coming decades. Nutrition, healthcare, education, vocational training and employment must be treated not as separate policy areas but as parts of one demographic strategy.

India's population story has therefore moved from the question of how many people the country can support to the much more important question of how well it can develop the people it has.

JOBS: THE DEFINING CHALLENGE OF A YOUNG INDIA

No issue is more closely linked to India's future than employment.

Every year, millions of young Indians enter the labor market. Their aspirations are considerably higher than those of previous generations. They have grown up with smartphones, social media, global entertainment and greater awareness of opportunities around the world.

But aspirations are rising faster than secure employment opportunities in many parts of the country.

The problem is not simply unemployment. It is also underemployment, informal employment, low wages, insecure work and the mismatch between education and available jobs.

A graduate may spend years preparing for a government examination because a secure public-sector job is seen as one of the few reliable avenues for upward mobility. A technically qualified young person may find work unrelated to his or her education. A rural worker may migrate to a city without finding stable employment.

India therefore needs an employment revolution.

Manufacturing must become more employment-intensive. Construction and infrastructure must absorb workers productively. Tourism, logistics, healthcare, education and care services can create millions of jobs. The technology sector must expand beyond a limited number of highly skilled workers. Small businesses need easier access to finance, markets and technology.

Women must also become a much larger part of the formal workforce.

The central test of India's demographic dividend will not be the number of young people it has. It will be whether those young people can find meaningful work and a sense of economic security.

EDUCATION: THE MOVE FROM LITERACY TO LEARNING

The education revolution is one of independent India's greatest achievements.

In 1947, India inherited a deeply inadequate education system. Large sections of the population had never attended school. Access to higher education was restricted to a small minority.

Eight decades of investment have changed that landscape. Schools and colleges have multiplied. Literacy has risen enormously. Technical institutions have produced generations of engineers, scientists, doctors and professionals. Millions of children from families with no previous history of formal education have entered classrooms.

But access is only the first stage.

The next challenge is quality.

A student can spend years in school and still emerge without adequate reading, writing, mathematical or problem-solving abilities. India's examination system often rewards memorisation more than creativity. The gap between elite educational institutions and poorly resourced schools remains significant.

Technology will make the challenge even greater.

Artificial intelligence is already changing the nature of work. Tomorrow's students will need to learn continuously because many of the occupations they enter may not exist in their current form.

India must therefore build an education system that teaches young people not merely what to remember but how to think, question, adapt and create.

The India of 1947 needed to build schools.

The India of 2026 needs to build a culture of high-quality learning.

HEALTH: FROM SURVIVAL TO WELL-BEING

India's health indicators have improved enormously since Independence. Life expectancy has risen, child survival has improved, vaccination has expanded and the country has built sophisticated medical institutions and pharmaceutical capabilities.

India is now a major producer of medicines and vaccines and has developed hospitals capable of providing highly advanced treatment.

But access remains unequal.

A person living in a major metropolitan area may have access to specialists, advanced diagnostics and modern hospitals. A person in a remote rural area may still struggle to obtain basic medical care.

India is also facing a new health burden. Infectious diseases remain important, but diabetes, heart disease, cancer, obesity and other lifestyle-related conditions are becoming increasingly significant.

The country's ageing population will create additional demands for long-term and geriatric care.

The health challenge of the next decades will therefore require a shift from simply treating illness to preventing it. Primary healthcare,



HEALTH: FROM SURVIVAL TO WELL-BEING
INDIA

nutrition, mental well-being, sanitation, clean air, physical activity and early diagnosis will become increasingly important. A prosperous India cannot be measured only by hospitals and medical technology. It must also be measured by how healthy its people are before they reach the hospital.

GOVERNANCE: MAKING THE STATE WORK BETTER

India inherited a highly bureaucratic administrative system in 1947. Over the decades, the state expanded enormously to provide welfare, infrastructure, education, healthcare and economic regulation.

Today, citizens expect much more from government.

They expect applications to be processed quickly, public services to be accessible online, welfare to reach beneficiaries, roads to be maintained, cities to be clean and courts to deliver timely justice.

Digital technology has already transformed many interactions between citizens and government. But digital governance cannot by itself solve institutional weaknesses.

India needs stronger local governments, more efficient municipal bodies, faster courts, better policing and greater administrative accountability.

The future of governance will be determined by whether institutions can keep pace with the complexity of Indian society.

A government that works efficiently at the national level can still fail citizens if a municipal body cannot

manage waste, a local hospital cannot provide basic treatment or a court takes years to resolve a dispute.

The next governance revolution must therefore move beyond digitisation.

It must be about institutional capacity.

DEMOCRACY: INDIA'S MOST IMPORTANT INSTITUTION

India's decision in 1950 to adopt universal adult franchise was one of the boldest political experiments of the modern world.

A poor and largely illiterate country chose democracy. That decision has endured. Elections have become one of the most deeply embedded institutions in Indian public life. Governments have changed peacefully. Voters have repeatedly defeated powerful incumbents. Regional parties have transformed national politics. Political power has moved between different social and economic groups.

But democracy cannot survive through elections alone.

It requires strong institutions, an independent judiciary, legislative scrutiny, a credible opposition, civil liberties and an informed citizenry.

The challenge before India is to preserve the competitive character of its democracy while ensuring that political disagreement does not become permanent social hostility.

- A strong government is important.
- A strong opposition is also important.
- An effective Parliament matters.

So do independent institutions capable of questioning those in power.

The strength of a democracy is ultimately measured not by how easily a government wins, but by how safely citizens can disagree with it.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: THE RIGHT TO KNOW

The media has changed more dramatically than almost any other institution since Independence.

In 1947, newspapers were the dominant mass medium, radio was emerging and television did not yet exist.

In 2026, citizens receive information through newspapers, television, websites, social media, video platforms, podcasts and messaging applications.

This has created an unprecedented information society.

But abundance is not the same as reliability.

The media faces commercial pressure, political polarisation, declining business models for traditional journalism, misinformation and the growing influence of social-media algorithms.

The greatest challenge is to protect serious journalism in an environment where sensationalism can travel faster than verified information.

Freedom of the press is not a privilege of journalists alone. It is a public right.

Citizens need independent reporting to understand how governments function, how public money is spent and how institutions exercise power.

A healthy democracy therefore requires a media ecosystem in which journalists can investigate, question and criticise without intimidation.

The challenge is not to create a press that is uniformly supportive or uniformly hostile to government.

It is to preserve pluralism, independence and the freedom to report facts.

POLITICS: BEYOND PERMANENT POLARISATION

Indian politics has travelled a long way from the Congress-dominated landscape of the early republic.

The rise of regional parties, coalition governments and the emergence of the BJP as the dominant national challenger and subsequently a major governing force have transformed political competition.

Politics has also become more personalised and media-driven.

Social media has made political communication immediate. Leaders can communicate directly with millions of citizens. Campaigns can mobilise supporters rapidly. But this new political environment has a downside.

Public debate can become increasingly polarised. Complex policy questions are often reduced to slogans. Political opponents can be portrayed as enemies rather than fellow citizens with different ideas about the country's future. India needs political competition. It does not need permanent political hostility. The challenge is to make elections contests over competing visions of development rather than battles in which every disagreement becomes a question of national loyalty.

SECULARISM: PRESERVING EQUAL CITIZENSHIP

India's secular idea emerged from an extraordinarily complicated history.

The country experienced Partition along religious lines, yet the Constitution chose a different path. The republic was founded on the principle that citizenship would not depend upon religious identity.

India's religious diversity remains one of its defining characteristics.

Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism and numerous other traditions have shaped the country's history and culture.

The challenge is not to remove religion from public life. Religion is too deeply embedded in India's civilisation for that.

The challenge is to ensure that religious identity does not determine whether citizens receive equal constitutional protection.

A confident democracy can celebrate its cultural heritage while guaranteeing equal citizenship.

The future of Indian secularism will ultimately depend on whether citizens can disagree about religion and politics without losing sight of their shared citizenship.

SOCIAL FABRIC: THE INDIA THAT MUST REMAIN TOGETHER

India's extraordinary diversity has always required negotiation.

Language, caste, religion, region and ethnicity have all shaped political and social identities.

The republic's greatest achievement has been its ability to accommodate these differences within one constitutional framework.

But social cohesion cannot be taken for granted.

Economic inequality, communal tensions, caste conflicts and political polarisation can create distrust. Social media can magnify these divisions by rewarding outrage and emotional confrontation.

The challenge is not to create a society without differences.

That would be impossible.

The challenge is to ensure that differences do not destroy the idea of a common national community.

India must remain a country where a person can be deeply attached to a regional, linguistic or religious identity and still feel an equally strong sense of belonging to the republic.

Its diversity should remain a source of confidence rather than insecurity.

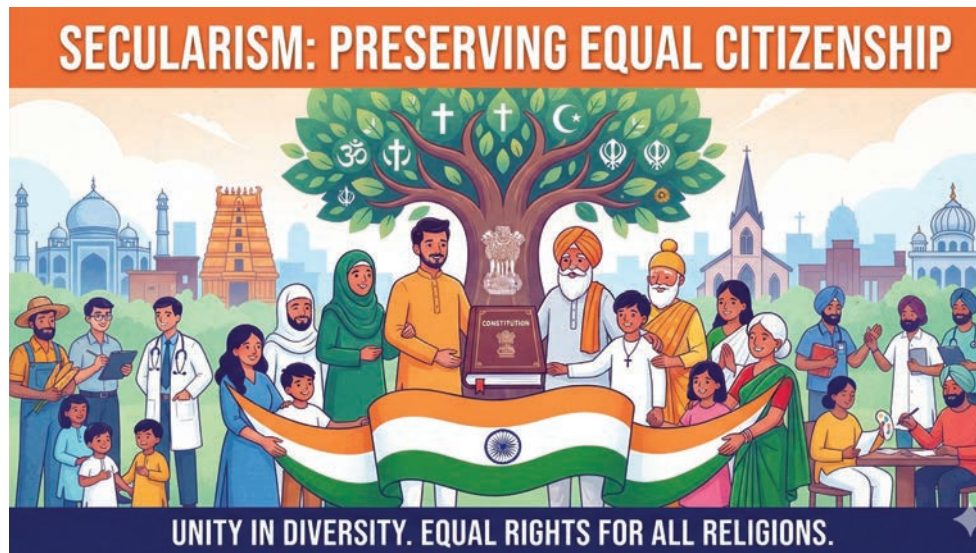
PATRIOTISM: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LOVE INDIA?

The meaning of patriotism has changed since 1947.

For the freedom generation, patriotism meant fighting colonial rule.

For the early republic, it meant building institutions and defending national sovereignty.

For today's generation, patriotism can be expressed through military pride, sporting achievements, scientific accomplishments, economic success and cultural confidence.



All of these are legitimate expressions of national pride.

But patriotism in a democracy must also include civic responsibility.

Paying taxes, respecting laws, protecting public property, helping fellow citizens, demanding accountability and defending constitutional rights are forms of patriotism too.

Criticism of government should not automatically be equated with criticism of the nation.

A mature patriotism understands the difference between the country and the government of the day.

The strongest patriotism is not afraid of criticism because it is confident in the country's ability to improve.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: THE NEXT GREAT LEAP

Few areas demonstrate India's transformation more clearly than science.

The India of the 1950s was beginning to build laboratories and

scientific institutions.

The India of 2026 has nuclear technology, sophisticated satellites, advanced launch vehicles, a growing semiconductor ambition, a major pharmaceutical sector and one of the world's largest technology workforces.

Chandrayaan-3 symbolised this transformation.

But the next technological revolution will be even more disruptive.

Artificial intelligence, quantum computing, biotechnology, robotics, advanced materials, clean energy and space technology could reshape the economy.

India has the opportunity to become not merely a consumer of these technologies but a creator.

That will require much greater investment in research and development, stronger universities, collaboration between academia and industry and an environment that encourages scientific risk-taking.

India must also prepare for the

social consequences of automation.

Technology may create enormous wealth while eliminating some existing jobs.

The answer is not to resist technology.

It is to ensure that workers are equipped to work alongside it.

FOREIGN RELATIONS: INDIA IN A CONTESTED WORLD

The India of 1947 entered a world dominated by the Cold War.

The India of 2026 faces a multipolar but increasingly competitive international system.

The United States and China are engaged in strategic rivalry. Russia remains an important partner. Europe is becoming more strategically assertive. The Indo-Pacific has emerged as a major centre of geopolitical competition.

India has expanded partnerships across these different centers of power while attempting to preserve strategic autonomy.

Its relationships with the United States, Japan, Australia and European countries have deepened. It has maintained significant ties with Russia. Its engagement with the Gulf has grown considerably, while its relationships with Africa and the Global South have received greater attention.

India's challenge is to become a major global power without becoming dependent on any single power.

That requires military capability, economic strength, technological independence, energy security and diplomatic flexibility.

The foreign policy of the next two decades will increasingly be determined by India's domestic strength.

A country with a large economy, innovative industries and cohesive institutions will have much greater influence abroad.

NATIONAL SECURITY: THE BATTLEFIELD HAS CHANGED

In 1947, national security largely meant defending borders.

That remains fundamental.

But modern security has expanded dramatically.

Cyberattacks can threaten critical infrastructure. Drones have changed battlefield tactics. Artificial intelligence is transforming military systems. Satellites have become essential to communication and surveillance. Disinformation can influence public opinion. Economic dependence on critical technologies can become a strategic vulnerability.

India therefore needs a modern national-security architecture that integrates military preparedness with technological and economic resilience.

The country must strengthen domestic defence manufacturing and invest in cyber capabilities, space systems, artificial intelligence and advanced communications.

The goal should not simply be to possess more weapons. It should be to possess the technological and industrial capacity to defend national interests independently.

AGRICULTURE: FROM FOOD SECURITY TO FARM PROSPERITY

The Green Revolution solved one of India's greatest post-Independence fears: hunger.

But agriculture in 2026 faces a different problem.

The question is increasingly how to raise farm incomes while using fewer natural resources.

Climate change, water shortages, fragmented landholdings, fluctuating prices and rising input costs make farming increasingly difficult for many small producers.

India must encourage diversification, better irrigation, improved storage, food processing, modern logistics and greater use of technology.

Farmers should not remain merely producers of raw commodities. They must be integrated into higher-value supply chains.

The agricultural transformation of the next decades must therefore move from food security to farmer prosperity.

WOMEN: INDIA'S UNTAPPED ECONOMIC POWER

The progress of Indian women since Independence has been profound.

Women have led governments, served in the armed forces, entered science and technology, built businesses, become judges and administrators, won Olympic medals and transformed professional life.

Girls' education has expanded dramatically.

Yet the economic participation of women remains an area where India has enormous room for improvement.

If millions more women enter productive employment, the economic consequences could be transformative.

That requires safer workplaces, reliable public transport, childcare, flexible employment, equal opportunity and greater access to finance and property.

The question is no longer whether women should participate in India's development.

The question is how quickly India can remove the barriers that prevent them from doing so fully.

THE ENVIRONMENT: DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DESTRUCTION

The generation of 1947 had little choice but to prioritise development.

India needed electricity, roads, irrigation, factories and cities.

Today, the environmental costs of rapid development are increasingly visible.

Air pollution affects major urban centres. Water resources are under pressure. Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather. Coastal regions face rising risks, while agriculture remains vulnerable to changing rainfall and temperature patterns.

India cannot simply choose between development and environmental protection.

It must find a way to achieve both.

The future requires renewable energy, cleaner transport, efficient buildings, sustainable agriculture, better waste management and climate-



resilient infrastructure.

The country must prove that rapid development does not necessarily require environmental destruction.

CITIES: WHERE INDIA'S FUTURE WILL BE DECIDED

The India of 1947 was overwhelmingly rural.

The India of the future will increasingly be urban.

Cities are already the centres of economic growth, innovation, education and employment.

But many Indian cities are struggling with congestion, pollution, inadequate public transport, housing shortages and weak civic infrastructure.

Urban planning will become one of the most important governance challenges of the next generation.

India needs cities that are not merely larger but better designed.

Affordable housing, efficient public transport, clean water, waste

management, green spaces and climate-resilient infrastructure will be essential.

The future of the Indian economy may ultimately depend on whether its cities can provide productive and healthy environments for millions of new residents.

YOUTH: THE GENERATION THAT WILL DEFINE 2047

Perhaps the greatest difference between 1947 and 2026 is the Indian young person.

The young Indian of 1947 inherited scarcity.

The young Indian of 2026 inherits possibility.

Today's youth are connected to the world in ways their grandparents could never have imagined. They can access information instantly, build businesses online, work for global companies and communicate across continents.

But they also face intense

competition.

Examinations are fiercely contested. Good jobs remain limited relative to aspirations. Housing is expensive in major cities. Career paths are changing rapidly because of automation and artificial intelligence.

Young Indians are therefore both India's greatest hope and one of its greatest political challenges.

They will not judge the republic solely by its past achievements.

They will judge it by whether it gives them a future.

Their expectations will influence politics, economics, culture and technology for decades to come.

THE DIGITAL CITIZEN

The transformation from 1947's paper-based bureaucracy to the digital India of 2026 is one of the most dramatic changes in everyday life.

A smartphone can now function as a bank, ticket counter, classroom, marketplace, map, camera and government-service gateway.

Digital payments have transformed commerce.

Online platforms have connected consumers and businesses.

Digital identity and public infrastructure have changed welfare delivery and financial inclusion.

But the digital revolution brings its own risks.

Privacy, data protection, cybercrime, misinformation, online harassment and algorithmic manipulation are emerging challenges.

The next stage of digital India must therefore be built around trust.

Citizens should benefit from technology without losing control over their personal information.

Innovation should be encouraged without allowing technology companies or governments to exercise unchecked power over citizens.

THE GREAT QUESTION OF INEQUALITY

India has reduced poverty on a historic scale, but inequality remains an important concern.

The richest Indians can access global standards of education, healthcare, housing and consumption. At the same time, many families remain economically vulnerable.

The challenge is not to eliminate differences in wealth altogether.

It is to ensure that the circumstances of birth do not permanently determine a person's future.

A child born in a poor family should still have access to excellent education.

A talented student from a rural area should be able to compete with someone from an elite city school.

A young entrepreneur without inherited wealth should have access to finance.

A farmer's child should have the opportunity to enter technology, medicine or science.

The true test of an advanced economy is therefore not merely how wealthy its richest citizens are, but how high the bottom can rise.

1947 AND 2026: THE CHALLENGE HAS CHANGED

The contrast between the two Indias is ultimately a contrast between two kinds of nation-building.

- In 1947, India needed food.
- In 2026, it needs nutrition and healthy lifestyles.
- In 1947, India needed schools.
- In 2026, it needs high-quality education and employable skills.
- In 1947, India needed factories.
- In 2026, it needs competitive industries and millions of good jobs.
- In 1947, India needed roads and railways.
- In 2026, it needs world-class, sustainable infrastructure and liveable cities.
- In 1947, India needed political independence.
- In 2026, it needs strong democratic institutions.
- In 1947, India needed to establish its identity as a nation.
- In 2026, it must preserve unity while accommodating increasingly complex identities.
- In 1947, India needed to establish scientific institutions.
- In 2026, it must become a leader in frontier technologies.
- In 1947, India needed international recognition.
- In 2026, it must use its growing global influence responsibly.

The problems are different, but the underlying mission remains the same: to expand the freedom and capabilities of India's people.

THE ROAD TO 2047

India @ 80 is not merely a celebration of what has been achieved.

It is a moment of accountability.

The centenary of Independence is only two decades away. By 2047, India will have to answer whether it successfully converted its demographic advantage into prosperity, whether it created enough employment, whether it built world-class education and healthcare systems, whether its cities became more liveable, whether its democracy remained resilient and whether its extraordinary diversity continued to coexist peacefully.

It will also have to determine what kind of global power it wants to become.

- Economic size will matter.
- Military capability will matter.
- Technology will matter.

But so will the strength of institutions and the quality of life of ordinary citizens.

A country cannot become truly powerful if its people lack confidence in their institutions or opportunity in their own future.

THE INDIA WE MUST BUILD NEXT

- The India of 1947 was asked to become a nation.
- The India of 2026 is being asked to



become a developed, inclusive and resilient nation.

- That requires more than economic growth.
- It requires an economy capable of creating jobs at scale.
- It requires schools that teach rather than merely examine.
- It requires healthcare that reaches the poor as well as the affluent.
- It requires institutions that citizens trust.
- It requires a democracy in which disagreement is legitimate.
- It requires a press capable of asking difficult questions.
- It requires a politics that can compete fiercely without tearing society apart.
- It requires a secular constitutional

framework that guarantees equal citizenship.

- It requires scientific ambition and technological independence.
- It requires environmental responsibility.
- It requires women to participate fully in the economy.
- And above all, it requires a generation of young Indians who believe that their country offers them a future.

The transformation from 1947 to 2026 is proof that India can change.

The challenge now is to make the next transformation broader, deeper and more equitable.

The founders of the republic could not have imagined today's India. They could not have imagined the internet,

smartphones, digital payments, modern airports, global Indian corporations or a spacecraft landing on the Moon.

But they understood something that remains true.

- A nation is not built once.
- It is built by every generation.
- The generation of Independence built the foundations.
- The generations that followed expanded them.

The generation of India @ 80 must now decide what kind of country those foundations will support by 2047.

The road ahead is difficult.

But India has never been a country short of challenges.

Its defining achievement has been the ability to turn challenges into chapters of national transformation.



FROM REVOLT TO FREEDOM

The Extraordinary Story of India's Freedom Fighters

India's freedom was not won in a single movement, nor was it the achievement of one leader or one political philosophy. It was the result of nearly nine decades of resistance - from the uprising of 1857 to the mass movements led by Mahatma Gandhi, from the constitutional nationalism of the early Congress to the underground activities of revolutionaries, from the Ghadar movement abroad to the Indian National Army in Southeast Asia.

Some fought with ideas. Some with satyagraha. Some with newspapers and speeches. Others took up arms, endured imprisonment or walked to the gallows.

Their methods were often different and sometimes sharply opposed. Yet together they formed the extraordinary story of India's long struggle against colonial rule.

1. MANGAL PANDEY

1827-1857 | The spark before the great uprising



Mangal Pandey, a sepoy of the 34th Bengal Native Infantry, became one of the most remembered figures associated with the events that preceded the Revolt of 1857. On 29 March 1857 at Barrackpore, he attacked British officers and attempted to incite fellow Indian soldiers

to revolt. His actions came amid growing discontent among sepoys, including anger over military practices and the controversial rifle cartridges. Pandey was arrested and executed by hanging on 8 April 1857, weeks before the rebellion spread from Meerut across large parts of northern India. Though the revolt had many causes and leaders, his defiance became an enduring symbol of the first great uprising against British rule.

Legacy: Remembered as one of the earliest iconic figures of the 1857 uprising and a symbol of sepoy resistance.

2. RANI LAKSHMIBAI OF JHANSI

1828-1858 | The warrior queen of 1857



Rani Lakshmibai became one of the most celebrated figures of the Revolt of 1857. The British annexation of Jhansi under the Doctrine of Lapse intensified her opposition to colonial authority. When rebellion spread across northern India, she emerged as a military

leader and defended Jhansi against British forces. After the fall of the city, she joined forces with other rebel leaders and continued the struggle. She was killed in battle near Gwalior in June 1858. The revolt ultimately failed, but Lakshmibai's courage entered India's national memory. She became particularly important as a symbol of women's courage and resistance to foreign domination.

Legacy: One of the most enduring female symbols of India's resistance to colonial rule.

3. BEGUM HAZRAT MAHAL

1820-1879 | The queen who resisted British annexation

Begum Hazrat Mahal emerged as one of the leading figures of the 1857 uprising in Awadh. Following the British annexation of the kingdom and the exile of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, she assumed political leadership in Lucknow. She declared her young son,



Birjis Qadr, ruler of Awadh and helped organise resistance against British forces. Her struggle combined political leadership, military resistance and opposition to colonial interference in the affairs of Awadh. When British forces eventually regained control, she

withdrew to Nepal rather than surrender. Her story illustrates the significant role played by women and regional rulers in the uprising of 1857.

Legacy: A symbol of resistance to the annexation of Awadh and women's political leadership during 1857.

4. BIRSA MUNDA

1875-1900 | The tribal revolutionary



Birsa Munda emerged as a powerful leader among tribal communities in the Chotanagpur region in the late nineteenth century. His movement challenged British authority, exploitative landlords and policies that disrupted traditional tribal land systems. Known as the

Ulgulan, or Great Tumult, the movement combined social reform, religious revival and resistance to colonial rule. Birsa was arrested by the British and died in prison in 1900 at only 25. His rebellion preceded the major nationalist campaigns of the twentieth century, yet his name has become an important part of India's anti-colonial history. He represented a form of resistance rooted in the defence of land, community and cultural identity.

Legacy: An enduring symbol of tribal resistance, land rights and opposition to colonial exploitation.

5. BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

1856-1920 | The nationalist who made Swaraj a popular demand



Bal Gangadhar Tilak was among the first nationalist leaders to transform political opposition to British rule into a broader public movement. A scholar, journalist and organiser, he used newspapers such as Kesari and The Mahratta to attack colonial policies. He popularised public celebrations of Ganesh

Chaturthi and Shivaji Jayanti as platforms for political mobilisation. Tilak opposed gradual constitutional reform and demanded self-government. His famous declaration that Swaraj was his birthright became one of the defining slogans of Indian nationalism. Imprisoned several times, including in Mandalay, he later helped establish the Home Rule movement with Annie Besant. His political activism helped prepare the ground for the mass nationalism of the Gandhian era.

Legacy: He transformed nationalism into popular politics and made self-rule an urgent public demand.

6. GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

1866-1915 | The constitutional nationalist



Gopal Krishna Gokhale represented the liberal and constitutional tradition of the national movement. A respected legislator, economist and social reformer, he believed that India's political progress required education, institutional reform and

greater Indian participation in government. He founded the Servants of India Society and devoted himself to public service. Gokhale became an important mentor to Mahatma Gandhi, who regarded him as a political teacher. His methods differed from those of more militant nationalists, but his commitment to reform, public debate and Indian self-government helped shape the intellectual environment of the freedom movement. He demonstrated that the struggle against colonialism had multiple traditions and that political freedom was inseparable from social development.

Legacy: A champion of constitutional politics, education and public service.

7. LALA LAJPAT RAI

1865-1928 | Punjab's nationalist firebrand



Lala Lajpat Rai was one of the most influential nationalist leaders of the early twentieth century and a member of the celebrated Lal-Bal-Pal trio. A powerful advocate of swadeshi, national education and political mobilisation, he became a leading voice of

resistance in Punjab. He travelled abroad to publicise India's cause and wrote extensively on nationalism and colonialism. In 1928, he led a peaceful protest against the Simon Commission in Lahore and was injured during a police baton charge. He died soon afterwards. His death deeply affected younger revolutionaries, particularly Bhagat Singh, and became a powerful symbol of colonial repression.

Legacy: His nationalism inspired both mass politics and the revolutionary generation that followed.

8. BIPIN CHANDRA PAL

1858-1932 | The radical voice of Swadeshi



Bipin Chandra Pal was one of the principal leaders of the Swadeshi movement and the third member of the Lal-Bal-Pal trio. A journalist, writer and powerful orator, he advocated boycott of British goods, national education and economic self-reliance. Pal believed political independence required a transformation of

Indian society and the creation of indigenous institutions. His speeches helped carry nationalist politics beyond Bengal. Though his political influence declined as Gandhi's mass movement expanded, many of his ideas - particularly swadeshi, self-reliance and national education - continued to influence Indian nationalism. His career demonstrated the growing assertiveness of the freedom movement in the years before Gandhi became its dominant figure.

Legacy: He helped establish economic self-reliance and swadeshi as weapons against colonialism.

9. MADAM BHIKAJI CAMA

1861-1936 | The nationalist who took India's cause abroad



Bhikaji Cama carried the message of Indian independence to international audiences at a time when the nationalist movement was still developing. A Parsi nationalist and political activist, she lived abroad for much of her later life and worked with Indian revolutionaries in Europe. In 1907, she unfurled a flag associated with India's independence movement at an international socialist conference in Stuttgart. She supported revolutionary publications and helped expose British colonial rule before audiences outside India. Her activism demonstrated that the Indian struggle was becoming an international cause and that Indians abroad could play an important role in challenging the British Empire.

Legacy: One of the earliest international voices of India's independence movement.

10. V.D. SAVARKAR

1883-1966 | Revolutionary nationalist and political thinker



Vinayak Damodar Savarkar emerged as an important figure in the early revolutionary movement. While studying in London, he became associated with India House and revolutionary networks and wrote *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, presenting the uprising as a

major anti-British struggle. Arrested by the British, he was transported to the Cellular Jail in the Andamans, where he spent years imprisoned. Savarkar's political thought later developed in directions distinct from the mainstream Congress movement, and his legacy remains contested. His early revolutionary activities, however, were significant in the development of militant anti-colonial politics.

Legacy: An influential figure in the early revolutionary tradition and a controversial but important voice in India's nationalist history.

11. GANESH DAMODAR SAVARKAR

1879-1945 | Pioneer of Maharashtra's revolutionary movement



Ganesh Damodar Savarkar was an early organiser of revolutionary nationalism in Maharashtra. Associated with Abhinav Bharat, he helped create networks committed to ending British rule. He used poetry, political writing and underground organisation to spread nationalist ideas. His activities brought him into

conflict with the colonial government, and he was transported to the Andaman Islands. His revolutionary career belongs to the formative period when secret societies were emerging across India. Although overshadowed by the later fame of his younger brother V.D. Savarkar, Ganesh Savarkar's organisational work was part of the foundation of Maharashtra's revolutionary tradition.

Legacy: An early organiser of militant nationalism in western India.

12. ANNIE BESANT

1847-1933 | The Home Rule campaigner

Annie Besant, born in Britain, became one of India's most prominent advocates of self-government. A theosophist, educationist, writer and political activist,



she settled in India and became deeply involved in public affairs. During the First World War, she launched the Home Rule movement with Bal Gangadhar Tilak, demanding greater Indian participation in governance and ultimately self-government. Her newspapers, speeches and political

campaigns helped revive nationalist politics. In 1917, she became the first woman president of the Indian National Congress. Although her methods differed from Gandhi's later mass strategy, the Home Rule movement helped turn self-government into a mainstream political demand.

Legacy: She helped popularise Home Rule before the emergence of Gandhian mass politics.

13. RAS BIHARI BOSE

1886-1945 | The revolutionary who built an international network



Rash Behari Bose was one of India's most experienced revolutionary organisers. He was associated with revolutionary activities during the First World War and became involved in the Ghadar uprising planned for 1915. After escaping British surveillance, he reached Japan, where he

continued his campaign for Indian independence. During the Second World War, he became a central figure in the Indian Independence League in Southeast Asia and helped create the political foundations for the Indian National Army. He eventually transferred leadership of the movement to Subhas Chandra Bose. His career connected India's revolutionary struggle with a wider Asian and international anti-colonial network.

Legacy: He helped internationalise India's revolutionary movement and laid foundations for the INA.

14. KARTAR SINGH SARABHA

1896-1915 | The teenage revolutionary who inspired Bhagat Singh



Kartar Singh Sarabha became one of the most important figures of the Ghadar movement. Born in Punjab, he travelled to the United States as a teenager and became involved with Indian immigrants working for independence. He helped print and distribute the Ghadar

newspaper and returned to India during the First World War to participate in plans for an armed uprising. The conspiracy was uncovered, leading to widespread arrests. Sarabha was tried and executed in 1915 at just 19. His courage profoundly influenced the next generation of revolutionaries. Bhagat Singh regarded Sarabha as a major inspiration and is said to have considered him his guru.

Legacy: The young Ghadar revolutionary whose sacrifice inspired Bhagat Singh and the revolutionary generation of Punjab.

15. PANDIT RAM PRASAD BISMIL

1897-1927 | Poet and revolutionary organizer

Ram Prasad Bismil combined poetry with revolutionary politics. A leading member of the Hindustan Republican Association, he believed British rule could be overthrown through organised revolutionary action. He played a central role in the Kakori train action of 1925, in which revolutionaries seized government funds intended to finance their activities. Arrested after the operation, Bismil was sentenced to death and executed in 1927. His poetry



became closely associated with revolutionary nationalism. His friendship with Ashfaqullah Khan also provided a powerful example of Hindu-Muslim solidarity within the revolutionary movement. Bismil's life represented the fusion of literature, political idealism and revolutionary

sacrifice.

Legacy: A poet-revolutionary whose words and sacrifice inspired India's youth.

16. ASHFAQULLAH KHAN

1900-1927 | The revolutionary who embodied Hindu-Muslim unity



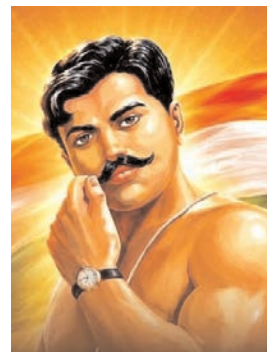
Ashfaqullah Khan was a leading member of the Hindustan Republican Association and a close associate of Ram Prasad Bismil. He participated in the Kakori train action of 1925, which was intended to obtain funds for revolutionary activities. His friendship with Bismil became

one of the most powerful examples of communal unity within the revolutionary movement. After his arrest, Ashfaqullah refused to betray his comrades despite pressure from the authorities. He was sentenced to death and executed in 1927.

Legacy: A revolutionary martyr whose friendship with Bismil symbolized India's plural nationalist tradition.

17. CHANDRASHEKHAR AZAD

1906-1931 | The revolutionary who remained Azad



Chandrashekhar Azad became one of the principal leaders of India's revolutionary underground after the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement. Arrested as a teenager during nationalist protests, he famously gave his name as "Azad". He later joined the Hindustan Republican

Association and helped reorganize it into the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. He worked closely with Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries, helping maintain underground networks after the British crackdown. On 27 February 1931, surrounded by police at Alfred Park in Allahabad, Azad fought until his ammunition was exhausted and died by suicide rather than be captured.

Legacy: The embodiment of defiance and the revolutionary creed of dying rather than surrendering.

18. ASFAQULLAH KHAN'S KAKORI COMRADES

1925 | The network behind the Kakori action

The Kakori train action of August 1925 was one of the most dramatic operations of the Hindustan Republican Association. Revolutionaries stopped a train carrying government funds near Kakori and seized the money to finance their underground activities. The British responded with a sweeping investigation and arrests. Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqullah Khan, Rajendra Lahiri and Roshan Singh were eventually executed, while others received long prison sentences. The case became a major political event

Legacy: Kakori demonstrated the organization, courage and sacrifice of the revolutionary underground.

19. PRAFULLA CHAKI

1888-1908 | The revolutionary who
chose death over capture

Prafulla Chaki was associated with the Jugantar revolutionary movement in Bengal. In 1908, he and Khudiram Bose were assigned to assassinate British magistrate Douglas Kingsford, known for his harsh treatment of nationalist activists. The bombing attempt failed to kill Kingsford and instead resulted in the deaths of two British women. Pursued by the police, Chaki ultimately took his own life rather than be captured. His death, alongside Khudiram Bose's execution, became a major episode in Bengal's revolutionary history and demonstrated the determination - and tragic consequences - of the early underground movement.

Legacy: A young revolutionary who became a symbol of resistance to colonial repression.

20. KHUDIRAM BOSE

1889-1908 | The teenage martyr



Khudiram Bose became one of the youngest and most celebrated martyrs of India's revolutionary movement. He became involved in nationalist activities as a teenager and joined the revolutionary network in Bengal. In 1908, he participated with Prafulla Chaki in the attempt to assassinate magistrate Douglas Kingsford. The bombing missed its intended target, killing two British women. Khudiram was arrested, tried and executed at the age of 18. His youth and courage captured the imagination of Bengal. His execution became a rallying point for nationalist sentiment and inspired other young people to join the struggle against British rule.

Legacy: One of the earliest icons of youthful revolutionary sacrifice.

21. ANANT LAKSHMAN KANHERE

1892-1910 | The young revolutionary of Nashik



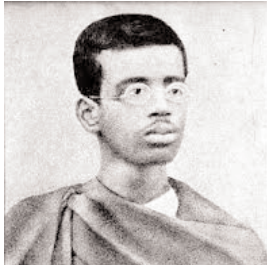
Anant Laxman Kanhere was associated with the Abhinav Bharat revolutionary network in Maharashtra. In 1909, he assassinated A.M.T. Jackson, the British Collector of Nashik, whom revolutionaries viewed as an important representative of colonial authority. Kanhere was arrested, tried and executed in 1910. The case exposed revolutionary networks operating in western India and led to further arrests. He was barely 18 when he died. His story represents the intensity of the revolutionary movement among young Indians in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Legacy: An early martyr of Maharashtra's underground revolutionary tradition.

22. KANAI LAL DUTT

1888-1908 | The revolutionary of Bengal

Kanai Lal Dutt was associated with the Anushilan Samiti and became known for his role in the assassination of Narendranath Goswami, a revolutionary who had become an approver for the British during the Alipore Bomb Case. Dutt was arrested and tried for the killing and executed in 1908 at the age of 20. His composure before execution turned him into a celebrated figure among Bengal's revolutionaries. His life reflects the secretive and dangerous world of early revolutionary organizations,



where activists faced surveillance, betrayal, imprisonment and execution.

Legacy: An early martyr of Bengal's revolutionary underground.

23. MAHATMA GANDHI

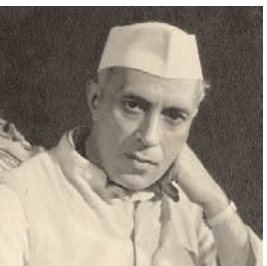
1869-1948 | The leader who made
freedom a mass movement

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi transformed India's freedom struggle by making it a movement of ordinary people. Returning to India in 1915 after his experiences in South Africa, he developed satyagraha into a powerful method of political resistance. His campaigns in Champaran and Kheda were followed by the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Salt March and Civil Disobedience, and finally the Quit India Movement. Gandhi brought peasants, workers, women and the urban middle classes into national politics. He connected political freedom with social reform, village reconstruction, communal harmony and opposition to untouchability. His insistence on non-violence gave India's struggle an international moral dimension and influenced anti-colonial movements across the world.

Legacy: He transformed independence from an elite political demand into a mass movement.

24. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

1889-1964 | The modern face of Indian nationalism



Jawaharlal Nehru became one of the central leaders of the freedom movement and a leading advocate of complete independence. Drawn into politics through Gandhi, he spent years campaigning against British rule and served repeated prison terms. Nehru represented a younger generation that sought a modern, industrial and democratic India. He served several terms as Congress president and played a major role in the national movement's final phase. His speeches, writings and international contacts helped present Indian nationalism as part of the worldwide struggle against colonialism. In 1947, he became independent India's first Prime Minister.

Legacy: He connected the freedom struggle to the vision of a modern, democratic and scientifically oriented India.

25. SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

1875-1950 | The organiser of
mass resistance

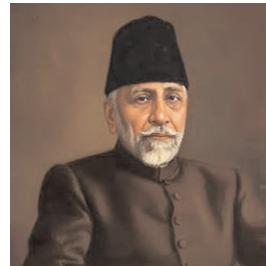
Vallabhbhai Patel emerged as one of the most effective organisers of the national movement. His leadership during the Kheda and Bardoli struggles demonstrated his ability to mobilise peasants through disciplined collective action. Bardoli earned him the title "Sardar". A close associate of Gandhi, Patel became a key Congress organiser and participated in major movements against British rule, including Quit India. He endured imprisonment several times. His organizational skills were particularly important during the final phase of the freedom struggle, when Congress had to negotiate political transition. After Independence, he became Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister and played a decisive

role in integrating the princely states.

Legacy: A formidable organizer whose leadership strengthened the freedom movement and helped consolidate independent India.

26. MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

1888-1958 | The intellectual of



composite nationalism

Abul Kalam Azad was a scholar, journalist and major Muslim leader of the Indian National Congress. Through publications such as Al-Hilal, he challenged British rule and promoted an inclusive Indian nationalism. He joined the Congress and became its president during some of the most difficult years of the freedom movement. Azad strongly opposed the idea that Hindus and Muslims constituted separate nations and remained committed to a united India. He participated in major nationalist campaigns and spent years in British prisons. His role during the final negotiations for independence reflected his commitment to communal unity even as Partition became increasingly difficult to prevent.

Legacy: A powerful advocate of composite nationalism, education and intellectual freedom.

27. SAROJINI NAIDU

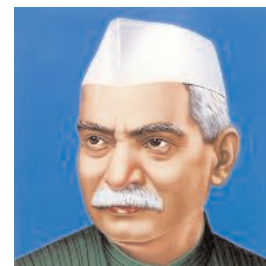
1879-1949 | The poet who became
a nationalist leader

Sarojini Naidu combined literature, political activism and women's participation in the freedom movement. Known as the "Nightingale of India", she became closely associated with Gandhi and the Congress. She travelled widely, speaking about independence, women's rights and social reform. She participated in the Civil Disobedience movement and faced imprisonment. In 1925, she became the first Indian woman to preside over the Indian National Congress. Her eloquence and ability to communicate with mass audiences made her an important nationalist campaigner. She later became the first woman governor of an Indian state after Independence.

Legacy: A bridge between literature, women's empowerment and nationalist politics.

28. RAJENDRA PRASAD

1884-1963 | From freedom fighter to first President



Rajendra Prasad was a lawyer, scholar and one of Gandhi's trusted associates. He became involved in the national movement through the Champaran struggle and subsequently participated in the Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India movements. His simplicity and organizational ability earned him wide respect within the Congress.

He spent considerable time in British prisons. As president of the Constituent Assembly, he presided over the historic process of drafting India's Constitution. In 1950, he became the first President of the Republic. His career symbolized the transition from the anti-colonial movement to constitutional democracy.

Legacy: A central link between India's freedom movement and the institutions of the Republic.

29. C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

1878-1972 | Nationalist, strategist and statesman



C. Rajagopalachari, popularly known as Rajaji, was one of the most intellectually versatile leaders of the freedom movement. A lawyer and close associate of Gandhi, he participated in the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience movements. His leadership during the Salt

Satyagraha in the south demonstrated how national campaigns could be adapted to regional conditions. During the final phase of British rule, he occupied important administrative positions and later became the last Governor-General of India. His political career after Independence took him in a different direction, including the creation of the Swatantra Party, but his contribution to the national movement remained significant.

Legacy: A nationalist who combined mass politics, administration, constitutionalism and independent political thought.

30. JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

1902-1979 | The socialist revolutionary



Jayaprakash Narayan brought socialist ideas into India's freedom movement and became an important leader of the Congress Socialist Party. During the Quit India Movement in 1942, he went underground after escaping from prison and helped organise resistance against British rule. His activities demonstrated that the freedom movement contained

powerful socialist and radical currents alongside Gandhian politics. JP later became an important advocate of democratic reform and public morality. His political journey continued after Independence, but his role in the underground phase of Quit India remains one of the most dramatic chapters of his career.

Legacy: A socialist nationalist who carried the spirit of resistance from the freedom struggle into post-Independence democratic activism.

31. ARUNA ASAF ALI

1909-1996 | The flag of Quit India



Aruna Asaf Ali became one of the most recognisable women of the Quit India Movement. When senior Congress leaders were arrested after the movement began in August 1942, she continued the struggle underground. On 9 August 1942, she hoisted the Congress flag at Gowalia Tank Maidan in Bombay, an act that became one of the defining images of

the movement. She remained underground for years while helping maintain nationalist networks and communications. Her courage transformed her into a symbol of resistance at a moment when British authorities were attempting to suppress the movement by arresting its leadership.

Legacy: The iconic woman of the underground Quit India movement.

32. USHA MEHTA

1920-2000 | The secret voice of Quit India

Usha Mehta became famous for helping establish the underground Congress Radio in Bombay during the Quit India Movement. At a time when British censorship had silenced much of the nationalist press and imprisoned major leaders, the clandestine radio broadcast news and messages of the movement. The



station repeatedly changed locations to evade British intelligence. Eventually arrested, Mehta was imprisoned but remained committed to the nationalist cause. Her work showed how young people, particularly women, played crucial roles in sustaining the underground

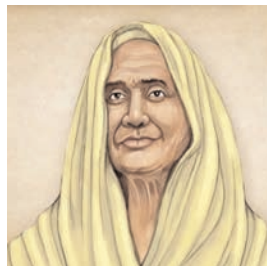
movement and keeping Indians informed during one of the most repressive periods of the freedom struggle.

Legacy: A symbol of youthful courage and the power of communication against censorship.

33. MATANGINI HAZRA

1870-1942 | The elderly woman

who marched with the flag



Matangini Hazra became one of the most moving symbols of Quit India in Bengal. A poor widow from Tamluk, she became involved in Gandhian campaigns and repeatedly participated in nationalist protests. In September 1942, she joined a procession carrying the

national flag towards a police station. British police opened fire. Even after being shot, she continued moving forward with the flag before collapsing. She was 72. Her death demonstrated the extraordinary breadth of the freedom movement: it was not confined to young activists, urban politicians or educated elites. Ordinary rural Indians were prepared to risk their lives for independence.

Legacy: A powerful symbol of grassroots participation and sacrifice.

34. SUCHETA KRIPALANI

1908-1974 | From underground resistance

to democratic leadership



Sucheta Kripalani played an important role in the Quit India Movement and worked underground after British authorities arrested the Congress leadership. She helped maintain nationalist networks and communication during the repression that

followed. After the war, she became a member of the Constituent Assembly and participated in the transition from colonial rule to democratic government. She later became India's first woman Chief Minister, leading Uttar Pradesh. Her career demonstrated how women who had fought against colonial rule could move directly into the institutions of independent India's democracy.

Legacy: A symbol of the transition from freedom struggle to constitutional political leadership.

35. DURGABAI DESHMUKH

1909-1981 | The young activist who

became a nation-builder



Durgabai Deshmukh entered the freedom movement at a young age and became a prominent Gandhian activist in Andhra. She participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement, faced imprisonment and worked extensively for women's education. Her

political activism was closely linked to social reform and the empowerment of women. After Independence,

she served in the Constituent Assembly and later became an important institution-builder in social welfare. Her career illustrates how the freedom movement was also a training ground for the people who would later build India's democratic and social institutions.

Legacy: She carried the ideals of the freedom movement into constitutional democracy and social development.

36. SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

1897-1945? | The nationalist

who raised an army



Subhas Chandra Bose represented the most militant and internationally oriented strand of Indian nationalism. A prominent Congress leader, he became Congress president in 1938 and again in 1939

before differences over strategy led to his departure from the organisation's leadership. During the Second World War, he escaped British surveillance and sought international support for India's independence. In Southeast Asia, he assumed leadership of the Indian National Army and established the Provisional Government of Free India. His call for sacrifice and his leadership of the INA became legendary. Although the INA's military campaign failed, the subsequent INA trials generated enormous public sympathy and contributed to the political pressure surrounding Britain's departure from India.

Legacy: He gave the freedom struggle an international, military and revolutionary dimension.

37. THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

1942-1945 | Soldiers who carried the freedom struggle beyond India's borders

The Indian National Army represented an extraordinary attempt to challenge British rule through an organized Indian military force. Initially formed under Mohan Singh and later reorganized under Subhas Chandra Bose, the INA recruited Indian prisoners of war and expatriates in Southeast Asia. Under Bose's leadership, it fought alongside Japanese forces in the Burma theatre and advanced towards India's northeastern frontier. Militarily, the campaign was unsuccessful. Politically, however, the INA had a profound impact. The Red Fort trials of INA officers generated widespread public sympathy and protests across India. The episode demonstrated that the question of Indian loyalty within the armed forces could no longer be taken for granted.

Legacy: The INA transformed military resistance into a major political challenge to British authority.

38. JATINDRA NATH DAS

1904-1929 | The hunger-strike martyr



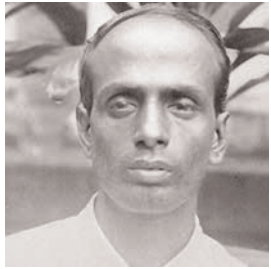
Jatindra Nath Das, popularly known as Jatin Das, became a symbol of resistance to the treatment of Indian political prisoners. Associated with the revolutionary movement, he was arrested in connection with the Lahore Conspiracy Case. In prison, he joined Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries in a hunger strike demanding better

conditions and equal treatment for political prisoners. After 63 days without food, he died in September 1929 at the age of 24. His death generated enormous public outrage. His funeral procession became a major nationalist event, showing how the suffering of political prisoners could become a powerful weapon against colonial rule.

Legacy: His hunger strike turned prison resistance into a national political issue.

39. SURYA SEN

1894-1934 | Masterda and the Chittagong uprising



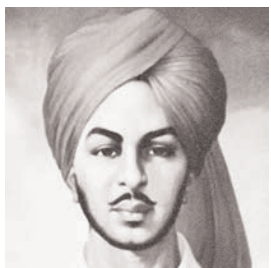
Surya Sen, popularly known as Masterda, was a schoolteacher who became the leader of the revolutionary movement in Chittagong. In April 1930, he led the Chittagong Armoury Raid, attempting to seize weapons and disrupt British communications. The revolutionaries temporarily

took control of key installations before British forces regained the area. Sen remained underground for several years and continued organizing resistance. He was eventually captured, brutally tortured and executed in 1934. His movement inspired young revolutionaries across Bengal and represented one of the most ambitious attempts to challenge British authority through coordinated armed action.

Legacy: A symbol of revolutionary courage and organised armed resistance.

40. BHAGAT SINGH

1907-1931 | The revolutionary who made Inquilab an idea



Bhagat Singh became one of the most influential figures of India's revolutionary movement. Deeply affected by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, he joined revolutionary organisations and eventually became a leading member of the

Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. In 1928, Bhagat Singh and his comrades killed British police officer J.P. Saunders in Lahore in an act of retaliation for the police action against Lajpat Rai. In 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw non-lethal bombs inside the Central Legislative Assembly and deliberately remained to face arrest. His courtroom statements, writings and hunger strike turned him into a political icon. He advocated revolution, socialism, secularism and rationalism. He was executed on 23 March 1931 at the age of 23. The Government of India has formally recognised the historic contribution of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev to the freedom struggle.

Legacy: Bhagat Singh became more than a martyr - he became an intellectual symbol of revolution, youthful courage, socialism and fearless political thought.

41. SHIVARAM HARI RAJGURU

1908-1931 | The revolutionary marksman



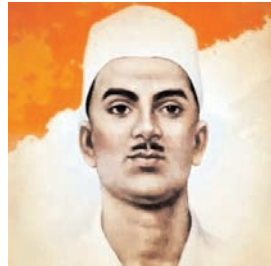
Shivaram Hari Rajguru was a close associate of Bhagat Singh and a member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. Born in Maharashtra, he became involved in revolutionary politics and developed expertise in firearms. He participated in the assassination of J.P. Saunders in Lahore in

December 1928, an action undertaken after the death of Lala Lajpat Rai. Rajguru was arrested, tried in the Lahore Conspiracy Case and sentenced to death. On 23 March 1931, he was executed alongside Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev. He was only 22. Their martyrdom became one of the most powerful episodes in the final decade of the freedom movement.

Legacy: Rajguru's name remains permanently linked with Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev and the revolutionary generation of the 1920s.

42. SUKHDEV THAPAR

1907-1931 | The organiser of the revolutionary movement



Sukhdev Thapar was one of the principal organisers of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association and a close associate of Bhagat Singh. Born in Punjab, he became involved in revolutionary politics at a young age and helped

establish underground networks in northern India. Sukhdev played an important organizational role in the revolutionary activities that culminated in the Saunders assassination and the Lahore Conspiracy Case. He was deeply involved in political education and believed that revolution required organization and ideological preparation. Arrested by the British, he was sentenced to death. On 23 March 1931, he was executed alongside Bhagat Singh and Rajguru.

Legacy: Sukhdev represented the organizational discipline and political commitment behind the revolutionary movement.

43. BATUKESHWAR DUTT

1910-1965 | The revolutionary who shared Bhagat Singh's cause



Batukeshwar Dutt became famous for his partnership with Bhagat Singh in the Central Legislative Assembly bombing of 1929. The two revolutionaries deliberately used non-lethal bombs and stayed at the scene to use the courtroom as a political platform. Dutt endured

imprisonment and participated in hunger strikes demanding humane treatment for political prisoners. Unlike Bhagat Singh, he survived British rule but later lived with considerable hardship and relative obscurity. His post-Independence life is a reminder that many revolutionaries who sacrificed everything for freedom did not receive the recognition or material security that might have been expected after 1947.

Legacy: His life reminds India of the many revolutionaries whose sacrifices continued long after the headlines had faded.

44. UDHAM SINGH

1899-1940 | The revolutionary who avenged

1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre



Udhham Singh's life was shaped by the trauma of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919. He remained determined to avenge the colonial violence he associated with the massacre and spent years travelling

abroad while maintaining links with revolutionary circles. In 1940, he assassinated Michael O'Dwyer in London. Arrested and tried, he was executed at Pentonville Prison. At the trial he used the name Ram Mohammad Singh Azad, an expression often remembered for its suggestion of Indian unity. His action ensured that the memory of Jallianwala Bagh remained an international issue decades after the massacre.

Legacy: A symbol of the anger and revolutionary resistance generated by colonial violence in Punjab.

45. THE UNKNOWN MILLIONS

The people whose names history did not record

No list of India's freedom fighters can ever be complete. History often highlights a few prominent leaders, but the true driving force behind India's independence was the Unknown Millions-the countless ordinary men and women whose names were never etched into monuments, history books, or official archives. No roster of freedom fighters can ever be complete, because for every iconic figure whose speeches inspired a nation, there were thousands of unnamed heroes who turned those ideals into a relentless, unstoppable reality.

The Indian freedom struggle was not a series of isolated political negotiations; it was a vast, decentralized tapestry of everyday defiance. Across every region, caste, gender, and social status, ordinary people made extraordinary sacrifices without any expectation of future fame or dynamic recognition.

Farmers and Agriculturalists: In rural heartlands, farmers faced total economic ruin and brutal taxation by stubbornly refusing colonial revenue demands, choosing poverty over submission to imperial extractors.

- **Shopkeepers and Traders:** Urban shopkeepers shuttered their businesses and willingly destroyed their own livelihoods to enforce boycotts of imported goods, systematically crippling the commercial profitability of British rule.
- **Students and Educators:** Entire generations of youth abandoned classrooms, walked away from promising careers, and took to the streets to distribute revolutionary literature and organize local protests.
- **Industrial Workers:** Factory workers and railway laborers repeatedly went on strike, bringing imperial infrastructure and supply chains to a grinding halt despite the imminent threat of violent suppression and dismissal.
- **Underground Courage and Frontline Sacrifice**
- Beyond public demonstrations lay a vast, dangerous network of underground operations that kept the movement alive under the watchful eye of colonial authorities.
- Women played an indispensable, high-risk role in this clandestine realm. They harbored hunted revolutionaries, transported illegal arms beneath their clothing, carried secret messages through police checkpoints, and picketed liquor and foreign cloth shops. In the dense forests, tribal communities mounted fierce resistance to defend their ancestral lands and rights against colonial encroachment, often fighting modern weaponry with traditional arms.
- In urban centers, journalists printed underground newspapers in secret basements, continually defying harsh censorship laws to keep the public informed. Within the colonial apparatus itself, Indian soldiers and police officers faced agonizing moral choices, frequently risking court-martial, imprisonment, or execution by disobeying orders to fire upon their own unarmed countrymen.



THE FIRST DAWN, THE ENDURING CELEBRATION

From the midnight of 1947 to the Independence Day of 2026

Every year, when the calendar turns to 15 August, India enters a familiar ritual of flags, patriotic songs, speeches, parades, school ceremonies and celebrations. The Prime Minister's address from the Red Fort becomes the centerpiece of a national day that is observed from the largest cities to the smallest villages. Buildings are illuminated, neighborhoods are decorated in the colors of the Tricolor, children participate in cultural programs and families gather around television screens to watch the national ceremony.

Yet Independence Day is more than a public holiday. It is India's annual appointment with its own history.

For eight decades, 15 August has allowed successive generations to look back at the moment when colonial rule ended and the Indian people assumed responsibility for their own destiny. But the Independence Day of 2026 is profoundly different from the first Independence Day of 1947. The India that celebrated freedom in 1947 was a poor, wounded and uncertain country emerging from colonial rule and Partition. The India that celebrates in 2026 is a major economy, a nuclear and space power, a global technology centre and one of the world's most consequential democracies.

The distance between those two mornings tells much of the story of modern India.

THE NIGHT THAT CHANGED INDIA

India's Independence Day began before the sun rose on 15 August 1947.

At midnight on 14-15 August, the Constituent Assembly met in New Delhi as British rule formally came to an end. Jawaharlal Nehru delivered his historic "Tryst with Destiny" speech, speaking of the moment when India would "awake to life and freedom."

The words captured the extraordinary character of the occasion. India was not simply changing governments. It was emerging from almost two centuries of British colonial rule and assuming sovereignty over its own affairs.

The atmosphere was filled with anticipation and emotion. Members of the Constituent Assembly knew that they were participating in an event that would define generations. Outside the Assembly, people gathered in streets and public spaces, waiting to witness the birth of independent India.

But the celebrations of that night were accompanied by a painful reality.

India had won freedom, but Partition had torn the subcontinent apart.

A FREEDOM BORN AMID PARTITION

The first Independence Day cannot be understood without remembering Partition.

The creation of India and Pakistan triggered an enormous movement of people across the new borders. Hindus and Sikhs moved towards India from areas that had become part of Pakistan, while Muslims travelled in the opposite direction. Families abandoned homes, businesses and ancestral lands. Trains carried refugees across Punjab and Bengal. Violence devastated communities.

For millions, August 1947 was not a moment of uncomplicated celebration.

It was a time of uncertainty, grief and displacement.

This explains one of the most poignant features of the first Independence Day. Mahatma Gandhi, the



most recognizable face of India's freedom struggle, was not in Delhi for the celebrations.

He was in Calcutta, attempting to stop communal violence and restore peace. While political leaders gathered in the capital to mark the arrival of freedom, Gandhi chose to remain among people suffering from the consequences of Partition.

The contrast was profound.

India was free, but the wounds of freedom were

still open.

THE FIRST INDEPENDENCE DAY

The celebrations in Delhi were nevertheless extraordinary. The new national flag appeared across the capital. Crowds gathered to witness the ceremonies. The Indian armed forces, which had previously served under British command, now appeared as the forces of a sovereign nation.

Jawaharlal Nehru participated in the flag ceremonies and addressed the public. But the familiar image of the Prime Minister unfurling the Tricolor from the Red Fort on 15 August was not yet the established tradition.

The first Independence Day ceremony associated with Nehru's public flag-hoisting took place at Princess Park near India Gate on 15 August 1947. The Red Fort ceremony that became central to Independence Day followed on 16 August, when Nehru hoisted the national flag at the historic monument. The tradition gradually acquired its present form.

The Red Fort became the symbolic stage from which India's elected leadership would speak to the nation every Independence Day.

THE RED FORT BECOMES A SYMBOL OF FREEDOM

Few places could have carried the symbolism of the new India more powerfully than the Red Fort.

For centuries, the monument had represented imperial authority in Delhi. It had been associated with Mughal sovereignty and later with British power. After Independence, its meaning changed.

The Red Fort became a national symbol rather than an imperial one.

Every year, when the Prime Minister stands before its walls, the ceremony creates a direct connection with 1947. The architecture remains largely unchanged, but the meaning has been transformed.

The fort that once symbolised imperial power now provides the backdrop for an elected Indian government addressing its citizens.

It is one of the most enduring visual metaphors of India's transformation.

FROM ONE CEREMONY TO A NATIONAL FESTIVAL

Independence Day has grown enormously over the decades.

What began as the celebration of the birth of an independent state has become a nationwide cultural and civic occasion.

The central ceremony in New Delhi remains the most visible event. The Prime Minister reaches the Red Fort, participates in the ceremonial proceedings, unfurls the national flag and delivers the Independence Day address.

The ceremony combines military tradition with democratic symbolism. The Guard of Honour, the playing of the National Anthem and the ceremonial salute all reinforce the idea that India's armed forces serve a sovereign constitutional state.

The Prime Minister's speech has become an annual political and national document.

Each address reflects the concerns of its time. In the early years, speeches focused heavily on nation-building, development, poverty and national unity. Later decades brought discussions of economic reforms, technology, globalisation, security, infrastructure and India's growing international role.

The speech from the Red Fort has consequently become more than a ceremonial address.

It is an annual statement of the country's ambitions.

INDEPENDENCE DAY IN EVERY CORNER OF INDIA

The power of Independence Day lies not only in what happens in Delhi.

Across India, the Tricolour rises in schools, colleges, government offices, panchayat buildings, factories, residential societies and public institutions.

Children gather for flag-hoisting ceremonies. Teachers speak about the freedom struggle. Students perform patriotic songs, dances and plays. Debates and essay competitions are organized. Cultural programs tell stories of freedom fighters and national heroes.

In villages and small towns, local celebrations often combine national symbolism with community traditions.

The national day consequently becomes both a state ceremony and a people's festival.

For children, particularly, it is often an introduction to the history of Independence.

They learn about Gandhi and Nehru, Bhagat Singh and Subhas Chandra Bose, Sardar Patel and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sarojini Naidu and countless others who participated in India's long struggle against colonial rule.

THE TRICOLOR: THE MOST VISIBLE SYMBOL

No image is more closely associated with 15 August than the Tricolor.

The flag had been adopted by the Constituent Assembly shortly before Independence. The saffron, white and green bands, with the Ashoka Chakra at the centre, became the visual expression of the new nation.

On Independence Day, the Tricolor appears everywhere.

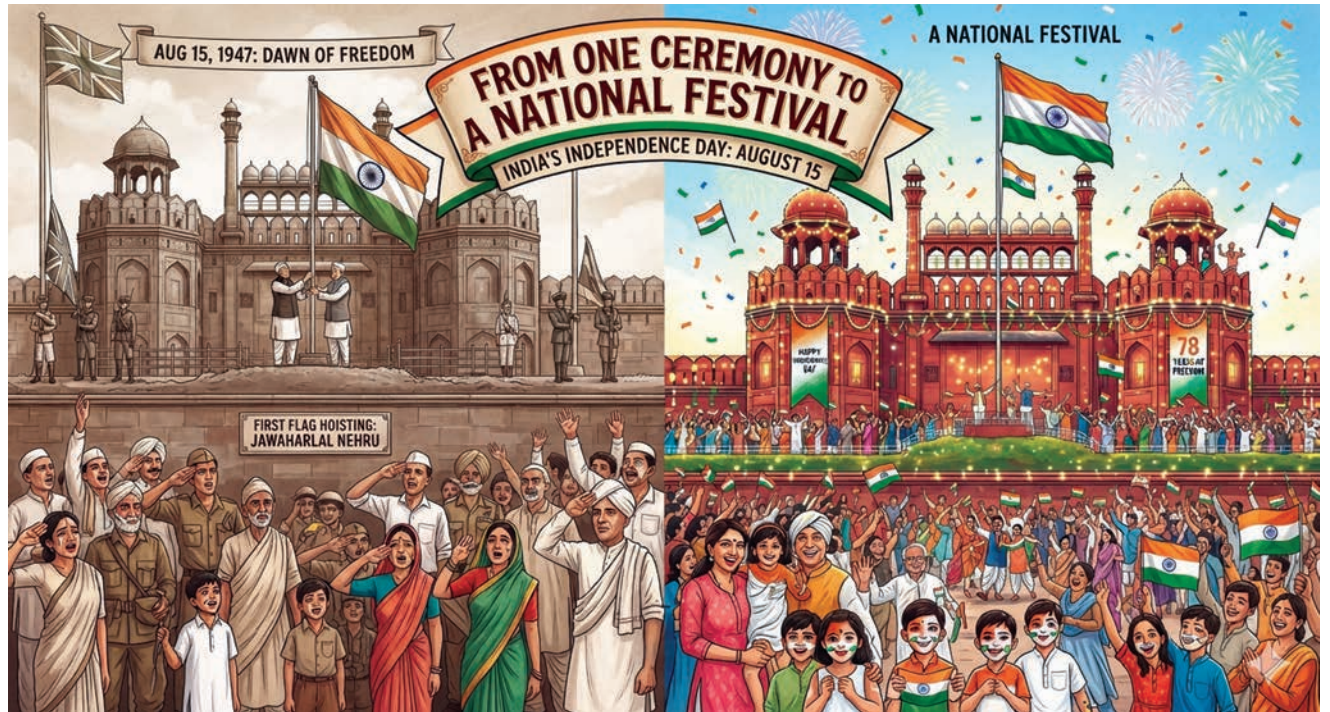
It flies from public buildings and school grounds. It is displayed on homes and vehicles. It appears on posters, newspapers and television screens. People wear saffron, white and green clothing and use the colours in decorations.

The flag performs a unique function.

It allows an extraordinarily diverse country to gather around a single symbol.

Different languages, religions, regions and political beliefs coexist beneath the same flag.

That is why the Tricolor is more than a national emblem.



It is a statement of shared citizenship.

THE SOUND OF 15 AUGUST

Independence Day also has its own soundtrack.

Patriotic songs fill schools, public spaces, radio stations and television programmes. Songs from the freedom movement sit alongside compositions from Hindi cinema and regional music traditions.

For many Indians, these songs evoke childhood memories of school assemblies, flag-hoisting ceremonies and August mornings.

Music has helped make Independence Day an intergenerational experience.

A song heard by a child in 2026 may have been heard by his or her grandparents decades earlier.

The words and arrangements may change, but the emotional connection remains.

KITES, COLOURS AND THE AUGUST SKY

In Delhi and many parts of northern India, kite flying has become one of the most colorful traditions associated with Independence Day.

On 15 August, rooftops fill with families and children, and the sky becomes crowded with kites of different colours and shapes.

The association between kites and Independence Day has acquired a symbolism of its own. Kites rising into the sky offer an uncomplicated visual expression

of freedom.

The tradition also gives Independence Day a lighter, more personal dimension.

The national celebration is not confined to official ceremonies.

It is experienced through neighborhoods, rooftops, family gatherings and children's games.

FROM RADIO TO THE SMARTPHONE

The way Indians experience Independence Day has changed as dramatically as the country itself.

In 1947, radio and newspapers were the principal channels through which citizens learned about national events. Photographs from the first Independence Day became precious historical records. Television later transformed the experience.

Millions could watch the Prime Minister's Red Fort address from their homes. The ceremony became a shared national television event.

The digital revolution has transformed it again.

Today, citizens can watch the ceremony live on television, websites and social media. Clips from the Prime Minister's speech circulate almost instantly. Photographs of flags and celebrations appear across digital platforms. Patriotic messages trend online.

Independence Day has become a national event experienced simultaneously in physical and digital spaces.



THE ARMED FORCES AND THE MEMORY OF SACRIFICE

Independence also carries a military dimension.

The armed forces are an essential part of the national ceremony, reflecting the responsibility of a sovereign country to defend its territory and citizens.

The ceremonial presence of soldiers reminds Indians that independence is not simply a historical achievement.

It has to be protected.

Every Independence Day also becomes an occasion to remember those who have died in wars and military operations and those who continue to serve in difficult conditions.

The celebration of freedom and the remembrance of sacrifice therefore remain inseparable.

REMEMBERING THE UNKNOWN FREEDOM FIGHTER

Independence Day naturally brings the famous names of the freedom movement into public memory.

But the freedom struggle was much larger than its best-known leaders.

Millions of ordinary Indians participated in protests, boycotts, underground movements, revolutionary activities, labour campaigns, peasant struggles and political organisations.

Women played important roles. Students participated. Journalists fought censorship. Workers and farmers joined movements. Soldiers rebelled against colonial authority.

Many names disappeared from the national narrative.

Independence Day offers an opportunity to remember them.

The freedom that India inherited in 1947 was the cumulative result of generations of sacrifice.

1947: A COUNTRY STILL BEING BUILT

The first Independence Day was also different because India was not yet the Republic it would become.

The Constitution had not yet come into force.

The Constituent Assembly was still writing the framework of the new nation.

The country had to integrate hundreds of princely states. It had to establish a functioning administration, rebuild an economy weakened by colonial policies and Partition, resettle refugees and maintain national unity.

India's first Independence Day therefore celebrated freedom while simultaneously beginning the enormous project of nation-building.

The country had achieved political independence.

It still had to build the institutions that would make that independence meaningful.

FROM 1947 TO 2026: THE INDIA THAT CHANGED

The contrast between the first Independence Day and today's celebration is a measure of India's transformation.

In 1947, India was overwhelmingly poor and predominantly rural. Literacy was low. Industrial capacity was limited. Infrastructure was inadequate. Food security was uncertain.

In 2026, India is a diversified economy with major industrial, technological and service sectors. It has an extensive road and railway network, modern airports, digital connectivity, sophisticated financial infrastructure and a growing middle class.

In 1947, India was beginning to establish its scientific institutions.

Today, Indian scientists work across nuclear technology, space science, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, information technology and advanced engineering.

In 1947, the country had just acquired political sovereignty.

Today, it is an important participant in global diplomacy and international economic affairs.

The country has travelled an extraordinary distance.

But Independence Day also reminds us that development remains unfinished.

THE MEANING OF FREEDOM IN 2026



Freedom meant one thing to the generation of 1947. It means many things to Indians today.

For the freedom fighters, independence meant liberation from foreign rule.

For later generations, freedom became associated with constitutional rights, universal suffrage, education and economic opportunity.

For today's generation, it also includes access to information, digital participation, professional opportunity and the ability to shape one's own future.

But the basic principle remains unchanged.

India's sovereignty belongs to its people.

Governments are elected.

Institutions derive legitimacy from the Constitution.

Citizens possess rights as well as responsibilities.

Independence Day therefore celebrates not only the absence of colonial rule but the continuing project of democratic self-government.

AN INDEPENDENCE DAY FOR THE FUTURE

At 80, India stands at another turning point.

The country is looking towards 2047, the centenary of Independence.

The questions facing the nation are different from those of 1947.

The challenge is no longer simply how to establish sovereignty.

It is how to convert economic growth into broad prosperity, demographic strength into employment, technological progress into better lives and national power into greater security.

India must also preserve social cohesion, strengthen institutions, improve education and healthcare, protect the environment and maintain the democratic freedoms that have been central to its identity.

Independence Day is therefore simultaneously about the past and the future.

It asks Indians to remember what was achieved.

It also asks what remains unfinished.

THE FLAG AND THE FUTURE

There is something powerful about the repetition of



the Independence Day ceremony.

- Every year, the same flag rises.
- The same historic fort provides the backdrop.
- The National Anthem plays.
- The Prime Minister speaks.
- Children watch.
- The country listens.

But the India listening is never exactly the same.

The India of 1947 was young, wounded and uncertain.

The India of 2026 is more confident, prosperous and globally connected, but it faces challenges of a scale that earlier generations could scarcely have imagined.

That is the deeper meaning of the Independence Day ritual.

It is not simply a celebration of what India was.

It is a reminder that every generation inherits the republic and becomes responsible for its future.

THE FIRST DAWN, THE NEXT DAWN

On the first Independence Day, Indians celebrated the end of colonial rule without knowing exactly what the future would bring.

They had freedom, but they had few guarantees.

They had a flag, but the republic had yet to be fully constructed.

They had political sovereignty, but they had to build institutions, an economy and a national identity capable of holding together an extraordinarily diverse population.

Eighty years later, the flag still rises.

But the country beneath it has changed beyond recognition.

The India of 2026 is not the India that Nehru addressed in 1947. It is larger, more prosperous, more urban, more educated, more technological and more globally influential.

Yet the essential promise of that first dawn remains.

Freedom was never meant to be merely the end of British rule.

It was meant to give Indians the power to shape their own destiny.

Every 15 August, the country renews that promise.

The Tricolour rises over the Red Fort, schoolchildren raise flags in distant villages, families watch ceremonies on television and millions of citizens pause to remember a remarkable journey.

From the first uncertain dawn of 1947 to the confident India of 2026, Independence Day has remained India's most enduring annual reminder that freedom is not simply a moment in history. It is a responsibility carried from one generation to the next.

And as India looks towards 2047, the centenary of Independence, the question is no longer merely how the country won its freedom.

It is what the country will build with it.



Lebanon state media says Israeli strike on south kills seven

15 AUG 2026
BEIRUT (TIP)

Lebanese state media said an Israeli strike in the country's south early Aug 15 killed seven people, the worst toll since deals in June saw a lull in hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah.

The National News Agency (NNA) said Israel "escalated its attacks on the south" early Saturday, reporting that "a strike launched by enemy warplanes on a home" on the outskirts of the village of Ansar "killed seven people and wounded three others".

It said the strike destroyed the home and that emergency rescuers were removing rubble and transporting the casualties to hospital.

Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war in March with rocket fire at Israel in support of its backer Iran.

Israel responded with heavy airstrikes and a ground invasion that Lebanese authorities say have killed more than 4,300 people.

Violence has significantly decreased since the signing of a US-Iran memorandum of understanding in June



on the broader Middle East war, and a US-sponsored framework deal between Lebanon and Israel agreed later that month.

But Lebanon still reports intermittent Israeli strikes occasionally causing casualties, and the broad demolitions of

civilian buildings in southern villages and towns.

The NNA said "the valley between Ansar and Zarariyeh was also subjected to a strike, the first at this geographical depth since the ceasefire two months ago".

It also said "Israeli warplanes carried

out a series of airstrikes targeting the Al al-Taher ridge", a strategic hill overlooking the Nabatieh area, also reporting Israeli shelling there.

The news agency said Israeli forces detonated homes in the town of Bint Jbeil near the border.

The Israel-Lebanon framework deal includes the disarmament of Hezbollah, a gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from south Lebanon and the deployment of the Lebanese army to the region, starting in "pilot zones".

On Friday, Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem accused Lebanese authorities of subjecting the country's armed forces to undue pressure by implementing the deal.

"How can you accept this ongoing humiliation of the Lebanese army, exposing it to bombardment and Israeli pressures, instead of acting as its protectors?" Qassem said.

This week, Human Rights Watch urged the United Nations to keep an international force in Lebanon after its peacekeepers' mandate ends this year, saying that "the peacekeepers are a crucial deterrent against attacks on civilians and human rights abuses". (AP)

Brazil's Lula triggers reciprocity process against US tariffs in effort to show strength



15 AUG 2026
SAO PAULO (TIP)

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said Aug 14 his government has triggered an economic reciprocity law mechanism against US-imposed tariffs, saying the move was intended to show his nation must be respected.

In July, US President Donald Trump imposed tariffs on hundreds of Brazilian exports, with duties reaching up to 37.5% in some products.

The Trump administration has accused Brazil of unfair trade practices, but Lula has denied the accusations, insisting they are politically motivated ahead of the October election.

Lula is seeking reelection against Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, a Trump ally who met with US officials, including Trump, in Washington weeks before the administration proposed higher tariffs on Brazilian goods.

"Yesterday, we invoked the reciprocity law to show that we are not to be taken lightly," Lula said in an interview with Brazilian podcasters. "We respect ourselves. I am very calm knowing what could happen, and I am prepared to debate the defense of Brazil anywhere in the world."

Brazil's Foreign Ministry said in a statement late Thursday it is requesting diplomatic consultations with its US counterparts on the issue, as a sign of Lula's aim "to privilege dialogue and negotiation in its international

relations."

The beginning of the proceedings does not necessarily mean Brazil will retaliate against US tariffs. "I don't want any fight with the United States," Lula said Friday. "Unfortunately, they are spreading falsehoods."

Earlier this month, the US State Department revoked the visa of Brazil's ambassador to Washington in retaliation for Brazil's denial of visas last month for two American diplomats who sought to visit ahead of the October election.

The US government also has accused Brazil of stalling approval of Trump's nominee for ambassador in Brasilia, while Brazilian officials say the US should have first sought the government's approval before submitting the nomination to Congress, as diplomatic protocol requires.

Since US Secretary of State Marco Rubio revoked the Brazilian ambassador's visa in response to Lula's actions but did not order her expelled, US officials have said the Trump administration does not want the dispute to escalate.

These officials, who have spoken on condition of anonymity to discuss internal administration deliberations, have said on multiple occasions that Rubio's limited response was intentionally designed to give Lula time and space to back down.

At the same time, they have said that the US will respond quickly should Lula's government choose to escalate the matter and that declaring the Brazilian ambassador "persona non grata" and expelling her from the US would be a logical next step.

Lula said once again Trump has treated him well, but warned any foreign governments "who come here to meddle in the election, will lose." (AFP)

European countries battle multiple wildfires as record heat grips the continent

14 AUG 2026
PARIS (TIP):

Firefighters across Europe struggled against multiple fires Friday as a new wave of record-breaking heat baked a swath of the continent, their task further complicated by exceptionally parched landscapes.

With France experiencing its driest year ever, a new fire raced through woodlands overnight in the Landes region on the southwest coast. The blaze forced more than 500 people to evacuate their homes in the town of Luglon as hundreds of firefighters deployed to the area, the regional administration said Friday.

It's one of several fires scorching forests around France this week, including in normally cooler and wetter regions in the north and Brittany. A historic fire devoured forests near Bordeaux last month and pushed a quarter of a million people from their homes.

After the U.K. recorded its hottest day of the year on Thursday, firefighters spent Friday tackling fires across the West Midlands, in central England, that led to thousands of emergency calls and forced people to flee from burning homes. Nineteen people were hospitalized, the ambulance service said. The historic temperatures are linked to human-caused climate change, and are hitting countries more designed for long cold seasons and ill-equipped for this sort of heat, with limited air conditioning.

Meanwhile, efforts to contain a wildfire in Germany were complicated by unexploded World War II munitions, and shifting winds in Croatia spread flames deeper into a coastal suburb and forced more than 1,000 people to flee.

In the town of Stourbridge, where a



huge blaze started Thursday, TV footage showed the fires consuming houses, with many left without roofs as flames burned inside the charred walls. About 20 to 30 homes were completely destroyed, Stourbridge lawmaker Cat Eccles told the BBC.

A woman who was evacuated from her home in Stourbridge said police knocked on her door and urged her to leave immediately.

"They thought the fire was changing directions, and they didn't know which direction it was going in," Jane Baxter told BBC Radio. "So, it was literally 'grab what you need and get out.'"

"We could see the flames from our bedroom window," she added. "It was spreading so fast and going in quite a few different directions across the fields."

Simon Tuhill, chief fire officer of West Midlands Fire Service, said an investigation will be launched but the fire was believed to have started in the grassland before spreading to homes nearby. Some 1,017 wildfires have been recorded in England and Wales this year, according to data from the National Fire Chiefs Council.

The Met Office, the official weather agency, said 38.1C (100.6 F) was recorded in west London on Thursday, marking the hottest day of the year. While temperatures cooled slightly on Friday, many parts of the country have seen little to no rain for weeks. (PTI)

ISRAELI SETTLERS' SIEGE OF PALESTINIAN HOMES DRAWS A SHARP US REBUKE

14 AUG 2026
QUSRA (TIP)

For five nights, Israeli settlers surrounded three Palestinian homes on the outskirts of a town in the occupied West Bank, preventing the families from leaving safely as their food and water supplies dwindled.

Qusai Abu Rida was holed up inside with his teenage son when settlers cut the water and electricity, leaving them to drink well water as dozens of Israeli settlers erected tents outside. His Palestinian American brother in Ohio, who owns the house, watched the siege unfold on security cameras and called for updates.

The standoff in the northern West Bank town of Qusra is the latest in a wave of settler violence convulsing the territory, which Israel seized in the 1967 Mideast war and which would make up the main part of a future Palestinian state.

On Thursday, U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee referred to the settlers as "terrorists" — a word American officials usually reserve for Palestinian



militants. It was an unusually sharp rebuke from the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, who has given unprecedented support to Israeli settlement over the years.

Mounting criticism of Israel from the United States could pose a challenge for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is trying to maintain good

relations with his country's closest ally as he mobilizes ultranationalist voters ahead of a tough battle for reelection in October.

On Sunday, dozens of settlers arrived at the homes in Qusra, blocking doors and preventing occupants from leaving, according to the families.

Israeli troops have intervened

multiple times, but the settlers keep returning, said Loui Ridi, the homeowner in Ohio who spells the family name differently. Rights groups have long accused Israeli forces of turning a blind eye to settler violence or of intervening to protect the settlers.

"It's a cycle," Ridi said. "They need to be prevented from the entire area, not just removed and moved 100 feet away so when the (Israeli military) leaves, they come back."

On Tuesday, Israel's military condemned the siege as "illegal, reprehensible, and unacceptable," and declared Qusra a closed military zone. The next day, dozens of settlers returned, tried to block the road with rocks and clashed with Israeli soldiers, according to video shot by village residents.

On Thursday, the military said troops dismantled "two illegal outposts" in Qusra and a nearby village, and detained one Israeli. It said more soldiers were sent to "carry out defensive missions and patrols." (AP)

North Korea slams US-South Korea military drills and threatens strong response



14 AUG 2026
SEOUL (TIP)

North Korea on Aug 14 threatened unspecified stern steps against the United States and South Korea ahead of their upcoming military drills, which Pyongyang called a war rehearsal that claimed would be more provocative than last year.

The warning is typical of the harsh rhetoric that North Korea often deploys ahead of major US-South Korean military exercises and suggests the country could conduct more weapons tests in coming days. North Korea has often used major US-South Korean military training as a pretext to ramp up its testing activities to expand its weapons arsenals and promote public support for leader Kim Jong Un.

The US and South Korean militaries are to start their major summertime Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises Monday and have described their scope as similar to past years. The allies have said the exercises are meant to strengthen their readiness against North Korean threats and reiterated that they are defensive in nature.

In a statement carried by state media Friday, North Korea's Foreign Ministry called the US-South Korean training "a rehearsal for an aggressive war" that is triggering a different level of instability in the region.

"It is our consistent principle of

ensuring security to respond to a new level of a threat with a new level of a deterrent," the statement said. North Korea "will more clearly express its stance on the enemies to cope with any threats and challenges through the responsible and decisive exercise of the right to legitimate self-defense."

North Korea also said the drills would be of a "more serious provocative nature and dangerousness than last year" and involve all the military assets and war-fighting modes of the US and South Korea, a claim that those countries haven't said.

The North Korean warning signals the country could conduct more weapons tests in coming days after its neighbors detected two ballistic missile launches off North Korea's east coast in the past week. North Korea hasn't commented on the launches, but outside experts assess they were likely meant to protest the U.S.-South Korean drills or upgrade weapons systems.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ignored the U.S. and South Korea's offers to resume diplomacy and focused on taking steps to bolster his nuclear arsenal since his diplomacy with U.S. President Donald Trump broke down in 2019. Experts say Kim will likely eventually aim to use his advancing nuclear program to win greater U.S. concessions such as extensive sanctions relief.

Kim has increased his diplomatic engagement with Russia in recent years. North Korea has been supplying troops and ammunition to Russia to support its war against Ukraine in return for economic and military assistance. Kim has also recently pushed to deepen ties with China, North Korea's biggest trading partner. (AP)

Ecuador's police seize a cocaine shipment with stickers of Norway's soccer star Erling Haaland

13 AUG 2026
QUITO (TIP)

Norway's soccer star Erling Haaland's face has appeared on billboards, trading cards and television screens, becoming a social media phenomenon for scoring seven goals across four World Cup matches in July.

Now, police in Ecuador have found it in an unexpected place — printed on green rectangular packages that made up a stunning cocaine shipment seized in a truck near the Colombian border.

The driver of the vehicle was arrested following the seizure of the stash of 469 kilograms (1,034 pounds) of cocaine on Wednesday, police said but provided no explanation for the stickers with the image of the golden-haired Norwegian striker.

However, it is common practice for drug traffickers to label their shipments with the names of well-known sports figures and other celebrities as a way of signaling which criminal network produced the merchandise and which client it belongs to.

A news release said anti-narcotics agents were conducting an operation following an anonymous tip received early Tuesday morning on the Pan-American Highway when they noticed a suspicious truck. After searching it, they found 370 packages hidden in a false bottom of the truck.

Police released a video showing the packages spilling out from the truck's false bottom, with the stickers of Haaland — often called a "pretty princess" and "babygirl" by his fans — clearly visible.

Haaland was one of the top scorers and most charismatic players at the World Cup held in Mexico, the United States, and Canada, and his imposing



stature and goofy sense of humor sparked a wave of creative viral videos and memes.

Haaland is not the only soccer star apparently favored by drug smugglers — the image of Argentine national team captain Lionel Messi has also appeared on another seized package.

Ecuador is considered to be a logistical hub for drug trafficking, where drugs are stockpiled, stored and distributed via Central American routes mainly to the United States, though narcotics are also shipped to Europe.

Police said a woman identified only as María R., with Colombian identity documents, was arrested in Wednesday's operation in the area of Guagua Negro, near the border city of Tulcan, 246 kilometers (153 miles) north of the capital of Quito.

The estimated value of the shipment is nearly \$842,000 on the domestic market, and more than \$11 million in the U.S. and more than \$19.6 million (17 million euros) in Europe.

In Ecuador, local criminal gangs allied with Colombian and Mexican cartels manage the routes and ship the narcotics, 80% of which originate in Colombia and the rest in Peru.

In the first half of this year, police reported seizing 80 tons of drugs, while in 2025 authorities confiscated nearly 215 tons, primarily cocaine. In 2024, the amount reached almost 295 tons. (AP)

Afghanistan marks five years under the Taliban with safer streets but pleas for jobs, education

14 AUG 2026
KABUL (TIP)

As Afghanistan's Taliban rulers mark five years since sweeping back to power, some Kabul residents say they feel safer after decades of conflict and upheaval but stress the leaders should now focus on creating jobs and expanding access to schools in the country where girls above the age of 12 are banned from education.

The Taliban regained control of Afghanistan on Aug. 15, 2021, after it launched an offensive as the U.S. and other NATO troops withdrew from the country after two decades of war. The withdrawal led to chaotic scenes at and around Kabul's airport with thousands wanting to leave.

"Thank God, the past five years have passed in safety," said Mohammad Qasim, 30, reflecting on the anniversary that comes against a backdrop of economic hardship in a conflict-stricken country. "Our wish and hope from the government is to create job opportunities for the youth."

"We, along with the entire nation, call upon the government to create employment opportunities for the youth and to encourage them to pursue education," he added.

Before the takeover, the Taliban stated that, upon assuming power, it would allow women access to education, employment and public participation, albeit in accordance with its interpretation of Islamic principles.



Soon after it seized power, the Taliban imposed an indefinite ban on girls' education beyond the sixth grade and, a few months later, also banned higher education for women until "further notice."

Women also were banned from entering gyms, parks and public baths, from taking part in sports and traveling to distant locations without a "mahram," or male guardian.

Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid has repeatedly said the administration is working to establish conditions under which girls and women

can attend classrooms or university campuses in line with Islamic Sharia laws. The restrictions, nevertheless, remain in force.

While the U.N. has acknowledged that the country has become more stable since the takeover, it has warned that lasting stability cannot be possible unless the Taliban rulers — who remain isolated internationally — lift restrictions on women and girls, protect basic rights and address terrorism concerns.

"A reduction in conflict has brought tangible benefits for many Afghans and

created opportunities to focus on recovery, development and regional economic cooperation," the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, or UNAMA, said in a statement ahead of the anniversary. It added, however, that the restrictions on women and girls impede Afghanistan's recovery and its reintegration with the international community.

In a statement this week, the U.N.'s agency on women's rights, said Afghan women and girls are living under the world's most severe restrictions, which not only violate their rights but also threaten the country's social and economic future.

"Half a decade after the Taliban takeover in August 2021, Afghanistan has systematically dismantled the rights of half its population, making it a global outlier with no parallel in the modern world," U.N. Women said.

"In the past year alone, this exclusion of women and girls from education, employment, public life, justice systems and healthcare has only intensified, entrenching what remains the world's most severe women's rights crisis," it said.

Fazila Soroush, a 39-year-old Kabul-based entrepreneur and an advocate for women's rights, said the government had "demonstrated its worth to the people through its actions in every area." (AP)

Toxic gas leak at Bangladesh shipbreaking yard kills at least eight workers

14 AUG 2026
DHAKA

A suspected gas leak at a shipbreaking yard in southeastern Bangladesh killed at least eight people on Friday during the dismantling of a decommissioned ship, police said.

Several others were injured at the Ferdous Steel Ship Breaking Yard in the Sitakunda area, police inspector Mohammed Alamgir said. The initial death toll

was six, he said, but two others died after being transported from the scene.

The company didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Senior government factory inspection official Mahbubul Hasan said the workers died due to toxic gas emissions from the ship, according to the official news agency



Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha.

"The cause of the gas emission and whether adequate safety measures were in place for the workers at the yard are being investigated," he said.

Bangladesh's shipbreaking industry is a multi-billion dollar global giant concentrated along a 20-kilometer stretch of the Sitakunda coast in Chattogram.

Accounting for roughly 36% of global ship scrapping, the region houses about 150 registered yards, generating an annual turnover of \$2.46 billion and supplying over half of the nation's scrap steel. The industry employs tens of thousands of workers.

Green campaigners complain that the industry lacks safety protocols and environmental standards. They say ships arrive in Bangladesh with hazardous waste from the West. (AP)

Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif warns India over Indus Waters Treaty in Independence Day address

14 AUG 2026
ISLAMABAD (TIP):

Pakistan has once again dipped into its familiar playbook of indulging in empty and hollow rhetoric against India, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif threatening a "direct response" over water even as Islamabad grapples with a mounting share of crises at home -- from worsening militant violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to unrest and human-rights abuses in Balochistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), alongside the continued imprisonment of former Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Yet, rather than confronting these failures, Sharif has once again chosen India as the target of his rhetoric.

Sharif, speaking at an event on the eve of Pakistan's Independence Day on Thursday, sought to portray India as an "enemy of peace" over New Delhi's decision to keep the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance following the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, which led to the death of 26 innocent individuals and ranting about the treaty as a national "red line".

Following the April 22, 2025 terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, India kept the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance after a Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meeting on April 23, 2025 and asserted that the conditions under which the treaty was negotiated have fundamentally



changed.

India has stated that the treaty can no longer function in its present form and will remain in abeyance until Pakistan "credibly and irrevocably" ends its support for cross-border terrorism.

"The Prime Minister said that India has proven itself an enemy of peace by unilaterally and illegally suspending the Indus Waters Treaty. He announced that

every drop of Pakistan's water is our red line. There will be no compromise on the water issue. If India does not come to the right path, we will give it a direct response," the Pakistan Prime Minister's Office said in a statement on X.

A government presiding over deepening instability across multiple regions of the country is once again attempting to project toughness by threatening India, even as its own citizens continue to face violence, political repression and insecurity amid growing economic pressure and instability.

Pakistan's carefully cultivated image of national unity is facing one of its sharpest challenges in Balochistan, where nationalist voices have called for August 14, Pakistan's Independence Day to be observed as a "Black Day".

Baloch leader and activist Mir Yar Baloch has urged Baloch people across the world to reject Pakistan's Independence Day celebrations, calling for black flags and armbands as a symbol of opposition to Islamabad's rule. (ANI)



An Eye Institute in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh combating avoidable blindness in children.

On behalf of all my colleagues of the Wilmer Eye Institute in Baltimore, MD. I send my best wishes and congratulations to our friends in Goutami on this extremely important occasion. This beautifully facility will match the wonderful world class work of your doctors, nurses, and staff in preserving and restoring the vision of so many patients. We in the United States are inspired by your dedication and admire your tireless efforts to serve so many who need your skills and compassion.

Best Wishes, Peter



Peter J McDonnell, MD Director Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins



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The art of the sparkle: How to match jewelry with every outfit

An outfit may set the tone, but the right jewelry completes the story. A delicate chain can add quiet elegance to a simple look, while a dramatic pair of earrings can transform an otherwise understated ensemble into a statement. Jewellery is also deeply personal—it can reflect your personality, mood and sense of style, whether you prefer timeless classics or bold, experimental pieces. Yet with countless designs, metals, colours and gemstones to choose from, deciding what works with what can sometimes be more complicated than getting dressed. The trick is not to match every piece perfectly, but to understand how jewellery can complement the colour, silhouette and occasion of an outfit. Fashion and jewellery experts suggest a few simple principles that can make styling easier, whether you are dressing for a casual day out, a boardroom meeting or a glamorous evening.

Keeping it casual

If you feel like this is your T-shirts and bling era, fret not and pretty up with a pair of striking yet subtle drop earrings in yellow gold. The simpler the silhouette the more arresting they will look—especially on deeper skin tones. The perks - you get to feel dainty yet stylish with the lowest amount of effort.

Business as usual

For a look that sets order in the room, complement your power suit or pencil skirt with a statement that can be read a mile away. A classic complement getter imbued with meaning - opt for a sturdy yet solid bracelet. With enough wears, it can be your go-to for taking interesting to a whole new level at work while exuding an aura that says you're in charge.



Statement maker

As we like to say - “when in doubt, go all out” if you're in the mood to make an entry, make sure all eyes are on you with a statement piece featuring coloured stones with intricate or unusual details. You can go maximalist with layering several stunners or keep it chic with just one theatrical piece. For a night out, go for darker colours that will be the perfect partners in crime to a formal style statement.

Final formal

Playing dress-up for formal events is one of the harder parts of the whole affair, be it weddings, cocktail events, house warmings or hosting. Add a touch of whimsy to your aura with a limited edition or unusual piece that will make for a good conversation starter. Quirky yet interesting, an heirloom, a flea-market find or any one-of-a-kind masterpiece will add

a touch of charm to your fit, when paired strategically.

Play it by color

Who doesn't love a good colour co-ord? Partition your fits into the primary palette of warm, cool and neutral to understand how well they play with your skin and mood. Whether it be a striking pop of Mediterranean sunshine or Gobi desert gold, bling it up with a blob of colour to evoke the sensuousness of colour therapy.

The shape of you

While fashion rules are meant to be broken, sometimes, the shape of your jewellery plays a big part in elevating the outfit. A classic, minimal design goes well with almost any OOTD while drop-shaped accents evoke femininity. Abstract, asymmetrical shapes when paired with stark or solid outerwear and rectangles or squares always speak edgy.

FOOD

Chicken Korma

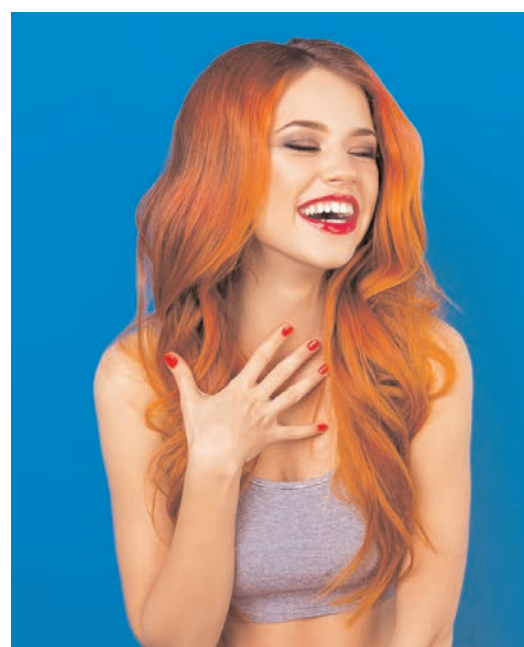
Korma is a gravy dish that is usually made with yogurt, lots of nuts and spices. A Mughal era original, Chicken Korma is the perfect dinner party dish that is easy, quick and a no fuss recipe.

Ingredients

1/2 Kg chicken
1 cup oil
2-3 tsp ghee
8-10 Cardamoms
6-7 Cloves
2 tbsp garlic
1 tbsp coriander powder
1 tbsp chili
Salt to taste
1 tsp ginger paste
1 cup yogurt
2 onions (fried, puree this with the yogurt), sliced
1 tsp garam masala
Few strands of saffron (mixed in 3 tsp of water)
For garnishing coriander leaves, chopped

Method

- Heat the vegetable oil into the pan, then put a dollop of ghee.
- Put cardamom, cloves, garlic and fry the mix properly.
- Then add the chicken and let it cook for about 2-3 minutes. Keep stirring it.
- Once it becomes brown, add coriander and chili powder.
- Add salt to taste.
- Add ginger paste, mixture of fried onions and yogurt, let it cook for a minute.
- Then put garam masala and saffron for flavor.
- If the gravy is too thick add little bit of water before covering it. The masala should fuse well with the chicken.
- Cover it and give it some time to cook on slow fire. Let it simmer for about 10-15 minutes.
- Keep stirring occasionally.
- Serve hot, garnished with coriander leaves.



Organic hair colors you can make at home

Beet dye

Cut the beetroots into tiny pieces and combine with 1 teaspoon honey and 1 teaspoon coconut oil in a bowl for a purplish-burgundy appearance. Beetroots are renowned for their striking colour and for increasing blood flow to the scalp, which results in healthy, bouncy hair.

For a smoother texture, take a sieve and pour the mixture into a jar container.

Simply apply the mixture to your hair for 60 minutes, rinse it out with a light shampoo and conditioner, and presto!

You have smooth hair with a purple colour right in your own home.

Food color dye

Add a few drops of whatever food colouring of your choosing to a half cup of a thick conditioner. By adding more food colouring, you can choose a lighter tint, or you can go for a soft, pastel look.

Food colouring is completely safe for your hair because it is suitable for human consumption and free of chemicals, while the conditioner will hydrate and soften your hair.

Apply this dye where you want it, wait 15 to 20 minutes, and then rinse it off.

Coffee for grey hair

Combine 12 cup of freshly brewed espresso with 12 cup of conditioner, then stir in 1 tablespoon of coffee grounds.

Coffee acts as a natural tonic for hair, stimulating cell growth and effortlessly transforming light grey hair into its natural colour.

It should be used as a mask for 60 minutes, then removed with water.

Cinnamon dye

Combine 1/2 cup cinnamon and 1/2 cup conditioner for subdued reddish-brown hair.

Cinnamon gives your hair a natural reddish-brown hue while moisturising the scalp and restoring its natural lustre.

This mixture should be applied as a mask and left on for 45 to 60 minutes. Use a gentle shampoo to rinse it off.

What happens to brain during heart attack and cardiac arrest

The brain cannot survive without oxygen, and honestly, it can't last long without it. It is one of the most oxygen-dependent organs we have. Even though it makes up only about 2 percent of total body weight, it uses roughly 20 percent of the body's oxygen supply. Other organs can manage a little because they carry small reserves, yet the brain is different. It has very limited storage, so when circulation is cut off even briefly, it becomes extremely fragile. In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr Sumeet Pawar, MBBS, DNB (Neurosurgery), minimally invasive brain and spine surgeon, explains what happens when blood flow to the brain stops.

Heart attack and cardiac arrest are not the same

Dr Sumeet highlighted that a heart attack and a cardiac arrest are basically not the same thing, even though people mix them up a lot. A heart attack happens when the blood supply to the heart muscle gets blocked, and still, the heart often keeps beating, at least for a while. Cardiac arrest, on the other hand, is when the heart suddenly stops pumping blood in a useful way. In cardiac arrest, the blood flow to the brain goes away almost right away, and that turns it into a real life-threatening situation.

What goes on inside the brain?

Dr Sumeet said, "When oxygen-rich blood no longer makes it to the brain, the cells start misfiring within seconds. Usually, the person goes unconscious after 10 to 20 seconds." If circulation isn't restored within 3 to 5 minutes, irreversible damage to the brain tissue can begin. The longer the brain sits without oxygen, the higher the chance of lasting neurological harm, such as memory trouble, problems with speech, movement issues, or possibly brain death.

Why does every minute matter so much?

According to Dr Sumeet, doing CPR right away helps keep a small, but still critical, trickle of blood moving to the brain until further medical care actually arrives.



Early defibrillation, when appropriate, can boost the odds of survival significantly. It also tends to lower the risk of long-term brain injury.

Recovery depends on acting fast

People who get through a cardiac arrest might return to normal; other patients—depending on how long the oxygen was cut off—can need neurological rehabilitation. Spot it early, call for emergency help immediately, and then follow a structured rehab plan; all of that matters for better results. *Source: HT*

The midnight shift: Sleep and timing impact your metabolic health

Imagine a wellness tool that doesn't require expensive supplements or giving up favorite foods. It turns out that one of the most significant factors in managing overall health might be the relationship between the internal clock and daily habits. By focusing on consistent routines and the quality of rest, it is possible to support the body's natural metabolic processes.

For years, the conversation around health focused primarily on what was consumed. However, modern research suggests that the timing of daily cycles matters significantly.

When the body follows a consistent routine, it can better manage energy levels. Eating late into the night can sometimes conflict with the body's natural circadian rhythms, which are designed to prioritize rest and repair during the late hours.

Quality sleep is a cornerstone of metabolic health. During rest, the body undergoes essential maintenance, regulating hormones that influence hunger and energy balance. Maintaining a consistent window between the final meal of the day and sleep can support better digestion and more restful slumber. This alignment helps the body function efficiently, as it isn't diverted by the tasks of heavy digestion during its primary recovery phase.

Establishing a regular schedule also helps reduce the likelihood of impulsive snacking, which often occurs during late-night hours. By focusing on balanced nutrition during the day and prioritizing a peaceful transition to sleep, individuals can improve their digestion and energy levels. Prioritizing these sustainable habits allows the body to maintain its natural balance without the stress of restrictive or complicated dietary rules. For any significant changes to a health routine, consulting with a healthcare professional is always the most appropriate first step.



The science behind a mouth-watering craving

Have you ever walked past your favourite food, caught its aroma, or simply seen a picture of it and suddenly noticed your mouth watering? You may not have been particularly hungry a moment earlier, yet the sight or smell of a familiar dish can instantly make you want to eat.

This everyday reaction may seem simple, but there is a fascinating process happening between the brain and the body. Your body can actually begin preparing for food before you have eaten anything. The brain takes in information from what you see, smell and even remember, and uses these signals to anticipate what is coming next.

This early preparation is known as the cephalic phase of digestion. Visual cues, smells and even memories associated with food can activate the nervous system and stimulate the production of saliva and digestive juices.

But the brain does not only prepare us to eat. It can also tell the body to stay away from something that appears unpleasant or potentially harmful. A bad smell, rotten food or something visually revolting can trigger nausea, gagging or a sudden loss of appetite.

So why does your mouth water when you see your favourite food? And why can the sight or smell of something disgusting make you feel sick?

"Your body can actually start preparing for food before you have eaten anything," explains Dr Kunal Bahrani, Chairman and Group Director, Neurology, Yatharth Hospitals.

The brain constantly receives information from the

environment. When you see, smell, or even think about food that you enjoy, these signals can activate the autonomic nervous system.

One of the results could be increased saliva production. In simple terms, the brain is anticipating what comes next. It recognises the food as something you are likely to eat and begins preparing the body for the digestive process.

This explains why you may start salivating even before the first bite.

Saliva is an important part of eating and digestion. It helps moisten food, making it easier to chew and swallow. It also helps begin the early stages of digestion.

So, when your mouth waters after seeing a plate of your favourite food, your body is not reacting randomly. It is getting itself ready for the meal.

According to the expert explanation in the provided material, visual, smell and memory cues can stimulate the nervous system and increase the secretion of saliva and digestive juices.

This is why even thinking about a familiar food can sometimes produce a physical response.

The cephalic phase of digestion refers to the early stage in which the body begins preparing for digestion before food actually enters the stomach.

The process can be triggered by different sensory cues. You may see a food, smell it, think about it or remember eating it previously. The brain interprets these cues and activates parts of the nervous system involved in digestion. *Source: India Today*

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Alien object that's bigger than our Solar System discovered

Astronomers using NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) have discovered a mysterious object in the early universe that appears unlike anything ever seen before, a gigantic structure larger than our Solar System that shines with the power of 100 billion Suns.

The object, detected just a few hundred million years after the Big Bang, is so unusual that researchers have proposed an entirely new category of cosmic object: a "black hole star."

The discovery, published in the journal *Nature*, was made by a team led by researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) during a survey searching for some of the universe's earliest galaxies.

Initially, the object appeared as an intensely bright red dot in JWST images. But closer examination revealed something strange. It was far too luminous to be an ordinary star, yet its structure did not match any known black hole or galaxy.

"We think there is a central black hole that is 100,000 times as massive as the Sun," said lead author Rohan Naidu of MIT. "Around this black hole, there would be a very extended envelope of gas that looks like a star the size of the Solar System."

The object, named MoM-BH-1*, appears to consist of a supermassive black hole wrapped inside a dense cocoon of hydrogen gas. Unlike normal stars, which generate energy through nuclear fusion, this cosmic giant is likely powered by matter falling into its central black hole.

Researchers found that the object contains almost no heavy elements, consisting primarily of hydrogen and helium, the first elements created after the Big Bang. It also displayed an unusually deep "Balmer break," a signature that could not be explained by ordinary stars.

Computer simulations showed that only a black hole



embedded within an enormous star-like hydrogen envelope could reproduce the object's extraordinary brightness and spectral features.

The discovery could also solve one of the biggest mysteries of the JWST era: the origin of countless "little red dots" seen across the early universe. Scientists now suspect many of these enigmatic objects may be black hole stars in various stages of evolution.

If confirmed, MoM-BH-1* would represent the first known member of a previously unknown class of cosmic objects, offering a rare glimpse into how the first black holes and galaxies may have formed shortly after the birth of the universe.

Nasa's Nancy Grace Telescope takes another step closer to August 30 launch

Nasa's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope has entered one of the most important stages of its journey to space, with engineers now connecting the observatory to hardware that will eventually carry it into orbit.

The latest update from Nasa, released this week, said teams at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida had begun integration operations with SpaceX hardware ahead of the telescope's planned launch later this month.

The telescope is now nine months ahead of its earlier schedule.

The telescope was carefully attached to its payload adaptor before being lifted onto a specialised structure that will secure it to the upper stage of SpaceX's Falcon Heavy rocket.

This progress is not merely a mechanical procedure but also marks the point at which Roman, after years of construction and testing, is being prepared as an actual flight payload.

The next major step will be to enclose the observatory inside the Falcon Heavy's protective payload fairing.

The fairing will shield the telescope from the intense aerodynamic forces and heat it will encounter while rising through Earth's atmosphere.

Once encapsulated, Roman will be moved to SpaceX's hangar at Launch Complex 39A for final integration with the rocket.

Nasa and SpaceX are currently targeting no earlier than August 30 for launch.

The latest update gives a target liftoff time of 4:56 pm IST, from Launch Complex 39A at Nasa's Kennedy Space Center.

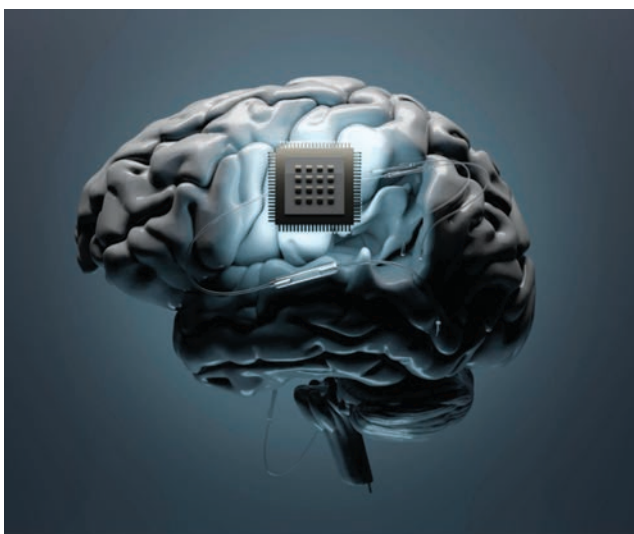
China putting chip in brain without opening skull

China is working on a brain-computer interface (BCI) that could one day be implanted without opening the skull, using blood vessels in the neck to reach the brain. The approach could make brain implants faster and less invasive than conventional procedures, although the technology is still in the experimental stage. The Shanghai-based start-up StairMed Technology is developing the system with researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, South China Morning Post reports. Instead of exposing the brain through surgery, doctors would insert the device through a blood vessel in the neck and guide it through the vascular system until it reaches a targeted area of the brain. The device would then be secured outside the blood vessel wall.

The company first unveiled the program in December. So far, the procedure has been tested on sheep, but StairMed has not yet started human trials. That means the much-discussed 10-minute implantation time is currently a target demonstrated by researchers rather than a procedure available to patients.

A different route into the brain

Traditional implanted BCIs require doctors to open the skull and place electrodes directly into or on the brain. Elon Musk's Neuralink, for instance, uses a surgical approach in which a device is implanted into the brain's cortex. The Chinese approach attempts to avoid that step altogether. By using the body's existing blood-vessel network as a route to the brain, researchers hope to reduce the trauma and risks associated with major brain surgery while making implantation easier to perform.



Duan Wanru, chief physician at Xuanwu Hospital under Beijing's Capital Medical University, said his team is also investigating a vascular method involving the brain's venous sinuses. The hospital has already begun its first human clinical study.

"A surgeon with four or five years of experience can position the device in as little as 10 minutes," Duan said. "So far, there have been no major safety concerns, and the implant can even be removed and retrieved within a month of the operation."

China's Nankai University also completed what it described as the world's first human trial of a BCI implanted through blood vessels last year. The country is now trying to build a larger domestic BCI industry, with Beijing aiming to develop two or three globally

competitive companies in the field by 2030.

What could these implants do?

BCIs are designed to translate electrical signals from the brain into commands that computers and other electronic devices can understand. For people with severe paralysis, the technology could potentially offer a way to communicate, control devices or regain some independence using their thoughts.

StairMed co-founder Zhao Zhengtuo said people with paralysis could eventually use the technology to get closer to a life similar to that of people without disabilities. The company has already reported an example of how its technology could be used. In one trial involving a surgically implanted BCI, a patient was able to use the system to serve customers on Chinese e-commerce platform JD.com and earn around 1,800 yuan a month.

StairMed has attracted significant investment as China increases its focus on neurotechnology. The company said its funding over the past year had crossed 1.1 billion yuan, with investors including Alibaba and Tencent.

The idea of inserting a BCI through a vein is not unique to China. US-based Synchron has also implanted its BCI through the jugular vein in patients in Australia and the United States. However, the biggest question remains whether these less invasive implants can work safely and reliably over long periods. Animal testing cannot establish how well the technology will perform in people, and human trials will have to show whether doctors can accurately position the device, keep it stable and capture useful brain signals without causing serious complications.

Oil prices rise as US-Iran tensions renew supply fears

AUGUST 14, 2026

TEXAS (TIP): Oil prices moved higher on Friday, Aug 14, as the prospect of an indefinite US naval blockade of Iran revived concerns about disruptions to crude supplies, particularly through the strategically important Strait of Hormuz.

Brent crude gained around 1.7% to settle at \$88.52 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) rose about 1.4% to \$82.40 a barrel. Both benchmarks were heading for weekly gains as tensions between Washington and Tehran remained unresolved.

The latest price move came after the United States indicated that its naval enforcement against Iran could continue indefinitely, raising the prospect of prolonged disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. The waterway is one of the world's most important energy chokepoints, carrying roughly one-fifth of global oil and LNG shipments under normal conditions.

Hormuz emerges as the key risk

The threat to oil supplies has intensified as maritime traffic through the strait has slowed sharply amid attacks on commercial vessels and the wider US-Iran confrontation. Two UAE-linked oil tankers were recently attacked, while Iran has maintained that it will restrict the reopening of the waterway until its demands are addressed.

For oil traders, the concern is not only the amount of crude directly produced by Iran but the possibility that prolonged disruption around Hormuz could affect supplies from several major Gulf producers. Any sustained reduction in tanker traffic would increase transportation risks and could force buyers to compete for alternative supplies.

The geopolitical premium has therefore returned to



crude markets, pushing prices higher despite a number of factors pointing in the opposite direction.

Demand outlook limits the rally

The oil market is also facing a weaker demand outlook. The International Energy Agency has lowered its forecast for global oil demand in 2026, citing the economic impact of elevated energy prices and continuing uncertainty linked to the Middle East conflict.

That softer outlook has prevented geopolitical tensions from translating into an even sharper rise in prices. Traders are weighing the possibility of supply disruptions against expectations that weaker consumption could eventually ease pressure on the market.

The US inventory picture is another factor limiting the upside. A recent surge in US crude stocks has pointed to ample supplies and provided a counterweight to fears of a prolonged shortage.

India's July exports hit record \$44 bn, deficit widens

AUGUST 14, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): India's merchandise exports rose 19.5% year-on-year to \$44.24 billion in July from \$37.02 billion a year earlier, marking the highest level for the month, commerce ministry data showed on Thursday, Aug 13.

For the April-July period, merchandise exports rose 17% to \$173.78 billion from a year earlier. Merchandise imports grew faster, rising 19.27% to \$292.38 billion. The merchandise trade deficit widened to \$118.6 billion during April-July from \$96.66 billion in the year-earlier period.

Including services, India's exports rose 13.16% to \$316.42 billion during April-July from \$279.63 billion a year earlier. Imports increased 17.28% to \$365.85 billion. This resulted in an overall trade deficit of \$49.43 billion, compared with \$32.32 billion a year earlier.

The latest data for the services sector released by the Reserve Bank of India is for June, while the July services figure is an estimate.

Among major export sectors, engineering goods exports rose to \$46.38 billion during April-July from \$39.24 billion a year earlier. Petroleum product exports increased to \$30.17 billion from \$21.15 billion, while electronic goods exports rose to \$21.11 billion from \$16.16 billion.

Exports of drugs and pharmaceuticals stood at \$10.79 billion, compared with \$10.25 billion a year earlier, while organic and inorganic chemicals exports increased to \$10.69 billion from \$9.43 billion. Gems and jewellery exports rose to \$9.59 billion from \$9.05 billion.

On the import side, petroleum, crude oil and products remained the largest category during April-July, rising to \$78.92 billion from \$64.81 billion a year earlier. Electronic goods imports increased sharply to \$52.82 billion from \$36.59 billion.

Imports of machinery, electrical and non-electrical equipment rose to \$22.77 billion from \$19.44 billion, while gold imports increased to \$15.17 billion from \$11.46 billion.

The US remained India's largest export destination during April-July, with exports rising to \$34.49 billion from \$33.48 billion a year earlier. The UAE followed with \$11.22 billion, while exports to Singapore rose to \$8.11 billion from \$4.11 billion.

China remained India's largest import source, with imports rising to \$52.71 billion from \$40.65 billion. Russia followed with \$34.50 billion, compared with \$21.61 billion a year earlier.

India has set a target of more than doubling total exports to \$2 trillion by FY31 – \$1 trillion each in merchandise shipments and services. The government has asked officials to sharpen focus on micro, small and medium enterprises, farm products, certification and promotion of 'Brand India.'

The central bank has said weak global demand and high logistics costs are headwinds for merchandise exports. Services exports, though, are expected to sustain their momentum as demand for Indian services remains healthy.



Reliance, Rolls-Royce join hands to develop engine for India's AMCA fighter jet

AUGUST 14, 2026

NEW DELHI (TIP): India's push to build a home-grown fighter jet engine has received a major boost. Reliance Industries and Rolls-Royce have announced their strategic intent to work together on an indigenous combat engine for the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme.

The two companies also plan to explore setting up an Aerospace Gas Turbine Complex in India that could become a centre for advanced engine and propulsion technology.

The proposed partnership will bring together Rolls-Royce's expertise in advanced aircraft engines and Reliance Industries' manufacturing, technology and execution capabilities.

The companies said they intend to explore the design, development, manufacturing and delivery of a sovereign combat engine for India's AMCA programme.

The partnership is aimed at creating an end-to-end capability in India, covering engine design and development to manufacturing, testing, production and long-term support.

Anant Ambani, Executive Director, Reliance Industries, said developing critical technologies within India is important for the country's strategic independence.

"India's strategic autonomy requires sovereign capability in critical technologies," Ambani said.

He added that the partnership would combine Rolls-Royce's expertise in advanced propulsion with Reliance's technology, manufacturing scale and



execution capabilities.

"Together, we aim to build an enduring national capability that can make India self-reliant and, over time, globally competitive in advanced propulsion technologies," he said.

As part of the proposed partnership, the companies will explore the formation of a dedicated Aerospace Gas Turbine Complex in India.

The facility is expected to focus on power and propulsion technology and could support capabilities across the complete engine development cycle.

The companies said the proposed complex would help build an Indian capability covering design, development, manufacturing, testing, production and through-life support.

The partnership could also open the door to wider cooperation in defence, civil aerospace and new power and propulsion systems.



BEJAN DARUWALLA AND CHIRAG DARUWALLA

ARIES



Ganesha says this week you will be successful in making new work-related plans. You will establish good relations with big businessmen or officials. The relationships you make will prove to help bring you the pleasure of profit. You will be able to defeat enemies with the help of your friends. Your name will be bright in society, respect will increase. This week, there will be interest in the welfare of others and the work of public welfare. You will get success and fame in the work field. Will be able to complete the task easily. There will be an event at home or at a relative's place, which will allow you to meet your relatives and friends. This week will be encouraging. This week you are about to conquer inauspicious situations. You will defeat your enemies. Will have a good time with the family. A blissful atmosphere will be seen in the family. Stubbornness is seen in your nature, due to which you spoil your work. During this time, you will get a good profit from real estate. Foreign-related work will prove beneficial this week. Family support will be received this week. Foreign travel can also happen. You will be soft-spoken, and you will establish good relations with people. You will have the desire to know about the latest thing in your mind.

TAURUS



Ganesha says this week there will be normal conditions in the workplace. This week will be favorable. You will get the best support and cooperation from colleagues and people sitting in higher positions. Being intelligent, you will get success in the field of work. Will get respect in society. Due to your religious and charitable nature, you will have faith in God and help others. Good news will be received from the children this week. Will get good support from friends and acquaintances. The mind will be happy by meeting the guests. Good relations will be formed with the people holding a high position in the work and along with the attainment of prestige, respect will also be gained in society. Married life is going to be pleasant this week. There will be journeys related to the work sector or religious sector. You will actively participate in charity work. Due to your intelligence and influential personality, you will be able to please the opposition. Behave well with your mother, otherwise, you may have to

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE - AUGUST 17, 2026 TO AUGUST 23, 2026

BY ASTROLOGER CHIRAG DARUWALLA

face trouble. There will be family happiness this week, good time will be spent with them. There will be sweetness in your speech. There will be expected business success. There will be attraction towards work related to the welfare of the people.

GEMINI



Ganesha says this week will be mixed fruitfully. You need to control your anger. Maturity will be seen in your nature and behavior. Married life will be good. There will be sweetness in your speech due to which you can attract others towards you. You may have health problems. You will be able to earn good money with your understanding of business. Some good news will be received this week. There will be victory in the court. You will get respect in job-business. They will be thinking about new business plans. There will also be interaction with people related to the government sector. Traveling abroad will prove beneficial this week. You will get a good amount of money through others. You will be religious and will get opportunities to undertake religious journeys. This week, business will remain normal. Good news will be received this week. Will get good support from friends and family. Faith in God will increase and a good time will be spent in works related to worship and religion. You will get respect as a result of your hard work and tireless efforts. You will have long business trips.

CANCER



Ganesha says to be successful at work this week, hard work will be required. The opposing class will be active in every way, due to which you will feel troubled. You can get an opportunity to visit a pilgrimage this week. There will be a good rapport with the family, especially the brother's good happiness and cooperation will be received. Married life will be pleasant this week, and the happiness and cooperation from the spouse and children will remain perfect. You will get mental peace by worshiping God. Will get opportunities to travel. This week you will get the pleasure of profit in business. Communication of new energy will be seen in the body. This week will be auspicious for you. The mind will be attracted to religious work. You will get opportunities to travel and will develop an interest in devotion to God. Will get good family support, and there will be an atmosphere of happiness in the house. New zeal and enthusiasm will be seen inside you, which will prove to be very necessary and useful for completing the tasks. This week, a blissful atmosphere will be seen in household life. The blessings of elders will remain good for you. Some kind of

auspicious work can be organized in your home or with relatives, due to which the mind will be happy. Will get an opportunity to travel a long distance or take a desired trip.

LEO



Ganesha says you may have to face financial loss this week. You will be able to defeat your opponents in the work area. Your faith in God will increase. You will also take an active part in religious works. You will get good family happiness. You may be a little worried about siblings. This week, there will be an increase in respect in business-business or job. Your relations will be connected with people holding high positions. There will be beneficial results in work related to travel. A good time will be spent with the family members and all possible support will be received from the family members. You will have stomach-related problems. You may be cheated on or betrayed by someone. Your faith in God will increase this week. You will be charitable, which will give you peace of mind. There will be an atmosphere of happiness in married life. You will get good news in the work area. Most of the time this week will be spent traveling. Do not let your company get spoiled, otherwise, you may get stuck in some trouble. This week will be very auspicious for you and good news will be received from all sides. Relations will be established with high-class people. Will get the pleasure of profit in business-business but will feel stressed due to increase in work pressure. Due to the auspicious program in the family, the mind will be happy. Married life will be pleasant, but due to your superstitious nature, sometimes there can be an argument with your spouse. Relationships can be made with people related to politics. This week, there is a situation of profit in the business sector. Good news will continue to prevail for you and you will get good luck. There will be an atmosphere of happiness in married life, good time will be spent with the spouse.

VIRGO



Ganesha says this week you can get opportunities to achieve success in politics and there will be friendships with highly placed people in government service. Due to your charitable nature, you will work for the welfare of others. You will get financial benefits from the government. You will get all the facilities this week. The advice given by you will be useful to others. Your health will generally remain good. This week, good relations will be formed with high-ranking people. Getting any good news regarding the family will create an atmosphere of happiness. You will be the talk of the

town among others because of your talent and dexterity in conversation. This week, due to some kind of event in the family or relatives, you will get the opportunity to meet friends and acquaintances, due to which the mind will be happy. There can be recreational trips, but be careful while traveling, otherwise, losses may have to be incurred. The happiness you get from home and family will be of the normal level. During this time, you will work diligently in the work area, but there will be a feeling of physical exhaustion. There will be good support from senior officers or friends in the work area. There will be no success in business-business this week. Good relations will be established with the people holding high positions. You will get the happiness of the family, it is necessary to change your habits.

LIBRA



Ganesha says this week your relations will be made with influential and rich people. There will be an opportunity to do a lot of recreational travel. Family members will be ready to provide possible help. The advice given by you will be useful to others, which will earn you respect and prestige. You are a believer in God and a self-contemplator. You will defeat the enemies. This week you will be inclined toward religious activities. Happiness and cooperation from the family will be good. Will work for the betterment of others. With your ability and dexterity in conversation, you will be successful in making your impact on others along with social prestige. Enemies will try to trouble you this week. You will be alert towards your work. You will not be able to sleep properly at night due to busy work or mental problems. The happiness of married life will remain at a normal level. There will be curiosity to know about new things. You are always ready to help others. This week, your money will be spent on noble works and works related to religion. You will get all possible cooperation from your friends and colleagues. You will be able to tactfully simplify every task.

SCORPIO



Ganesha says this week, there may be minor complications in life, which you will solve in time. Due to the arrival of relatives in the family, the atmosphere of the house will remain pleasant. There will be possible help of luck. There will be good money-profit in business-business. The condition of wealth will be good. You will be able to beat your opponent. This week all possible cooperation and help will be received from family members and friends. There will be an increase in faith and trust in God. There will be

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BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE : AUGUST 17 TO AUGUST 23

BY ASTROLOGER CHIRAG DARUWALLA

AUGUST 17

Ganesha says that today you have many opportunities to improve your financial condition. Traveling abroad or doing transactions can be beneficial. Property-related disputes can be resolved. Children demanding more attention may bring good news for you. Take good care of yourself. At the end of the year, you are planning a pilgrimage which may give you relaxation and mental peace.

AUGUST 18

Ganesha says you are a great host and love to socialize with people, but sometimes you need to curb your tendencies to be stubborn and wasteful. Foreign travel or transactions can be very beneficial. Some people find a romantic period during the wedding period. You may give priority to real estate transactions, construction projects, and repairs. Any kind of conflict and tension-creating situation should be avoided.

AUGUST 19

Ganesha says that although you are incredibly talented and your friends and colleagues respect you very much, you need to curb your tendencies to be rude, wasteful, and sometimes jealous. People with piles and high blood pressure need to be extra careful about their health. Despite occasional disputes and discord, the marital front seems smooth. You can gain popularity among your friends and social environment due to your creative thinking.

AUGUST 20

Ganesha says you have a very good memory and amazing technical skills, but you need to work on your tendency to be irritable and vindictive sometimes. Many changes can be seen today in the company where you work. You can get a lot of benefits from these, but your daily routine may change. The offers can be attractive for traders looking to make a quick buck. Women who are pregnant should pay more attention to their health. It is important to pay attention to your diet

and the medicines prescribed by your doctor.

AUGUST 21

Ganesha says that today you should exercise financial restraint and avoid spending money on unnecessary luxuries. The closeness between you two may increase and you may respect each other more. For most of you, a trip away seems most likely towards the end of the year. You should not be disappointed by the high expectations of your family members. Also, you can spend some special and romantic moments with your partner.

AUGUST 22

Ganesha says you enjoy being surrounded by beautiful things. Even if you are not an artist, you still like to collect objects with artistic value. There may be opportunities for inappropriate communication with your employer this year. Check thoroughly before handing over your work to your superiors. Although many factors may not be in



your favor, the support and assistance of friends and family members can give you new energy and make things more comfortable than otherwise. Times couldn't be easier than this.

AUGUST 23

Ganesha says you put in a lot of effort, and your dedication and efforts are always appreciated, but you need to curb your tendency to be indecisive, stubborn, and sometimes lazy. This year your employer and you may become close relatives. As a result, you can play an important role as an ambassador for the company. You may be the center of attraction at a social function. You may meet new people and develop important relationships. Even if you appear to be in good health, it is still recommended that you take preventive medications.

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successful journeys. You will get good news this week. You will have a good time with familiar people. You will take part in religious work and work related to charity. Government work will be completed without any hindrance. Luck is going to be in good favor this week. There will be a business trip and there will be good profit in business. This week, with the help of your cleverness and intelligence, you will achieve success in business. You will get the best happiness for your subordinates. Will have a good time with the family. Will participate in the works of religion with full devotion.



Sagittarius

SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha says this week you will become the reason for discussion among people and will be famous in society. Will be successful in keeping the opposing class happy. Sweet relations will be formed with people who are richer and higher in position than themselves. The advice given by you will be useful to others. You will help others progress. Will make a significant contribution to any charitable or public interest work. There will be an increase in respect and prestige in society. You can get benefits in technical work. You may have estrangement from someone because of your life partner. It is a difficult time for the women of your house. This week, you will be successful in everything with your cleverness, and you will get positive results in the work area. There will be an increase in respect. New enthusiasm and enthusiasm will be seen in the mind. You will get the best happiness from the family. Your health will remain good this week. Good relations will be established with eminent people in society and respect will increase. Will have a good time with

friends. Success will be achieved by respecting elders. You will participate in auspicious work, there will be happiness in your nature. This week there will be monotony in married life, there will be tension between the wife over something. You will be successful in business based on your ability. Family happiness is going to be good.



Capricorn

CAPRICORN

Ganesha says you will get many opportunities for recreational travel. You will do noble deeds and you will also work for the welfare of others. New enthusiasm and enthusiasm will be seen in your mind this week, which will be good for you. It will be a good week to do religious work. Family happiness will be happy. This week, keep restraint on your speech, otherwise, you may have to face an adverse situation. There will be business trips by you. Will get good happiness of brothers. Due to the movement of relatives in the house, the atmosphere of the house will remain pleasant. Will be fortunate to meet an acquaintance after a long time, which will bring back memories of the old days. There can be estrangement between husband and wife over some small matter, married life will be affected. This week, along with work, a happy atmosphere will be seen in your family as well. The mind will be happy. Rights will increase. The mind will be attracted to religious tendencies. This week will be auspicious and beneficial for you. You will get success in the field of work as well as good monetary gain. Good relations will be established with people holding high positions in the work area. There will be successful business-related journeys. During this time, you will get good happiness from children.



Aquarius

AQUARIUS

Ganesha says this week there will be success in defeating the opposing class. You will be successful in getting your work done by making proper use of your influence and your tact on the subordinates. Success will be achieved in the field of education and competition. All possible cooperation will be received from family members. There will be an increase in the happiness of married life. Your religious nature will increase this week. You will get all possible help from luck. Relations with big people will be connected. Business-business will progress. Will worship God for mental peace this week. There will be profit from doing ancestral business. There will be an increase in wealth. There will be good relations with the mother. There will be good behavior with friends and relatives and a lot of cooperation will also be received from them. There will be trips full of entertainment, due to which new energy will be introduced into the body. You can travel abroad this week. This week you will get the desired success in business. Economic conditions will remain good. Some such work will be done by you, due to which the name of the family can be glorified and respect and prestige will increase in society. There will be success in government work. If you are thinking of doing new work then luck will support you. The conditions of happiness will remain in the happiness received from the family. There will be good cooperation and support from parents.



Pisces

PISCES

Ganesha says you will get good company from your loved ones this week. Being intelligent, you will get good benefits in the field

of work. You are a happy-hearted person. Your intellectual power will be good. Students will study diligently. You are the one who thinks deeply about any work. Will be able to win over the opponents this week. Some kind of auspicious program will be held in the family or relatives, in which there will be an opportunity to participate and meet loved ones. Marital happiness will remain good. You will get opportunities for business trips. This week is very good for religious work. There will also be opportunities to travel. There will be auspicious work in the family. With your cleverness, you will be successful in your work. Sweetness will be seen in married life. The atmosphere of the family will be pleasant. Do not trust anyone this week, otherwise, you may get cheated. Married life will be spent happily, and good news will be received from the spouse and children. Expected success will be achieved in business and the happiness of profit will remain. Good news will be received in matters related to money and fruitful results will be obtained in journeys.

AUTHOR BIO

Chirag Daruwalla is the best astrologer and one of the most famous names in the astrology world.

He has more than 18 years of experience. Readers may seek his advice related to career, health, finance, business, money, love and marriage. He has complete knowledge, solutions, and guidance to all the problems related to life. Visit his website chiragdaruwalla.com. He is available for consultations on WhatsApp number +91 8141566266 or by email: info@chiragdaruwalla.com

Sikh History This Week

AUGUST 14 TO AUGUST 20

August 14

1634 Battle of Amritsar took place between Mughals and Sikhs, led by Guru Hargobind Ji.

1772 Sikh forces had crossed Indus and plundered Peshawar city. On this day Ahmad Shah died.

1892 Khalsa College Council established at Amritsar.

1923 Babbars appeal to the people to swell their ranks. This appeal was distributed through "Babbar Akali Doaba" newspaper.

1930 Civil disobedience movement initiated in the Punjab.

1949 Sardar Kapur Singh I.C.S was suspended by government of Gopi Chand Bhargav on frivolous charges. His real crime was being a committed Sikh.

1984 Surinder Singh Sodhi, a right-hand man of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was killed.

15th August

1923 The case of the Babbars was initiated.

1924 10th Shahidhi Jatha of 500 Akalis, led by Sardar Visakha Singh Daftur (Lahore), courted arrest on reaching Jaito.



1947 Punjab was divided into East and West Punjab. A major segment of the Sikh community was uprooted from their ancestral land and forced to migrate to India. This day marks the Independence day for India. Though citizens of India, the Sikh community encountered organized and pre-meditated killings of their members, lootings of all their worldly possessions, and general human suffering and deprivation that is unparalleled in the history of humankind. Over two lakh Sikhs gave their lives in search of freedom while being forcibly migrated to East Punjab. However, until today the independence promise remains unfulfilled for the Sikh community. The community itself continues to persist in petty internal squibbled, allow others to dictate terms, and is unable to establish its own sovereign state where Sikhs may prosper without any restriction. More than the lost lives, dearer than homes and lands left behind, was the Holy Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak Dev. Numerous other historical gurudwaras were also left behind with their fates unknown. For more information refer to History section on page 29 of the September 1994, Volume 42:9, No. 489, issue of The Sikh Review.

1951 The Times of India reported that the Sikhs were opposed to Hindu-Congress because each and every demand of the Sikhs was opposed by the Congress.

1960 Sikhs observe Indian independence day as Ghulami (Slavery) day.

1960 Master Tara Singh begins fast unto death.

Master Tara Singh begins fast unto death to protest against the discriminatory attitude of the government in not forming a Punjabi Speaking State demanded by the Sikhs although the rest of India had been



reorganised on linguistic basis. On Aug. 28th, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, made a statement in the Indian Parliament declaring:

1969 Shaheed Darshan Singh Pheruman launched his fast until death to force resolution of Punjab demands from Indian central government.

1980 Dal Khalsa hoisted Khalistan flag throughout the Sikh Homeland.

16th August



1604 SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB first installed in Sri Harmandir Sahib

The Holy Sri Guru GRANTH SAHIB was ceremonially installed in Sri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar. Guru Arjan, shortly after Akbar's visit, early in 1599, began the project of compilation of Adi Granth. Bhai Gurdas was appointed amanuensis. Guru Arjan took five years to complete the project. Adi Granth was ready in 1604 when it was installed in Sri Harimandir Sahib. Baba Buddha Ji was appointed the first priest. Today is the actual date of the event, however, it is observed on a different date by Guru Khalsa Panth.

1940 Gandhi wrote a nasty letter to Master Tara Singh. It contained some of his pre-conceived notions about Sikhs and the Akali movement. It was also influenced by the Punjab Congress's solid support of Subash Chandra Bose for the Presidentship of the Congress vis a vis Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Gandhi's nominee.

17th August

1931 The foundation stone was laid for Sri Guru Ram Das Sarai.

1947 Radcliffe Award decided the boundary between Pakistan and the Sikh Homeland.

1994 Principal Satbir Singh, a renowned scholar of GurSikhism passed away in Patiala.

18th August

1887 Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhwalia, the chief of Sri Guru Singh Sabha movement, and a chief proponent of Khalsa Raj, passed away. SINGH SABHA, a reform group of Amritdhari GurSikhs who

objectively sought the eradication of the wrong practices in re-establishing the true traditions of GurSikhism. Their initial efforts for religious propagation and education resulted in the establishment of Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Amritsar, in 1872. Sardar Thakur Singh Sandawalaia was the first chief, while the temporary offices and gathering facilities were organized at Guru Ka Bagh. The objectives of Singh Sabha, Amritsar, were to inculcate the principles of Sikh religion as preached by the Sikh Gurus among the Sikhs with a view to restoring Sikhism to its pristine purity, preach the principles of Sikh religion by word of mouth, by publication of historical and religious books, and through magazines and newspapers, encourage propagation of Punjabi, reclaim apostates and attract the sympathies of those highly placed in public administration to the educational progress of the Sikhs. The Singh Sabha was to shun politics.

1922 Karam Singh of Jhingar, Master Dalip Singh of Gossal and Kishan Singh Gargaj visit Montgomery jail to meet Master Mota Singh.

20th August

1922 Babbars call to plunder treasuries through the Babbar Akali Doaba newspaper.

1942 Protection of Sikh interests again came up in British mind. British, while preparing to leave Indian subcontinent were conscious of the fact that the Sikhs have a rightful claim to a Sikh State but did not want to create one. Mr. Amery, Secretary of State, in his letter to Viceroy linked the Sikh concern for a degree of autonomy sufficient to protect them from Muslim domination in the context of Pakistan scheme and sought to explore the various possibilities they suggest in advance of any further constitutional discussions. He came to the conclusion that a separate Sikhdom is really unworkable without extensive transfer of population, and wanted the reform department to work out contingency plans in complete secrecy.

1944 All Party Sikh Conference passed resolution for the creation of an independent Sikh state.

1947 PEPSU established through a combination of eight regions.



1980 Harchand Singh Longowal was elected President of the Shiromani Akali Dal. gently spoken and mild-mannered, he was assisted by a well-informed and sharp-witted writer and political commentator, of exactly his own age, Rajinder Singh, Editor of Kuami Ekta. Harchand Singh Longowal had chosen him to be his team-mate as one of the general secretaries of the party.

1982 Sardar Manjit Singh alias Musibat Singh was killed at Rajasansi airport, Amritsar. He was shot at a point blank range by D.S.P. Bachan Singh when Manjeet Singh surrendered and came out of the plane. Subsequently, D.S.P. Bachan Singh with all the members of his family was killed except his daughter.

1982 Gurmit Singh's nails pulled out and hands burnt by Indian Police. Gurmit Singh of the village Dhulkot (Ludhiana) was arrested on by the police.

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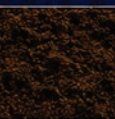
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Hariyali Teej: When devotion blooms with the monsoon



When the first showers of the monsoon transform the earth into a carpet of green, India's festive calendar comes alive with Hariyali Teej. Celebrated on the Tritiya, or third day, of the bright fortnight of the Hindu month of Shravana, the festival is a vibrant expression of devotion, marital harmony, feminine strength and the renewal of nature. The word Hariyali means greenery, reflecting the lush landscape that surrounds the festival and the season of rain in which it is observed.

Observed with particular enthusiasm in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and other parts of North India, Hariyali Teej brings together worship and celebration. Women dress in green, decorate their hands with mehendi, adorn themselves with bangles and jewellery, sing traditional songs and gather around flower-decked swings. At its heart, however, is a deeply spiritual story-the reunion of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati.

The Sacred Union of Shiva and Parvati

Hariyali Teej is dedicated to Shiva and Parvati and celebrates their divine union. In Hindu tradition, Goddess Parvati represents Shakti, the feminine cosmic power, while Shiva represents consciousness. Their union is therefore understood not merely as a marriage but as a profound symbol of the coming together of complementary cosmic forces.

The popular legend associated with Teej tells of Parvati's extraordinary determination to attain Shiva as her husband. Shiva, immersed in ascetic meditation, initially remained detached from worldly relationships. Parvati, however, remained steadfast in her devotion and undertook intense penance to win his acceptance.

According to a widely circulated version of the legend, Parvati's penance continued through many births and was marked by extraordinary perseverance and sacrifice. Eventually, Shiva recognised the depth of her devotion and accepted her as his consort. Their union came to symbolise the triumph of steadfast love and spiritual determination.

The story gives Hariyali Teej its deeper spiritual message: devotion is not merely an act of ritual but a quality of the heart that requires patience, faith and perseverance.

Why the Festival Is Celebrated in Sawan

The timing of Hariyali Teej is significant. It arrives during Shravana, popularly known as Sawan, one of the most sacred months in the Hindu calendar and a period strongly associated with the worship of Lord Shiva. The monsoon changes the visual character of the Indian landscape during this period. Dry fields become green, rivers and ponds fill with rainwater, trees put out fresh leaves and the air carries the fragrance of wet earth. Hariyali Teej mirrors this transformation, making nature itself part of the festival.

Green, therefore, becomes the defining colour. Green clothing, bangles and decorations symbolise fertility, growth, prosperity, renewal and the vitality of nature. The color also connects the spiritual celebration with the abundance brought by the rains.

The Ritual of Fasting

Fasting is among the most important observances associated with Hariyali Teej. Traditionally, married women undertake the fast while praying for the well-being, longevity and happiness of their husbands. Unmarried women may also observe Teej as a prayer for a suitable life partner and a harmonious married life.

Practices surrounding the fast vary between families and regions. Some devotees observe a strict fast, while others follow modified forms of fasting according to their family traditions and circumstances.

The spiritual purpose of the fast goes beyond abstaining from food. It is viewed as an act of discipline, devotion and surrender. By turning attention away from physical needs, devotees seek to cultivate inner strength and focus their minds on the divine.

At the same time, traditional observances should be approached with awareness of individual health needs; fasting need not be understood as a test of physical endurance.

Worship of Shiva and Parvati

On the festival day, women prepare a sacred space for the worship of Shiva and Parvati. Idols or images of the divine couple are decorated with flowers, vermilion, sacred offerings and traditional ornaments.

Prayers are offered to Goddess Parvati, particularly in her form as a devoted wife and embodiment of Shakti. Shiva is worshipped alongside her, reinforcing the symbolism of companionship and balance.

Offerings and the precise sequence of rituals differ according to regional and family traditions. In many households, the puja is accompanied by the recitation or listening of the Teej vrat story, followed by prayers for marital harmony, prosperity and family well-being.

The ritual thus turns the household into a sacred space where devotion and domestic life come together.

Green Sarees, Mehendi and Solah Shringar

One of the most recognisable aspects of Hariyali Teej is the traditional adornment of women. Green sarees,

lehengas, bangles and other ornaments fill the festive landscape with colour.

Women often decorate their hands and feet with mehendi, with intricate floral, paisley and traditional motifs. Jewellery and solah shringar-the traditional sixteen forms of adornment associated with married women-are also an important part of the celebration.

These practices are not merely about appearance. In the cultural imagination of Teej, adornment represents joy, auspiciousness, femininity and the celebration of married life.

The festive preparations also provide an opportunity for women to come together; exchange gifts, share songs and strengthen bonds of friendship and family.

The Joy of the Swing

Few images capture Hariyali Teej as beautifully as a decorated swing hanging from a tree.

During the monsoon, swings are traditionally decorated with flowers and leaves, and women gather to take turns riding them while singing Teej songs. The practice carries both a festive and seasonal significance. The swing becomes a symbol of freedom, happiness and the playful spirit of the rains.

Traditional folk songs performed during Teej often speak of love, longing, marriage, the arrival of the monsoon and the emotions associated with a woman's relationship with her maternal and marital homes.

In this way, music gives expression to emotions that may otherwise remain unspoken. Teej songs preserve memories, regional traditions and women's voices across generations.

The Tradition of Sindhara

Another important custom associated with Hariyali Teej is Sindhara. Traditionally, a married woman's parents send a collection of gifts to their daughter and her in-laws.

The gifts may include sweets such as ghewar, mehendi, bangles, cosmetics, clothes and other items associated with the festival. Because of this tradition, Hariyali Teej is also known in some regions as Sindhara Teej.

The practice has an emotional significance beyond the gifts themselves. It represents the continuing affection between a married daughter and her parental home. Teej therefore becomes a moment when family bonds are renewed and daughters are reminded that the emotional connection with their maternal families continues even after marriage.

A Celebration of Feminine Strength

At its spiritual core, the story of Hariyali Teej is the story of Parvati's determination. She is not portrayed simply as a passive recipient of divine grace; she actively chooses her path, undertakes penance and remains unwavering in her purpose.

This makes the festival especially significant as a celebration of feminine strength.

Parvati's story can be understood as a reminder of the power of perseverance-the ability to remain committed to one's values despite difficulty. Her eventual union with Shiva represents not only marital fulfilment but also the culmination of spiritual discipline.

For generations, the festival has provided women with a cultural space for prayer, community, celebration and self-expression.

Nature as Part of the Sacred

Hariyali Teej also reflects the intimate relationship between Indian spiritual traditions and nature.

The festival arrives when the monsoon breathes new life into the landscape. Trees become greener, fields begin to flourish and the rhythms of rural life change with the rains. The celebration of greenery is therefore also a celebration of renewal.

The decorated swings, floral arrangements, green clothing and songs about rain all bring the natural world into the cultural experience of the festival.

In this sense, Hariyali Teej is not only a festival of Shiva and Parvati; it is also a celebration of the earth awakening after the heat of summer.

Beyond Ritual: The Meaning of Teej Today

Like many Indian festivals, Hariyali Teej has evolved while retaining its traditional core. What was once largely observed within families and communities is today also celebrated through public gatherings, cultural programmes, fairs, competitions and social events.

Yet its fundamental message remains relevant. The festival speaks of devotion without losing joy, tradition without abandoning celebration and marriage as a relationship based on companionship, commitment and mutual well-being.

For many devotees, the fast and puja are expressions of faith. For others, the festival is equally an occasion to reconnect with family, revisit ancestral customs and celebrate the beauty of the monsoon.

Western Ghats: Where the hills meet the wild

Stretching along India's western flank, the Western Ghats are a spectacular tapestry of mist-covered mountains, dense forests, cascading waterfalls, tea and coffee plantations, winding trails and wildlife-rich landscapes. Recognised as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, the region offers an extraordinary range of experiences—from quiet hill retreats and plantation stays to rainforest adventures and adrenaline-filled river rafting. For travellers looking to escape the bustle of city life without venturing too far, the Western Ghats offer some of the country's most rewarding weekend destinations. Here are six places where nature, adventure and tranquillity come together.

Agumbe, Shimoga

Located in the Shimoga district of Karnataka, Agumbe is a small village often referred to as the "Cherrapunji of South India". This biodiversity-rich region has the highest rainfall in south India and the second-highest annual rainfall in India. Agumbe is an enriching experience as this hill station is blessed with picturesque beauty and trekking trails. It is one of the last surviving lowland rainforests. Agumbe served as the setting for India's very famous fictional town Malgudi in the TV serial Malgudi Days.

It is home to some rare species of medicinal plants like Myristica, Listsaea, Garcinia, Diospyros, Eugenia and more, hence it got the nickname "Hasiru Honnu" which means green is gold. Being home to an extensive rainforest and the wide variety of flora and fauna, Agumbe houses the Agumbe Rainforest Research Station. This is India's oldest weather station which exclusively monitors any changes made in the rainforest areas. Interestingly, Agumbe is also called as the "Cobra Capital" because of the high number of Cobras found here. Agumbe provides great options for trekking, beckoning the adventure enthusiasts to visit this offbeat destination hidden in the lap of nature.

Dandeli

Located on the Western Ghats of Uttara Karnataka, Dandeli is bestowed with the lush green forests and lies on the banks of the Kali river. Known for its many fantastic adventure opportunities, Dandeli is a hub for river rafting on river kali. Adventure seekers have many options such as mountain biking, trekking, cycling, kayaking and canoeing. The Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary is another exciting element that Dandeli has to offer. This is perfect for nature lovers too as they can spot Bisons and Black Panthers here as well as be amidst beautiful flora as well.

Dandeli has famous attractions here like the Kavla Caves, Ulavi Temple, Satholi Falls and the famous Sykes Point which gives tourists a breathtaking view of Dandeli. Camping is a popular activity here and there are plenty of operators here that provide fantastic services and memorable experiences to the guests.

Coonoor

One of the three beautiful Nilgiri hill stations, Coonoor is the second largest hill station of the Western Ghats. It is situated at an altitude of 1930 meters and just 19 km



from Ooty. With slopes of tea plantations, dotted with many attractions and blessed with chilly weather throughout the year, this place is a perfect summer retreat.

Coonoor is a delightful location to have a panoramic view of the Nilgiri Hills and Catherine Falls. It is a dreamy destination for its rich greenery, the manicured hills, the Colonial culture and amazing sceneries. Coonoor also has some heritage homes and guesthouses admits the hills that's perfect for a vacation or a staycation.

Yercaud

Nestled in the Shivaroy Hills of Tamil Nadu, Yercaud is a hill station in the Eastern Ghats steeped in abundant greenery. Commonly called 'Ooty of the Poor', this region has a history dating back to the time of the British. Located at an altitude of 4970 feet, Yercaud is known for its vast expanses of coffee plantations and great weather.

Yercaud lake is the main point of attraction of the region. One of the many highlights is the summer festival that takes place in May. It is dedicated to Lord Servarayan, the supreme god of the ranges and gives visitors a glimpse into the rich heritage of this region.

Kalpetta

Kalpetta is a quaint town with a backdrop of majestic hills lurking in the shadows, lush green surroundings, fresh air and picturesque beauty. Housed in the Wayanad District of Kerala, at a height of 780 m above the sea level, Kalpetta is a perfect place for nature lovers as well as honeymooners. Encompassed with a mild fragrance of coffee and rustic lanes, the town is blessed with beautiful nature with scenic landscapes. It is also one of the major trading centres in Wayanad. Dotted with ancient temples, Kalpetta has a stronghold on Jain communities with over 500 settlements in and around the region. Blessed with all the necessary elements of beauty, nature and charming romanticism, this sleepy town is a must on your Kerala itinerary.

Idukki

Idukki, a landlocked district of Kerala,



is one of the most nature-rich areas in Kerala with more than half of the area covered with forest. This rugged hill resort is known for its wildlife sanctuaries, beautiful bungalows, tea factories, rubber plantations and forests.

Idukki's speciality lies in 650 feet long and 550 feet high arch dam across the

Kuravan Kurathi mountain, which is the largest in the country. Anamudi, which is the highest peak in India, south of the Himalayas, is also located in Idukki. Idukki is one of the districts in the state that has abundant scope for promotion of eco-tourism if proper infrastructure and promotional activities are provided.

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

PM Modi Lays Out Roadmap For 'Viksit...

For the occasion, Modi continued what has become a distinctive Independence Day tradition, wearing a striking red tie-and-dye turban, associated with the textile traditions of Rajasthan and Gujarat, along with a tricolor-inspired pocket square.

The morning began with the traditional ceremonial reception and Guard of Honour before the Prime Minister unfurled the National Flag at the Red Fort. The unfurling of the Tricolor was accompanied by the ceremonial 21-gun salute, while Indian Air Force helicopters showered flower petals over the venue.

This year's ceremony, however, carried special historical symbolism.

For the first time as part of the Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort, "Vande Mataram" was rendered from the ramparts, marking the continuing commemoration of 150 years of India's National Song. The government had designated the anniversary of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's celebrated composition as a central theme of the national celebration.

The patriotic invocation continued throughout the ceremony. Approximately 2,500 NCC cadets and My Bharat volunteers were positioned at Gyanpath, with the day's arrangements designed around the Vande Mataram and Viksit Bharat themes.

Modi himself invoked the song's emotional place in India's national consciousness, declaring that "every heart is beating with the rhythm of Vande Mataram."

At the beginning of his address, the Prime Minister paid homage to the generations of freedom fighters whose sacrifices brought nearly two centuries of colonial domination to an end.

Their courage and sacrifice, Modi said, remained an inspiration for the country's present generation as it undertakes another national mission-not now the struggle to win freedom, but the effort to build a developed India by the centenary of Independence.

That connection between the sacrifices of the past and the ambitions of the future ran through much of the address.

The freedom generation had given India political independence; Modi's message to today's generation was that it now carried the responsibility of giving that independence its fullest economic, technological and social expression.

The road to Viksit Bharat

The centerpiece of the Prime Minister's speech was his government's long-term national objective of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Modi presented the coming 21 years as a period in which India must accelerate development, strengthen domestic capabilities and reduce strategic dependence on other countries. He placed particular emphasis on self-reliance, arguing that India's future economic strength would depend not simply upon higher growth but upon its ability to build capabilities in strategic sectors. Among the areas he highlighted were critical minerals, energy and semiconductor chips-sectors increasingly important not only to economic competitiveness but also to national security and technological sovereignty.

The message was unmistakable: India's ambition to become a developed country cannot rest solely upon the size of its economy. It must be accompanied by technological depth, industrial capability and greater resilience in strategic supply chains.

Youth at the center of the 2047 mission

The official Independence Day theme placed Yuva Shakti-Youth Power- at the heart of the Viksit Bharat project.

That emphasis reflected a demographic reality as much as a political message. The generation that will inherit India at 100 is already being educated, trained and employed today. For Modi, therefore, the 2047 objective is inseparable from the ambitions, skills and energies of young Indians.

The Prime Minister portrayed India's approximately 140 crore people-and particularly its young citizens-as the force capable of carrying the country toward new levels of development.

His message was essentially one of national scale: a

country of India's population, entrepreneurial energy and technological aspirations must think beyond incremental progress and set goals commensurate with its potential.

From 'Fragile Five' to a more confident economy

Modi also returned to the economic comparison that has figured prominently in his government's political narrative-the contrast between the India his government inherited in 2014 and the India it says exists today.

He recalled the period when India was counted among the so-called "Fragile Five" emerging economies, arguing that the country had since strengthened its economic foundations and considerably accelerated development.

The characterization inevitably belongs within the larger political debate over India's economic performance. The government points to infrastructure expansion, digitization, financial inclusion, manufacturing, investment and India's increased global economic weight as evidence of transformation, while critics continue to raise questions about employment, inequality, household pressures and the distribution of the benefits of growth.

But from the Red Fort, Modi's emphasis was firmly on confidence: India, he argued, should no longer think of itself as a country condemned to follow technological and economic transformations created elsewhere.

His 2047 prescription was for an India increasingly capable of creating, producing and competing on its own strength.

Solidarity with flood-affected families

The sweep of the Prime Minister's address from past achievement to future ambition was interrupted by acknowledgement of a painful present reality.

Modi expressed solidarity with families affected by recent floods and assured those facing loss and displacement of government support and assistance in rehabilitation. The reference brought a human dimension to a speech otherwise dominated by national goals and economic transformation-an acknowledgment that the measure of development must ultimately include the country's capacity to stand beside citizens in moments of calamity. The audience assembled at the Red Fort was itself intended to symbolize the government's conception of popular participation in India's development journey.

Approximately 5,000 special guests from different parts of the country were invited to witness the celebrations. They represented diverse walks of life, including women entrepreneurs, sanitation workers, street vendors, farmers, innovators, start-up founders and young achievers. More than 1,500 invitees from States and Union Territories were expected in traditional attire, creating a vivid representation of India's cultural diversity.

The choice of guests reflected an effort to move the national ceremony beyond political and official elites and give visible representation to citizens whom the government identifies as participants in India's development story.

From the memory of freedom to the responsibility of 2047 If one theme connected the different strands of Modi's 13th Red Fort address, it was the idea that India's 80th Independence Day should be regarded not merely as another anniversary, but as a milestone on the road toward 2047.

The Prime Minister looked backward to the sacrifices that won freedom but devoted much of his attention to what the present generation must do with that inheritance.

Vande Mataram provided the historical and emotional bridge. Yuva Shakti represented the generation being asked to carry the responsibility forward. And Viksit Bharat@2047 supplied the destination.

Whether India can fulfill that extraordinarily ambitious promise will depend on much more than declarations from the Red Fort. It will require sustained economic growth, employment for its young population, improvements in education and health, technological innovation, stronger institutions, social cohesion and the ability to ensure that development reaches citizens across regions and economic classes.

But on India's 80th Independence Day, Modi sought to leave the country with a message of confidence rather

than hesitation: that the India approaching the centenary of its freedom should aspire not merely to become richer, but stronger, more self-reliant, technologically capable and fully developed.

From the ramparts from which India's prime ministers have addressed the nation since the dawn of Independence, the horizon was fixed firmly on 2047.

And the generation being summoned to reach it was India's youth.

Trump Rallies For Blakeman, Celebrates...

largest reduction in violent crime in American history in 2025.

He said the country recorded more than 3,100 fewer murders than before he took office and claimed there were also 10,000 fewer rapes and roughly 1 million fewer assaults, robberies, burglaries and thefts.

Trump said preliminary 2026 data showed robberies had fallen another 20 percent and murders another 23 percent.

"According to the latest data, crime has continued to plummet under our leadership in 2026, with robberies down another 20 percent and murders down another 23 percent," Trump said. "Together, we're showing what is possible when you finally have a president in the White House who supports our police, who lets you do your job and who always backs the blue."

FBI Director Kash Patel, who grew up in Nassau County, previewed those figures shortly before Trump took the stage. Patel credited Trump with backing and funding police and said the administration was seeing historic results, including declines in homicide and drug overdose deaths and the apprehension of violent fugitives around the world.

"President Trump, thank you for backing law enforcement. Thank you for funding law enforcement. Thank you for loving law enforcement," Patel said.

Trump repeatedly praised Nassau police, called Blakeman a political "winner" and cited Nassau County's ranking as the safest county in the country.

"Nassau County has been rated the number one safest county in the United States of America," Trump said. "That's not bad."

Blakeman, who spoke before Trump, said Nassau has what he called the most comprehensive agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the country and said the partnership resulted in the removal of 2,000 migrants with criminal records in one year. "In one year, we removed 2,000 illegal migrants with criminal records ranging from attempted murder, rape, murder, drug dealing," Blakeman said.

Blakeman said the county accomplished those removals without conducting immigration raids at churches, daycare centers, schools or hospitals because local officials were working directly with federal law enforcement.

"We were able to do it in an orderly way, but they say that we're cruel," Blakeman said.

Trump credited Blakeman's cooperation with federal authorities with helping Nassau maintain its public-safety record. "I want to thank Bruce Blakeman for working closely with federal law enforcement to remove more than 2,000 migrant criminals from Nassau County," Trump said. "He removed 2,000 absolute total criminals. That's why your records are so good. That's why you're number one in the whole country."

The president's endorsement of Blakeman was part of a broader attack on Gov. Kathy Hochul and New York Democrats.

"Nowhere is the communist attack on American society more clear than here in New York State," Trump said. Trump argued that cashless bail allows repeat offenders back onto the streets and portrayed sanctuary policies as shielding dangerous criminals.

"I love this place, but it gets harder to love. It really does," Trump said of New York. "But if you think, it really started with the no-cash bail."

Trump accused the Biden administration of allowing violent criminals into the country through an "open border," said sanctuary jurisdictions were one of the biggest obstacles facing federal law enforcement and claimed his administration had arrested 1.2 million criminals nationwide while increasing federal criminal prosecutions by more than 50 percent.

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and every citizen is equal.

*Diverse in faith.
United in spirit.
One India, Indivisible.*

Sare Jahan se achha HindostaN hamara
Hum bulbulen hai iski yeh gulistan hamara

Zafar Iqbal

History This Week AUG 14-20

AUGUST 14



August 14, 1935 - President Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act establishing the system which guarantees pensions to those who retire at age 65. The Social Security system also aids states in providing financial aid to dependent children, the blind and others, as well as administering a system of unemployment insurance.

August 14, 1941 - After three days of secret meetings aboard warships off the coast of Newfoundland, the Atlantic Charter was issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The Charter, a foundation stone for the later establishment of the United Nations, set forth eight goals for the nations of the world, including; the renunciation of all aggression, right to self-government, access to raw materials, freedom from want and fear, freedom of the seas, and disarmament of aggressor nations. By September, fifteen anti-Axis nations signed the Charter.

August 14, 1945 - Following the two Atomic Bomb drops and believing that continuation of the war would only result in further loss of Japanese lives, delegates of Emperor Hirohito accepted Allied surrender terms originally issued at Potsdam on July 26, 1945, with the exception that the Japanese Emperor's sovereignty would be maintained. Japanese Emperor Hirohito, who had never spoken on radio, then recorded an announcement admitting Japan's surrender, without actually using the word. The announcement was broadcast via radio to the Japanese people at noon the next day. The formal surrender ceremony occurred later, on September 2, 1945, on board the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

August 14, 1945 - V-J Day, commemorating President Truman's announcement that Japan had surrendered to the Allies.

AUGUST 15

August 15, 1969 - Woodstock began in a field near Yasgur's Farm at Bethel, New York. The three-day concert featured 24 rock bands and drew a crowd of more than 300,000 young people. The event came to symbolize the counter-culture movement of the 1960's.

Birthday - French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) was born on the island of Corsica. Originally an officer in King Louis' Army, he rose to become Emperor amid the political chaos that followed the French Revolution. He built a half-million strong Grand Army which



utilized newly invented modern tactics and improvisation in battle to sweep across Europe and acquire an empire for France. However, after defeats in Russia and later by the British, he went into exile on the island of St. Helena off the coast of Africa. On May 5, 1821, he died alone on the tiny island abandoned by everyone.

AUGUST 16

August 16, 1777 - During the American Revolutionary War, the Battle of Bennington, Vermont, occurred as militiamen from Vermont, aided by Massachusetts troops, wiped out a detachment of 800 German-Hessians sent by British General Burgoyne to seize horses.

August 16, 1780 - The Battle of Camden in South Carolina occurred during the American Revolutionary War. The battle was a big defeat for the Americans as forces under General Gates were defeated by troops of British General Charles Cornwallis, resulting in 900 Americans killed and 1,000 captured.

August 16, 1896 - Gold was discovered in Rabbit Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River in Alaska, resulting in the Great Klondike Gold Rush.



August 16, 1977 - Elvis Presley was pronounced dead at the Memphis Baptist Hospital at 3:30 p.m., at age 42.

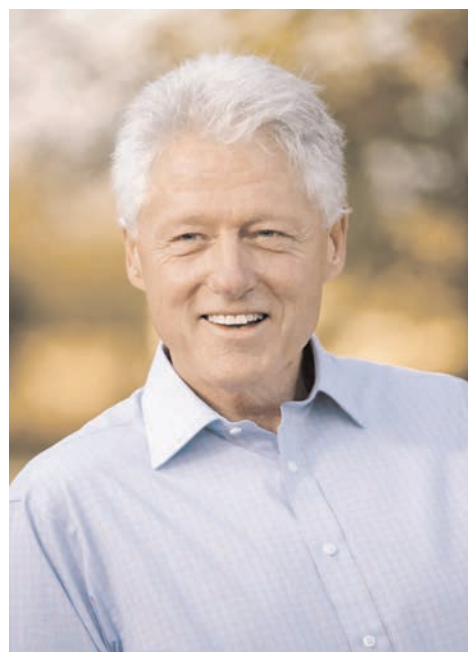
Birthday - T.E. Lawrence 'of Arabia' (1888-1935) was born in Tremadoc, North Wales. He led an Arab revolt against the Turks during World War I and served as a spy for the British. He was killed in a motorcycle accident at Dorset, England, on May 19, 1935.

Birthday - Israeli leader Menachem Begin (1913-1992) was born in Brest-Litovsk, Poland. He fought for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine in the 1940's, serving as the leader of a militant Zionist group. In 1977, he became Prime Minister of Israel, and is best known for signing the 1979 Camp David Peace Accord between Israel and Egypt with President Jimmy Carter and President Anwar el Sadat of Egypt.

AUGUST 17

August 17, 1943 - During World War II in Europe, the Allies completed the conquest of the island of Sicily after just 38 days. This gave the Allies control of the Mediterranean and also led to the downfall of Benito Mussolini and Italy's eventual withdrawal from the war. However, the Germans managed to evacuate 39,569 troops, 47 tanks, 94 heavy guns, over 9,000 vehicles and 2,000 tons of ammunition back to the Italian mainland from Sicily.

August 17, 1978 - The first transatlantic balloon trip was completed by three Americans; Max Anderson, Ben Abruzzo, and Larry Newman, all from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Starting from Maine on August 11th, they traveled in Double Eagle II over 3,000 miles in 137 hours, landing about 60 miles west of Paris.



August 17, 1998 - Bill Clinton became the first sitting President to give testimony before a grand jury in which he, the President, was the focus of the investigation. This resulted from a sweeping investigation of the President by Independent Counsel Ken Starr as well as a private lawsuit concerning alleged sexual harassment by Clinton before he became President. In the evening, President Clinton appeared on national television and gave a speech admitting he had engaged in an improper relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. The admission occurred several months after a much publicized denial.

Birthday - American frontiersman Davy Crockett (1786-1836) was born in Hawkins County, Tennessee. He was a farmer, scout and politician who perished at age 49 during the final heroic defense of the Alamo in Texas.

AUGUST 18

August 18, 1920 - The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified,

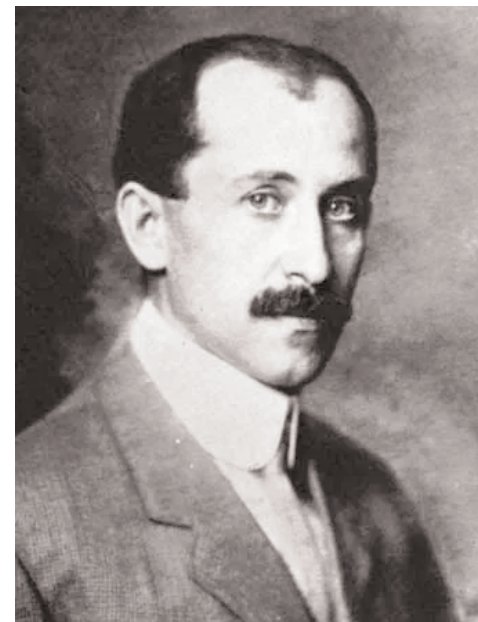
granting women the right to vote.

Birthday - American explorer Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809) was born near Charlottesville, Virginia. Along with William Clark, he explored the American West, and in 1805, after a journey of over 18 months, reached the Pacific Ocean.

AUGUST 19

August 19, 1934 - In Germany, a plebiscite was held in which 89.9 percent of German voters approved granting Chancellor Adolf Hitler additional powers, including the office of president.

August 19, 1991 - Soviet hard-line Communists staged a coup, temporarily removing Mikhail Gorbachev from power. The coup failed within 72 hours as democratic reformer Boris Yeltsin rallied the Russian people. Yeltsin then became the leading power in the country. The Communist Party was soon banned and by December the Soviet Union itself disintegrated.



Birthday - Aviation pioneer Orville Wright (1871-1948) was born in Dayton, Ohio. In 1903, Orville and his brother Wilbur achieved the world's first successful sustained and controlled flight of a motor-driven aircraft, following years of experimentation with kites and gliders.

Birthday - Bill Clinton, the 42nd U.S. President was born in Hope, Arkansas, August 19, 1946. He was the first President elected who was not alive during World War II.

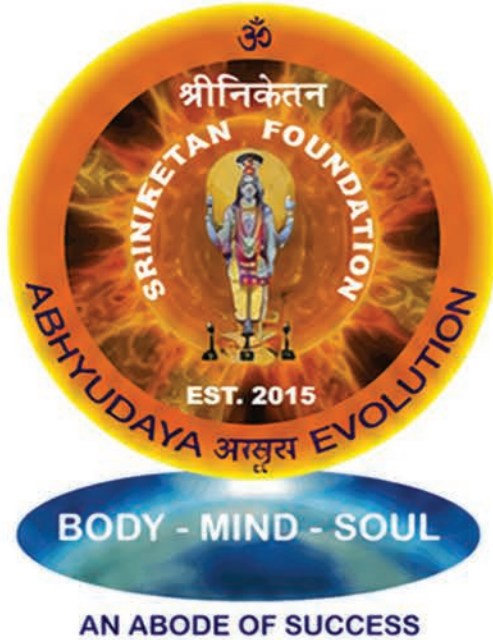
AUGUST 20



Birthday - Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901) the 23rd U.S. President was born in North Bend, Ohio. He was the grandson of William Henry Harrison, the 9th President.

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FIH HOCKEY WORLD CUPS

Teams brimming with confidence as they launch their campaigns on Saturday, Aug 15



BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

AUGUST 14, 2026

AMSTERDAM (TIP): FIH Hockey World Cups, both for men and women, that get underway in the Netherlands, Belgium, on Saturday, promise a rich fare as 16 teams each in either of the sections vie with each other for top honors.

Teams' optimism is reflected from the comments made by their captains, coaches and other team officials. Quotes from the participating teams reveal not only their preparations but also the challenges they expect to experience and overcome in their endeavor for supremacy and glory in the sport.

Here are what the captains and coaches of the participating teams have to say on their chances in the 16-day event that may throw up new icons and champions:

India Head Coach, Craig Fulton, says "This is a special year for us - 50 years since India's World Cup triumph - and that history gives real motivation to this campaign. Our preparation has centered on consistency, sharper decision-making under pressure and embedding our press-counter-outcome philosophy. The players' commitment has been excellent - they are driving standards and pushing each other daily. We know how tough the competition will be, but we trust our process. Our approach is simple: one game at a time, all in, honor that legacy, and put ourselves in the best position to compete for the title."

Argentina Head Coach, Lucas Rey, says "We are very happy. We believe we had a strong preparation phase after the Pro League concluded, training every day back in Argentina. We always aim to develop the technical, tactical, physical, and emotional sides of the game. We integrate these aspects closely and work on the fine details that we believe will give us an edge over our opponents. And here is the final product. Now, it is time to bring that to the pitch."

For Australia Head Coach, Mark Hager, "Every World Cup is unique, and earning selection in an Australian team is something every player works incredibly hard for. The group we've selected has shown throughout the year that they have the commitment, resilience and quality required to compete on the biggest stage."

"We've built strong depth across the squad, with experienced players who have performed at the highest level alongside exciting younger athletes who have embraced every opportunity in the green and gold. The FIH Pro League gave us valuable opportunities to test ourselves against the world's best teams, and we've continued to grow as a group with every campaign. We've been building towards this tournament for a long time. A World Cup is



about performing when it matters most. We know the challenge ahead, but we're excited by what's possible. This group is hungry, they're connected, and they're ready to represent Australia with pride," he concludes.

Belgium Head Coach, Shane McLeod, says "As a group we have enjoyed the success of the Hockey Pro League but know that for the World Cup we must focus on a new challenge. Having this challenge in our home country is a motivating factor. We will ensure that we display all of the qualities that the supporters expect from this Red Lions group."

"We have a pretty experienced squad which has a good mix of experience and some athletes that are making their World Cup debuts. We have five athletes going to their third World Cup, and five who will be going to their first. I think it's a nice mix in the squad. We've had a lot of consistency in the Pro League this year so we are hoping we can bring that to the World Cup too," says England Head Coach, Zak Jones.

Spain Head Coach, Max Caldas, says "This team has grown in terms of players, people, and leaders. I want to see this team compete because it's going to make an entire country proud"

France Head Coach, John-John Dohmen, stated "As the coach of the French national team, I am proud to represent this team at the World Cup."

We improve with each tournament, and our objective will be the same for this one. As Nations Cup winners, we hope to live up to the world's biggest hockey tournament. We have an amazing group of players and staff which is giving us a lot of energy a trust during games. We have a very strong group with the Germans, the reigning world and European champions, Malaysia, an unpredictable and talented team, and of course Belgium, the world number one. The match against Belgium will be very special for me, but also for all my players, almost all of whom play in what is one of the best leagues in the world. The Belgium-France match will be one of the best of this World Cup."

Germany Head Coach, André Henning, says, "My greatest respect goes to all the

players who have dedicated themselves to the team in such an impressive manner over the past few months. We only have 20 spots, but significantly more outstanding candidates and personalities. Everyone has given their all for each other. We have now assembled a World Championship team that possesses a great deal of quality and just as much potential. With an average age of just over 25, we will be one of the youngest teams in the tournament. I am incredibly excited for the five players who will be playing their first major tournament for Germany. At the same time, we have 14 players who have already won titles for us. The combination of hunger and knowledge of how success works will carry this team."

What Ireland Head Coach, Mark Tumilty, has to say, is "This is a special moment for everyone involved in Irish hockey, especially this group of players."

The chance to play at only our fourth FIH Hockey World Cup, against the best teams in the world and on the biggest stage in our sport, is something we're all looking forward to. We know what lies ahead will be a tough challenge, and we have great respect for every team in the competition. Although we haven't played any international matches since the Nations Cup, the players are ready for the opportunity. We're clear about how we want to play, excited to test ourselves against the world's best, and proud to represent Ireland at the World Cup."

Japan Captain, Reiki Fujishima, says "It is a great honor to represent Japan and compete on the biggest stage in world hockey. We will fight for every victory through hard work, resilience, and teamwork. We want to showcase Japan's speed and strong team spirit, and prove that Japanese hockey can compete with the very best in the world. We truly appreciate your support from Japan and around the world."

Malaysia Head Coach, Brendon Carolan, says "I would not call this a group of death - I would call it a group of opportunity. It all depends on how we choose to view the situation because our primary target is the Asian Games. If we want to qualify for the Olympic Games, we must be capable of

beating the world's top eight teams. That is the reality. So, we are taking this draw positively, especially with the Asian Games taking place in September."

Lars Balk, a Netherlands Player, comments on eve of the tournament "What I'm looking forward to most is the Dutch fans. That's the best part for me. The stands are always packed here. It doesn't matter whether it's India vs Germany or India vs the Netherlands, the stadium is always full. There are so many hockey fans here, and they always support us. That's what I'm really excited about: playing in front of a sold-out stadium filled with Dutch supporters dressed in orange."

New Zealand Captain, Sam Lane, says "In terms of the games you want to play in, opening against the Dutch at home in our first World Cup match gets the adrenaline going just thinking about it. They're a passionate crowd and love to be entertained. I remember watching the 2014 World Cup match against the Dutch and hoping one day I'd get to experience that."

Pakistan Captain, Abu Bakar Mehmood, says "The journey to the World Cup has demanded sacrifice, discipline, and resilience. Now it's time to embrace the challenge and show the world the spirit of Pakistan hockey. We'll leave everything on the field and play with passion, courage, and heart. Keep us in your prayers-we're ready for this challenge."

Wales Head Coach, Danny Newcombe, says "To qualify for a second consecutive World Cup is a testament to the commitment and quality of this very special group. We're proud to be here, and our focus is simple: to compete with the best teams in the world. That's the challenge we've earned, and one we're ready to embrace."

For the women's event "Preparing for the World Cup is not just about sweating it out on the field; it is a continuous process of improving ourselves every day. With discipline, hard work and unity, the Indian team is fully prepared to make the nation proud at the World Cup," says Indian captain, Salima Tete.

Argentina Captain, Majo Granatto, says "I think the team is in a great place. Not just on the pitch-which comes from the amount of hours, effort, and dedication the team has put into training-but off the pitch as well, which is essential. Today, we are truly a team. Being able to say that gives me pride and the reassurance that things will go great for us over there. I believe our preparation was spectacular; we did everything in our power to be the best version of ourselves at this World Cup. I'm heading there with that confidence, and I know the team is going to deliver."

For Australia Head Coach, Rhett Halkett, "Selection for a World Cup is never easy because it represents the pinnacle of our sport. Every player who has represented the Hockeyroos this year has contributed to where we are today. I am very proud of how the squad have handled everything thrown at them this year."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 113

FIH WORLD CUP HOCKEY

Sticks Test has India worried



BY
PRABHJOT SINGH

AUGUST 14, 2026

AMSTERDAM (TIP): Deep Defender and Drag Flicker must have been worried, as the hockey sticks he has brought here for use in the FIH World Cup starting at Wagener Stadium in Amsterdam did not meet the approval of the Technical Committee of the FIH.

Indian players had their sticks checked at the Wagener Stadium this afternoon. While all other players, including skipper Harmanpreet Singh, former captain Manpreet Singh, ace striker Mandeep Singh and Dilpreet Singh, got their sticks cleared, Jugraj Singh went in before the technical staff a couple of times, but his sticks failed to clear the norms.

Jugraj will have to get his additional or spare sticks cleared in time for the opening game.

Traditionally, hockey sticks were cleared through a "ring test", as the main blade had to clear the "ring". But with the passage of time, the composition, the shape and the material of a modern hockey stick have changed significantly. It is a tool that can fire the ball with terrific speed. Like Prithipal Singh, Surjit Singh, Paul Litjens, Carsten Fischer, Munir Dar and others used to play with heavy sticks, weighing 21 to 27 ounces.

Nowadays, stick technology, like the ball, has advanced so much that it has grown beyond fiber, carbon and graphite, compared to the traditional stick made



from mulberry.

The team management was confident that Jugraj Singh would get his sticks approved in time for the game against Wales.

Earlier generation of penalty corner hitters

After two matches in the women's section - Australia vs Japan and Germany vs Scotland - India will take on Wales in the first match of the men's section at Wagener Stadium.

Jugraj Singh is one of the key players in India's special group of drag flickers led by skipper Harmanpreet Singh.

After the sticks test, the Indian team had a training session at an adjacent practice pitch. Australian women also had their training session in the afternoon.

All players looked fit and in great spirits.

Since India is a hockey nation, all eyes will be on the men's team as it starts its campaign on the country's Independence Day on August 16, and the women do it a day later.

The weather in Europe in general and Amsterdam in particular is a little hot for this time of the year. In fact, many parts of Europe are experiencing one of the hottest summers. The hot weather is being blamed for wildfires that have been making panic-stricken Europeans move to safer havens.

How the weather impacts the performance of players will remain a debatable issue as the games scheduled for early afternoon may bear the maximum brunt.

After India plays Wales, another Asian team, Malaysia, will also play its first match. It will take on defending champions Germany.

While every match in the World Cup is crucial, the game of the event, without any doubt, will be between arch-rivals and neighbors - India and Pakistan - on August 19.

Pakistan is the most successful nation in men's Hockey World Cup history, having won four titles - in 1971, 1978, 1982 and 1994.

The Netherlands, Australia and Germany have won three World Cups each.

India, meanwhile, has found success harder to come by at the World Cup despite being the record eight-time Olympic hockey champion.

India has won the World Cup only once, with its solitary triumph coming in Kuala Lumpur in 1975 under the captaincy of Ajit Pal Singh. The team was coached by Gurcharan Singh Bodhi and managed by the legendary Balbir Singh Senior.

India beat Pakistan 2-1 in the 1975 final, with Ashok Kumar, the son of Indian hockey wizard Dhyan Chand, scoring the winning goal after defender Surjit Singh had neutralized the earlier lead taken by Pakistan.

Germany are the reigning men's FIH World Cup champions, having clinched the 2023 edition held in Odisha, India.

Indian women, led by Salima Tete, will launch their campaign in a game against their continent rivals, China, on August 16.

FROM PAGE 112

This team has a well-balanced mix of experience and mature emerging talent. Throughout the year we've continued to challenge ourselves against the world's best teams, and we've seen positive strides in both our performances and our belief. One of the biggest strengths of this group is how open they have been to change. It has not always been easy for them, but they have remained connected as a team throughout every challenge. They've bought into what we're trying to achieve, they compete hard for each other, and they're incredibly driven to keep improving. We know there are no easy games at a World Cup, but that's what excites us. It's an opportunity to showcase ourselves and the brand of hockey we want the Hockeyroos to be known for."

Belgium Head Coach, Adam Commens, says "We are particularly enthusiastic about this group of players. We have quality in all positions, plenty of speed, and a team bursting with ambition to succeed. We are all really looking forward to playing in front of our home crowd in three weeks."

Chile Captain, Manuela Urroz, comments "The energy in the squad is unreal and we're so excited for our debut. Representing our country on the world stage is an honor, and every match is a chance to show what Chilean hockey is made of. Vamos Chile!"

China Captain, Li Hong, says "We're hoping the team can achieve a result at this World Cup that we'll be satisfied with. And beyond our own performance, we're looking forward to seeing all the teams here play at their best - a World Cup is at its finest when every side brings something special to it. The Olympic silver medal is already behind us; it belongs to the past. What drives us now is the ambition to create more results like that one - more achievements that stand alongside an Olympic silver. It isn't pressure, and it isn't entirely confidence either. It's an enormous source of

motivation."

England Head Coach, David Ralph, says "We have a good mix of experienced players with World Cups and Olympic Games on their resumes and players who are making their debut appearances at an event of this scale. That wealth of experience and the energy and freshness from younger players are exciting; looking forward to the World Cup."

Spain Head Coach Carlos Garcia Cuenca says, "It is a very challenging World Cup, and the competition format makes it one of the fairest tournaments from a sporting perspective. Our realistic objective is to finish among the top six teams in the world. Once we achieve that, why should we not aim for the medals? We wanted to do something different, something that would make it very difficult for our opponents to compete against us. We arrive at the World Cup with a defensive game model that I believe has now reached its highest level of execution."

Germany Head Coach Janneke Schopman says, "The nomination for the World Championship was an extremely close decision, as all the players have shown very good development and performance in the Pro League. Our World Championship squad is young and full of energy, and the recent successes in the Pro League reinforce our conviction that we can compete with any opponent worldwide. This tournament will take us another step further in our development!"

Ireland Head Coach Gareth Grundie says, "There is no denying that the World Cup is a competition that has a special significance for the team. For this group, this year's FIH Hockey World Cup is an opportunity to leave a legacy of their own. The last few months, between the Qualifiers and the FIH Hockey Pro League, have given us lots of opportunities to test ourselves against some of the best teams in the world. We have learned first-hand, and also shown the world, that we can go toe-to-toe with these teams, something we intend to continue doing in this World Cup."

Japan Head Coach Akira Takahashi says, "At the World Cup, SAKURA JAPAN will show the world our unity, resilience, and fighting spirit by never giving up until the very end. Inspired by the support of our fans and carrying the pride of Japan, we will give everything we have in every match and compete together as one team."

Netherlands Head Coach Raoul Ehren feels, "A World Cup on home soil is, of course, an incredible experience. It doesn't happen very often, and it will probably be quite some time before it happens again. There's nothing better than playing in a packed stadium filled with fans dressed in orange. You can feel it in every way: the excitement is building, and the tournament is really coming to life. That will only continue to grow in the weeks ahead."

New Zealand Head Coach Phil Burrows says, "Opening against the host nation in Belgium is a great occasion and a real test straight away. Ireland and Spain are both strong sides, so it's a quality pool. Being up against all European and Pro League teams presents a consistent, high-level challenge, which is exactly what you want at a World Cup."

Scotland Captain Sarah Robertson says, "This is the highest level anyone in a Scottish hockey shirt can play at, so we know the challenge ahead and the opportunity it brings. We have put in so much hard work to qualify and then again to raise our game for the World Cup. We have a great culture in this team, and we are going to enjoy every minute together creating history." USA Captain Meredith Sholder says, "We have put in the work, and now, it is about trusting that preparation and executing in critical moments. We know the level of competition we will face will be fierce, but we believe in this group, and we are excited for the opportunity to represent the United States on the world stage."

(Prabhjot Singh is a Toronto-based senior journalist who writes on Sports, politics and community. He can be reached at prabhjot416@gmail.com)

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