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Madhya Pradesh's Digital Tourism Embracing Innovation for Growth



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Madhya Pradesh's Digital Tourism : Embracing Innovation for Growth

Known as the "Heart of India," Madhya Pradesh occupies a unique position in the nation's cultural and historical fabric. The state, which stretches across the central plains, is home to numerous architectural wonders, spiritual sites, wildlife sanctuaries, and archaeological treasures.

THE PAHALGAM TRAGEDY : Loss of Lives and Peace

On April 22, 2025, the peaceful Baisaran Valley close to Pahalgam in Indian-administered Kashmir was the location of a tragic terrorist attack that resulted in the deaths of 26 civilians, mainly Hindu tourists. This event ranks among the most lethal ...



The U.S.-China Trade War Conflict : Causes, Consequences, and the Future

The two most potent economic powers in the contemporary world are the United States and China. Collectively, they make up a considerable portion of international investment, trade, industrial production...

Rock Painting

Earliest attempt by human beings to depict their natural world symbolically



Indian Airstrikes Eliminate Key Jaish-e-Mohammed Figures

On May 7, 2025, India executed a series of precision airstrikes under the codename "Operation Sindoor," targeting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. These strikes were a direct response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir, which resulted in the deaths of 26 Hindu tourists. Among the significant outcomes of the operation was the elimination of ten family members and four close aides of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Maulana Masood Azhar.

Operation Sindoor marks a significant development in India's counter-



terrorism efforts, demonstrating a proactive stance against threats emanating from across the border. The elimination of Masood Azhar's family members and close aides is a testament to the operation's precision and intelligence capabilities. As the region grapples with the aftermath,

the international community watches closely, urging both nations to exercise caution and seek peaceful resolutions to their longstanding disputes.

Targeted Strikes in Bahawalpur

The Indian Armed Forces focused their efforts on nine locations, with Bahawalpur—Azhar's hometown and JeM's operational base—being a primary target. Notably, the Jamia Masjid Subhan Allah in Bahawalpur, identified as a hub for JeM activities, was among the sites struck. The operation aimed to dismantle the core of JeM's leadership and operational capabilities.

Operation Abhyas: India's Nationwide Civil Defence Mock Drill on May 7, 2025

On May 7, 2025, India undertook one of its most extensive civil defence exercises in recent history, codenamed Operation Abhyas. This nationwide mock drill, spanning 244 districts, was initiated by the Ministry of Home Affairs in response to escalating tensions with Pakistan following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives. The primary objective was to assess and enhance the country's preparedness for potential wartime scenarios, including air raids, blackouts, and mass evacuations.

Scope and Execution

Operation Abhyas was meticulously planned to simulate real-time emergency situations across various urban and rural settings. Major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad were focal points, but the drill also extended to remote districts to ensure comprehensive coverage. Activities included the activation of air raid sirens, blackout simulations, evacuation procedures, and the establishment of emergency control rooms. Public spaces such as schools, railway stations, and religious sites participated actively, with drills conducted at locations like Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus and Delhi's Khan Market.

Operation Sindoor: India Strikes Back After Pahalgam Terror Attack

On May 6, 2025, the Indian Armed Forces launched "Operation Sindoor," a series of precision airstrikes targeting nine sites in Pakistan



and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The operation was a direct response to the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, where 26 Hindu tourists were killed. India attributed the attack to Pakistan-based militant groups, including Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

The strikes were executed using Rafale fighter jets equipped with SCALP missiles and AASM Hammer bombs. Over a 23-minute period, 24 missiles were launched, targeting locations such as Bahawalpur, Muridke, Muzaffarabad, and Kotli. These sites were identified as operational hubs for JeM and LeT. Notably, Bahawalpur is known as the hometown of JeM leader Masood Azhar.

India described the operation as "focused, measured, and non-escalatory," emphasizing that no Pakistani military installations were targeted. The Indian government stated that the strikes aimed solely at dismantling terrorist infrastructure to prevent future attacks on Indian soil.

The Use of Saliva in IPL 2025: Controversy, Effects, and the Path Forward

The Indian Premier League (IPL) has always been a breeding ground for innovation and spectacle. As the 2025 season unfolds, one of the unexpected topics gaining attention is the use of saliva by bowlers. Saliva, often used by bowlers to shine the ball, has traditionally been a key part of cricketing techniques to maintain the ball's condition and help swing bowling. However, with the IPL 2025 in full swing, this practice has sparked debates regarding its impact on both the game and players' health, particularly in light of recent cricketing regulations and the COVID-19 pandemic. This article explores the use of saliva in IPL 2025, its effects, and the controversy surrounding it.

Saliva and Ball Shining: The Traditional Use

In cricket, the ball is often polished using saliva or sweat to maintain its shine and condition. This practice is particularly important for swing bowlers,

who rely on the condition of the ball to generate movement in the air. By using saliva, bowlers ensure that one side of the ball remains shiny and the other side becomes rough, a technique known as "reverse swing." This allows bowlers to extract more movement from the ball, making it difficult for batsmen to judge deliveries, particularly in the latter stages of an innings.

For years, this technique has been an essential part of the game. In the high-stakes environment of the IPL, where T20 matches are fast-paced and dynamic, the ability to maintain the ball's condition is crucial for bowlers. As a result, saliva has been widely used by bowlers in all formats of the game, including the IPL.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Saliva Ban

In 2020, the International Cricket Council (ICC) introduced a ban on the use of saliva to shine the ball due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus primarily

spreads through respiratory droplets, and using saliva could

potentially pose a health risk to players. As a result, the ICC implemented this measure to safeguard players and prevent the spread of the virus during matches. The saliva ban was initially enforced in all international cricket matches and domestic leagues, including the IPL.

This decision was met with mixed reactions from the cricketing community. Some players and analysts expressed concerns over how the ban would affect bowling, particularly swing bowling, while others supported it as a necessary step for public health and safety. Despite these challenges, bowlers quickly adapted, relying on sweat and other methods to maintain the ball's condition.



Tsunami Alert Follows 6.9 Quake in Papua New Guinea

On the morning of April 5, 2025, a powerful 6.9 magnitude earthquake struck off the southern coast of New Britain Island in Papua New Guinea. The quake occurred at a shallow depth of 10 kilometers (6 miles) and was centered approximately 194 kilometers (120 miles) east of Kimbe, the capital of West New Britain province.

Tsunami Warning Issued and Later Canceled

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the U.S. Tsunami Warning Center issued a tsunami warning for parts of Papua New Guinea, forecasting

hazardous tsunami waves of 1 to 3 meters along some coasts. A cautionary alert for smaller waves, less than 0.3 meters, was also issued for the nearby Solomon Islands.

However, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center later canceled the alert, stating that the tsunami threat had passed. No significant tsunami waves were observed, and there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties.

Aftershocks and Regional Impact

Following the main earthquake, several aftershocks were recorded,

including a 5.3 magnitude tremor approximately 30 minutes later. Despite the seismic activity, local authorities reported no significant damage. Residents in affected areas experienced brief shaking but returned to normal activities shortly thereafter.

Geological Context

Papua New Guinea is situated on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an area known for its high seismic and volcanic activity due to the movement of tectonic plates. The region frequently experiences earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, making it one of the most seismically active areas in the world.

Madhya Pradesh's Digital Tourism

Embracing Innovation for Growth

Known as the "Heart of India," Madhya Pradesh occupies a unique position in the nation's cultural and historical fabric. The state, which stretches across the central plains, is home to numerous architectural wonders, spiritual sites, wildlife sanctuaries, and archaeological treasures.

Madhya Pradesh offers visitors looking for both cultural depth and natural splendor a varied and immersive experience, from the world-famous Khajuraho temples, renowned for their intricate sculptures and artistic grandeur, to the prehistoric rock shelters of Bhimbetka, which shed light on early human life.

Madhya Pradesh's rich history, religious tourism, and wildlife reserves have historically been the main drivers of its tourism industry. Cities like Sanchi, with its historic Buddhist stupas, and Ujjain, with the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga, draw both pilgrims and history buffs. Among India's most popular wildlife attractions are the lush woods of Kanha, Bandhavgarh, and Pench, which attract tourists, photographers, and environmentalists

from

DR. MOHAN YADAV
Chief Minister Madhya Pradesh
By 2030, the size of Madhya Pradesh's economy will be expanded up to ₹45 lakh crore, and efforts will be made to double the per capita income to ₹2.80 lakh in the next seven years from ₹1.40 lakh now.

around the globe.

However, depending solely on the state's historical and physical resources is no longer adequate in a world that is becoming more digital and interconnected. Making tourism experiences more engaging, accessible,

with the demands of contemporary

tourists is becoming increasingly important.

The Government of Madhya Pradesh has launched a daring and revolutionary push toward digital tourism in acknowledgment of this changing paradigm, with the goals of modernizing its tourism infrastructure, improving visitor experiences, and broadening its worldwide reach. This strategic effort embodies a visionary reinvention of how heritage, culture, and natural beauty might be experienced and conserved in the twenty-first century, going beyond a simple technical upgrade.

The state is increasing the accessibility, interest, and educational value of its wide range of cultural and natural assets by utilizing cutting-edge technology including virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), geographic information systems (GIS), mobile applications, and artificial intelligence (AI). Visitors to an archeological site, for example, might soon be able to take a self-guided augmented reality tour using a smartphone app that recreates the site's original design, complete with historical context, interactive quizzes, and narration. Deeper involvement is made possible by this combination of digital and physical immersion, especially for younger travelers and foreign visitors who might not be familiar with the history of the area.

Furthermore, Madhya Pradesh's larger objectives of job creation and economic development are intimately linked to the digital transformation

of the state's tourism industry. New professional opportunities in fields including content creation, app design, animation, virtual tour creation, and technological support are being made possible by the digital tourist industry. Through programs like the AVGC-XR Policy 2025, which encourages the growth of the animation, visual effects, gaming, comics, and extended reality sectors, the state is fostering a thriving ecosystem where technology and tradition coexist, giving local youth and businesspeople a significant say in how tourism develops in the future.

This technological integration is also in line with the worldwide movement toward responsible and sustainable travel. Madhya Pradesh is attempting to preserve its ancient landmarks and delicate ecosystems by providing virtual experiences and lowering the environmental impact of mass tourism. One way to appreciate the state's

attractions without sacrificing their integrity is through digital alternatives like virtual safaris, 360-degree temple walkthroughs, and online museum experiences.

The government's initiatives to digitize cultural institutions, create smart tourism applications, upgrade digital payment systems, and introduce e-booking portals for state-run hotels and historical sites are also contributing to the simplification of tourism services and the improvement of travel convenience and friendliness in Madhya Pradesh.

Essentially, Madhya Pradesh's digital tourism project is a proactive approach that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the relationship between technology, culture, and the economy. It shows how a historically and culturally rich state can use innovation to empower its citizens, protect its legacy, and create a more sustainable and inclusive future. As the project picks





up steam, Madhya Pradesh is poised to reinvent itself as a modern-day leader in digital heritage tourism as well as a steward of India's ancient heritage.

The AVGC-XR Policy 2025: A Vision for Immersive Tourism

The Madhya Pradesh government made history by announcing the AVGC-XR Policy 2025, which gave new industries like animation, visual effects, gaming, comics, and extended reality (XR) a lot of attention. The state's vision for tourism, historical preservation, job growth, and digital innovation has fundamentally changed as a result of this program, which goes beyond simple policy reform. In order to establish Madhya Pradesh as a premier destination for immersive and digital tourism experiences in India and the larger South Asian region, the policy calls for a significant investment objective of \$240 million (about ₹2,000 crore) and a vision to generate over 20,000 job opportunities by 2029.

The AVGC-XR Policy is unique in that it places a strong emphasis on utilizing cutting-edge technology to enhance both cultural heritage and tourism. The way visitors engage with and comprehend historical and natural sites could be completely transformed by these technologies, especially Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR). Visitors will be able to enter a particular era or setting rather than



just viewing monuments or reading placards. One could explore a digital replica of Bhimbetka's prehistoric cave shelters using a virtual reality headset or a smartphone app, experiencing early human existence, art, and rituals as if they were in the actual ancient period.

In a same vein, XR technology is being used to reinvent the state's well-known national parks, including Bandhavgarh, Pench, and Kanha. For instance, tourists can enjoy wildlife sightings in a safe, immersive digital setting by participating in a virtual safari in Kanha National Park. This acts as an instructional tool in schools and museums, teaching younger generations to India's biodiversity and conservation efforts, in addition to offering an accessible option for individuals who might not be able to visit the park in person. In an interactive 3D environment, the same technology may replicate the fluttering of endangered birds, the rustle of sal forests, or the grand roar of a Bengal tiger, creating a stronger emotional bond with the natural world.

In order to guarantee inclusive and culturally sensitive digital tourism, the AVGC-XR strategy also places a strong emphasis on content localization and the use of regional languages. With historically correct narrations and interactive stories, multilingual virtual reality tours can provide smooth navigation around cultural icons like

the Khajuraho temples, Sanchi Stupa, and Orchha Fort for visitors from abroad. An augmented reality (AR)-enabled tour of Khajuraho, for example, can not only explain the sculptures but also animate them to demonstrate the mythological tales and ceremonies they represent, offering multi-layered interpretations that surpass conventional guided tours.

The strategy is anticipated to stimulate a digital creative economy in addition to tourism, making Madhya Pradesh a destination for AVGC-XR professionals, studios, and startups. The policy creates opportunities for a dynamic blend of technology and tradition by enabling the creation of interactive content, Indian mythology-based video games, animated documentaries, and even historical simulations. There are currently several incentives for animation companies in places like Indore, Bhopal, and Gwalior to thrive, including as foreign partnerships, mentorship programs, and subsidies.

Furthermore, sustainability and preservation are greatly aided by this digital change. Overtourism and environmental deterioration are two issues that many Madhya Pradesh cultural sites must deal with. The state may preserve delicate ecosystems and historic sites while providing all-encompassing tourism experiences by digitizing access and encouraging virtual alternatives. Virtual tours of the jungle temples of Amarkantak or the



Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain, for example, might enable millions of people to experience these places of worship without putting undue demand on the actual locations.

Madhya Pradesh's policy is in line with the Government of India's National AVGC-XR Mission, which aims to establish the state as a vital partner in India's endeavor to secure a substantial portion of the global digital content market. With its rich cultural resources and progressive administration, Madhya Pradesh is poised to make a significant contribution to the projected \$680 billion worldwide AVGC market by 2030.

In conclusion, the AVGC-XR Policy 2025 is a model for Madhya Pradesh's future tourism and cultural participation, not just a policy paper. In addition to improving the visitor experience, combining technology and tradition promises to protect cultural heritage, foster digital innovation, create jobs, and establish Madhya Pradesh as a trailblazing state at the forefront of India's digital tourism industry.

Infrastructure and Skill Development: Building the Digital Ecosystem

The Madhya Pradesh government is investing in the creation of cutting-edge infrastructure and skill-development initiatives to support the goals of the AVGC-XR Policy. One important step in promoting innovation is the creation



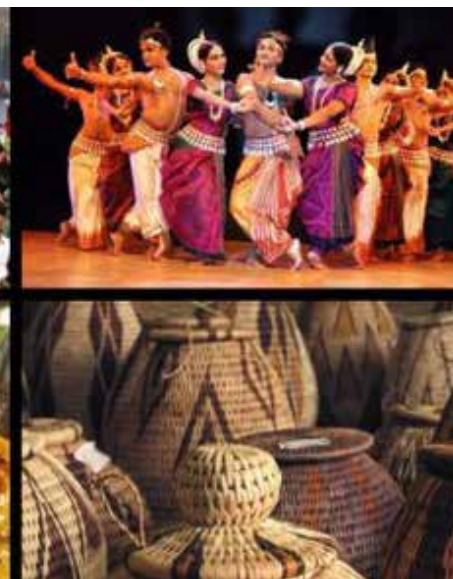
of AVGC-XR laboratories and Centers of Excellence within fine arts universities. These facilities will act as training grounds for experts in the field of creating digital content as well as incubators for new businesses.

Additionally, by providing scholarships and specialized training in AVGC-XR areas, with additional incentives for women, and by supporting women-led enterprises, the program highlights inclusivity. This strategy guarantees fair access and involvement, expanding the pool of talent and promoting a range of viewpoints in the production of digital tourism content.

Digital Integration in Cultural Institutions

Madhya Pradesh is actively incorporating digital technologies into its cultural institutions, going beyond infrastructure and policy. One excellent example is the Tribal Museum in Bhopal. Since its founding in 2013, the museum has embraced digital innovation by providing virtual tours that are divided into different subject areas, including traditional games, spiritual world, and tribal homes. Furthermore, the addition of multilingual QR-based audio guides improves the visiting experience and makes the museum's extensive exhibits more widely available.

Budgetary Allocations: Financial Commitment to Tourism and



Culture

The budget for 2025–2026 makes clear the state's financial commitment to tourism and cultural development. ₹1,610 crore has been set aside by the government for endowments, tourism, culture, and religious trusts. With ₹2,005 crore set aside for the event, a sizeable amount of this funding is invested in the planning of the Simhastha Kumbh Mela 2028 at Ujjain. To enhance connectivity and encourage spiritual tourism, more money are allotted for the construction of study centers, religious and cultural landmarks, and metro train projects.

Expanding the Tourism Horizon: Rural and Adventure Tourism Initiatives

Madhya Pradesh's tourism plan includes adventure and rural travel in addition to digital innovation. The state intends to operationalize 350 homestays under the Rural Tourism Mission, giving visitors a genuine village experience. The Clean Destination project and the Responsible Souvenir Initiative are two initiatives that assist local craftspeople and encourage eco-friendly travel.

Adventure tourism is also gaining momentum, with events like the Skydiving Festival attracting participants nationwide. The state is expanding its tourism options and attracting thrill-seekers by promoting Ujjain as a skydiving destination and introducing

aero-sports like paramotoring and hot air ballooning.

Film Tourism: Showcasing Madhya Pradesh on the Silver Screen

Madhya Pradesh has implemented the Film Tourism Policy 2025 in recognition of the impact that movies have on travel. Filmmakers are encouraged to shoot

but also enjoyed in completely new ways in the quickly changing global tourism scene, where experiences are increasingly influenced by interactivity and personalization. Through the use of cutting-edge technologies like 3D mapping, augmented reality, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence, the state is transforming its historical sites and natural wonders into dynamic,

aided by the incorporation of digital technologies. Virtual platforms have made it possible for older tourists, those with disabilities, and foreign visitors to see heritage places that were formerly physically or geographically unavailable to many. At the same time, lowering traffic in historically or ecologically vulnerable locations by using virtual alternatives helps protect these places for coming generations.

This digital revolution has repercussions in industries including enterprise, entertainment, and education. In addition to improving the educational process, virtual museums, interactive learning modules, gamified travel apps, and digital storytelling platforms are opening up new job opportunities in software development, animation, gaming, and content creation. Madhya Pradesh is progressively becoming a hub of technological and creative excellence that can compete in the global digital content economy as a result of the tourism and digital media convergence.

Importantly, these activities complement central plans to increase India's share of the worldwide AVGC-XR market and are in line with the country's objective of a "Digital India." Other states, particularly those with a strong cultural and natural legacy, might use Madhya Pradesh's leadership in this area as a model.

Madhya Pradesh is redefining tourism and rethinking its identity on the global scene as these projects acquire traction. A thriving center of digital experiences, creative industries, and economic innovation is now rising from what was long thought of as a region of temples, wildlife, and palaces. Even as Madhya Pradesh looks to the future, the combination of history and technology guarantees that the state's essence will endure. The state is ready to welcome a new age of immersive, inclusive, and intelligent tourism—one that respects the past while embracing the possibilities of the future—with the AVGC-XR Policy 2025 at its center. ■



in the state's many locations under this policy, which provides financial incentives. Films in regional languages and those that support local talent are eligible for additional bonuses, which range from ₹1.5 crore for first-time shootings to ₹2 crore for third-time filming. Bollywood stars have praised the state's film-friendly climate and its potential to become a major location for movies.

Conclusion

The ambitious AVGC-XR Policy 2025, which supports Madhya Pradesh's entry into digital tourism, is a revolutionary and progressive approach to technology innovation, economic regeneration, and cultural preservation. Madhya Pradesh is making aggressive moves to guarantee that its legacy is not only conserved

immersive experiences that appeal to tourists in the twenty-first century.

This shift to digital is a catalyst for inclusive growth rather than merely a modernization endeavor. The foundation for a sustainable digital environment is being laid by the state's purposeful investments in talent development, capacity-building, and infrastructure. Initiatives for skill development that support local youth, particularly in rural regions, guarantee that the financial advantages of digital tourism go far beyond metropolitan areas. Madhya Pradesh's dedication to social justice and inclusive development is reflected in the policy's special provisions for women-led companies and underserved communities.

Furthermore, accessibility and environmental sustainability are greatly



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THE PAHALGAM TRAGEDY Loss of Lives and Peace

On April 22, 2025, the peaceful Baisaran Valley close to Pahalgam in Indian-administered Kashmir was the location of a tragic terrorist attack that resulted in the deaths of 26 civilians, mainly Hindu tourists. This event ranks among the most lethal attacks on civilians in the area since the 2008 Mumbai attacks.



Terror Strikes Baisaran Valley: Tourists Targeted in Brutal Religious Attack

Five armed militants broke into the tranquil Baisaran Valley, a well-liked tourist area in Jammu and Kashmir that is tucked away close to Pahalgam, in a

terrifying act of terror that has stunned the country. Only reachable on foot or by horseback, the valley is frequently referred to as the "Mini Switzerland of India" because to its verdant meadows and serene splendor. However, on this particular day, the peaceful surroundings

turned into a scene of violence and terror.

The assailants blended in perfectly with the surroundings, disguised as either security personnel or local guides and wearing military-style camouflage. Multiple eyewitnesses reported that the terrorists were armed with sophisticated

weapons, such as AK-47 assault rifles and M4 carbines, which are generally found in well-organized terror cells.

As the threatening group moved from one group of tourists to another, tourists who were enjoying what should have been a tranquil summer vacation were taken by surprise. The attackers conversed with them in a chillingly composed manner, asking seemingly innocuous inquiries about their backgrounds—until the subject of religion came up.

What transpired was a horrific act of hate. According to survivors, the militants reacted violently right away when someone acknowledged they were Hindu. The quiet of the mountains was



broken by gunfire in the serene valley, which sent people running for shelter.

One of the few survivors, Aishanya Dwivedi, described the horrific event with shaky clarity. Her voice broke as she remarked, "They asked us about our names, where we were from, and then about our religion." They exchanged glances before shooting my husband, Raghav, after he claimed that we were Hindus. He landed directly in front of me.

Only instinct kept Aishanya alive; she fell to the ground and pretended to be dead until the attackers left. Others did not have the same luck. Although the precise number of fatalities is still

being confirmed, preliminary indications indicate that the tragedy claimed the lives of at least seven persons.

Security personnel were unable to stop the attackers before they vanished into the nearby forest. Since then, the Indian Army and the Jammu and Kashmir Police have begun a large manhunt in the area, using special operations teams, drones, and sniffer dogs to try and find the culprits.

The attack has been denounced by authorities as a hate-fueled act of terrorism intended to sabotage intercommunal harmony and terrorize tourists visiting the area. According to a

top police official, "this is not just an attack on innocent civilians," "It's an attack on the idea of India—on coexistence, on freedom, on the sanctity of human life."

An emergency advisory has been issued asking visitors to stay alert and report any suspicious activity, and security has been stepped up in all of Kashmir's popular tourist destinations. Families across lament the loss of loved ones who had only sought a short getaway in the hills as officials look into potential cross-border ties to the militants.

Aishanya and the other survivors will always carry with them the memories of that day in the Baisaran Valley, which serves as a warning of the frailty of peace and the depths of human depravity.

In a shocking twist, a traveler from Ahmedabad unintentionally recorded the massacre while he was filming himself on a zipline. The video, which began with a cheerful scene, abruptly shifted to a terrifying situation as gunfire erupted and panic broke out below.

Casualties and Heroism

The assault led to 26 deaths, which included 25 tourists from different Indian states and a local Muslim pony operator, Syed Adil Hussain Shah. He allegedly attempted to shield the tourists and struggled to take a weapon from one of the assailants before being shot. At least 20 additional individuals

sustained injuries.

The victims originated from various Indian states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, and West Bengal. Included among the deceased were newly married personnel from the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy, as well as a representative from the Intelligence Bureau. One of the victims was a Christian from Madhya Pradesh who lost his life after failing to recite the Islamic Kalima.

Perpetrators and Investigation

Initially claiming responsibility for the incident, the Resistance Front (TRF), believed to be a branch of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, expressed their disapproval of Indian government policies that allow non-Kashmiris to reside in the region. Nevertheless, they later retracted their claim.

Three attackers have been identified by Indian authorities: Adil Hussain Thoker, a local, and two Pakistanis, Ali Bhai (also known as Talha Bhai) and Hashim Musa (also known as Suleiman). Prior to joining Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hashim Musa had experience in Pakistan's paramilitary forces, according to investigations. Forensic research and digital evidence have linked the attack to safe houses in

Karachi and Muzaffarabad, suggesting that Pakistani-based agents may have provided support. A reward of Rs 60 lakh has been announced by the Jammu and Kashmir Police for information that results in the identification, detention, or removal of the attackers.

Domestic and International Reactions

Across India, the attack was widely condemned. Prime Minister Narendra Modi called it "shocking and painful," and President Droupadi Murmu called it a "dastardly and inhuman act," promising that those responsible will face consequences.

Protests sprang out in a number of Kashmiri towns as protesters expressed their sorrow and rage, denounced the brutality, and called the incident a blow to Kashmiriyat. Businesses and stores closed in solidarity.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, stated that Kashmiris "stand shoulder to shoulder with the victims."

In order to prevent a wider conflict between the two nuclear-armed states, the United States, United Nations, and United Kingdom stressed the need for de-escalation and called for prudence. The U.S. State Department said that it

was communicating with Pakistan and India on the event.

Escalation of India-Pakistan Tensions

India responded to the incident by closing its airspace to Pakistani aircraft, suspending the Indus Waters Treaty, and expelling Pakistani diplomats. In retaliation, Pakistan closed its airspace to Indian planes, suspended the Simla Agreement, and restricted trade. There have been more cross-border ceasefire violations, and there have been reports of continuous small-arms firing along the Line of Control.

Attaullah Tarar, Pakistan's Information Minister, claimed "credible intelligence" and accused India of using the terror assault as a pretext to target Pakistan, warning of an impending Indian military action within 24 to 36 hours. If its sovereignty is threatened, Islamabad has promised a forceful response, which may involve the deployment of nuclear weapons.

Impact on Kashmiri Communities

In India, anti-Kashmiri and Islamophobic sentiments have increased since the incident. Far-right organizations have threatened, harassed, and





attacked Kashmiri women and students. Shopkeepers refused to do business with Kashmiri tenants, and they faced eviction in states like Uttarakhand, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh. As they tried to return home, a number of Kashmiri students were compelled to take sanctuary in airports.

To protect Kashmiri students, the Haryana government issued orders. However, a number of BJP leaders and members have been implicated in the spike in violence and hate speech that followed the incident, including demands for aggressive rallies and economic boycotts. Similar language has also been used in protests organized by affiliates such as the Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

One of the worst attacks in the area in recent memory was the 2015 Pahalgam terror attack, which killed dozens of defenseless citizens and security guards. In addition to the immediate sorrow and loss of life, the episode has greatly increased South Asian geopolitical and ethnic tensions, especially between India and Pakistan. Both countries have since

used military posture and retaliatory rhetoric, rekindling concerns about a wider clash in an already unstable area. As both sides accuse one another of supporting or concealing militant activity, conflict along the Line of Control (LoC) has escalated and diplomatic relations have become more strained.

The consequences have been equally dire at home. Political exploitation of the tragedy and heated media coverage have reportedly contributed to an increase in Islamophobic sentiment in India. Communities of Kashmiri people have experienced increased surveillance, harassment, and in certain situations, violence, both in the Valley and elsewhere in the nation. By escalating mistrust across communities and excluding already vulnerable groups, this has further strained the already brittle social fabric. Concerns about growing hate speech, erroneous detentions, and discriminatory policies that could exacerbate radicalization and alienation have been raised by civil society organizations.

The international community has become increasingly vocal in its pleas

for prudence amid these rising tensions. Both India and Pakistan have been asked by the UN, regional organizations, and powerful countries to defuse the situation and concentrate on joint counterterrorism initiatives rather than assigning blame to one another. Analysts caution that the present course may lead to a wider regional security crisis in addition to destabilizing bilateral relations.

Responses to the Pahalgam attack must be balanced and grounded in justice rather than retaliation or political expediency as investigations proceed. The root causes of this violence, such as ideological radicalization, socioeconomic inequality, and political disenfranchisement, must be addressed immediately. Any long-term solution must be built on community-based peacebuilding, inclusive government, and dialogue.

There is no doubt that the road ahead is difficult, but the only way to prevent more deaths and foresee a sustainable peace in the area is by peaceful diplomacy, intercommunal cooperation, and a dedication to human rights. ■

The U.S.-China Trade War Conflict

Causes, Consequences, and the Future



The two most potent economic powers in the contemporary world are the United States and China. Collectively, they make up a considerable portion of international investment, trade, industrial production, and innovation. Their economic relationship has developed into a complex web of competition and collaboration during the last few decades. On the one hand, China has gained access to American money, technology, and consumer markets, while the United States has profited from access to China's extensive manufacturing base and affordable commodities. Both nations have experienced growth as a result of this interdependence, which has also aided in the globalization of the global economy.

However, there is a long history of conflicts behind the surface of this mutually beneficial cooperation, particularly with regard to economic policy, market access, and trade practices. When the United States, under President



Donald Trump's administration, enacted a number of punitive trade policies against China in 2018, these tensions reached a breaking point and the U.S.-China trade war was born. This battle, which was characterized by retaliatory acts, harsh diplomatic debates, and successive rounds of tariffs, represented a crucial turning point in international economic relations.

The trade war represents a larger and more strategic struggle than just redressing trade imbalances or defending homegrown businesses. Fundamentally, it is an expression of a more profound struggle for global influence, technological leadership, and sustained economic domination in the twenty-first century. In this ongoing conflict, issues like governmental subsidies, forced technology transfers, intellectual property theft, and the strategic importance of new technologies like 5G and artificial intelligence have taken center stage.

The ramifications of this conflict go well beyond the boundaries of the two countries engaged, as the world

observes it develop. Economic alliances have changed, supply chains have been disrupted, and global markets have been affected by the trade war. It has also led to a reassessment of the rules-based international commercial system and globalization. This essay will look at the beginnings of the trade war between the United States and China, evaluate the major actions and events that led to the conflict's escalation, evaluate the political and economic ramifications for both nations as well as the global economy, and investigate possible paths toward collaboration and resolution.

Origins of the Trade War

Long-standing problems that have strained bilateral relations are the root cause of the trade war between the United States and China. At the forefront of these are worries about:

Trade Disparity: The United States imports significantly more than it exports, resulting in a persistently large trade deficit with China. American authorities saw this discrepancy as proof of unfair trade tactics.

Intellectual Property Fraud: China

has been charged by the United States with coerced technology transfers and intellectual property theft. In order to gain entry to the Chinese market, American businesses frequently had to disclose their unique technologies.

State-Owned Enterprises and Subsidies: China's economic structure, which includes significant state support for important industries, has come under fire for fostering unfair competition in international markets.

Currency Tampering China has been accused of manipulating its currency to make its exports more affordable and competitive, especially by U.S. officials.

Although these problems predated 2018, President Donald Trump's administration marked the official start of the trade war as he worked to close the U.S. trade imbalance and address what he called China's "unfair trade practices."

Key Events in the Trade War

When the United States placed tariffs on \$34 billion worth of Chinese goods in July 2018, the trade war really got underway. China swiftly responded by imposing duties on a comparable

volume of American shipments. The confrontation intensified over the course of the following two years, during which time each side imposed multiple rounds of tariffs on imports valued at hundreds of billions of dollars.

Major milestones include:

- July 2018: Both parties slapped initial tariffs.
- August–September 2018: An additional \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports are subject to a 10% tax from the United States.
- May 2019: \$200 billion worth of goods were subject to 25% higher tariffs.
- Phase One Deal (January 2020): The "Phase One" deal was struck by the United States and China following months of discussions. China promised to strengthen intellectual property safeguards and boost imports of American goods. The United States delayed more tariff increases in return.

Significant tariffs and a number of outstanding issues persisted notwithstanding the deal. Early in 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic surfaced, significantly complicating economic relations and casting a cloud over trade talks.





Economic Consequences

The trade war had a range of consequences for both the U.S. and Chinese economies, as well as for the global economy.

- **Impact on the US:** greater Prices for Consumers: Tariffs, which are essentially taxes on imports, frequently resulted in greater costs for American firms and consumers.

- **Farmers Affected:** Chinese retaliatory tariffs severely impacted American agricultural exports, especially soybeans. To lessen losses, the US government gave farmers subsidies.

- **Uncertainty for Businesses:** Businesses who operated internationally had to deal with supply chain interruptions and a lack of clarity around upcoming trade regulations.

- **Impact on China:** Slower Economic development: Although domestic stimulus measures helped to offset the consequences, the trade war did lead to a slowdown in China's economic development.

- **Change in Trade Patterns:** In an effort to lessen its reliance on the United States, China expanded trade with other

partners, including Southeast Asia and the European Union.

- **Global Impact:** Disrupted Supply Chains: The conflict had an impact on supply chains worldwide, especially in the manufacturing and technology industries.

- **Investor Uncertainty:** As investors reacted to the risks and uncertainty surrounding the conflict, global markets saw volatility.

Beyond Tariffs: Technological and Geopolitical Tensions

Tariffs, trade deficits, and market access are frequently used to frame the trade war, but its roots go far deeper into a complicated and escalating struggle for strategic and technological superiority. The essential competition to establish the standards for new technologies that will influence the future and lead the next wave of global innovation is at the core of this conflict. The United States, which has long been seen as the technological leader in the world, is beginning to see China's quick technological advancement as a danger to its geopolitical position, national security, and economic interests.

The U.S. government has taken a

number of strong measures to limit China's technology dominance as a result of this worry. The prohibition of Chinese telecom behemoths like ZTE and Huawei is among the most notable examples. There are concerns that these companies' equipment may be utilized for cyber-intrusion or espionage because of their alleged strong ties to the Chinese military and government. The United States has responded by outlawing the use of Huawei devices in vital infrastructure and putting pressure on its partners to follow suit. Additionally, Huawei and other Chinese tech companies are unable to buy cutting-edge American semiconductors, software, and technologies that are necessary for their operations and innovation because of export restrictions enforced by the United States.

This tactic often called "technological decoupling" represents a significant change in the global tech industry. It seeks to stop the transfer of advanced U.S. technologies to possible strategic rivals and lessen reliance on Chinese companies in delicate fields. But this strategy hasn't been without its detractors. In response,



China has stepped up its attempts to become self-sufficient in technology. The Chinese government has made investment in important industries like semiconductors, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, robotics, and 5G telecommunications a top priority through programs like "Made in China 2025" and the more recent 14th Five-Year Plan.

The outcome is a fierce competition for technical domination. China is creating national innovation centers, investing billions of dollars in R&D, and providing incentives to domestic companies to lessen their dependency on international suppliers. Through legislative initiatives like the CHIPS and Science Act, the U.S. is also increasing investments in its own technological infrastructure with the goal of reviving semiconductor research and manufacture domestically.

This larger picture makes it clear that the trade war is now about who will dominate global innovation and digital infrastructure, not just economics or tariff policies. The stakes are worldwide, ranging from the rollout of 5G networks to the creation of advanced processors

and artificial intelligence. In addition to defining economic leadership, the results of this technical competition will also define the norms, values, and governance of the digital age.

Furthermore, the wider geopolitical balance, diplomatic alliances, and global supply networks are all significantly impacted by this conflict. Countries all across the world are being forced to deal with this division, frequently having to decide whether to align with the technological ecosystems of China or the United States. With each having its own standards, platforms, and rules, the formation of two potentially opposing spheres of influence poses a challenge to the global technological environment, making it less interoperable and more separated.

In conclusion, the U.S.-China trade war's technology component demonstrates that the dispute is as much about the future of world power as it is about current trade. It represents an effort to mold the laws, structures, and capacities that will govern the global order in the ensuing decades. The world is keeping a careful eye on both

countries as they intensify their efforts at innovation and strategic independence, knowing that the result of this contest will have far-reaching effects that go well beyond economics.

Efforts Toward Resolution and the Role of the Biden Administration

President Joe Biden inherited a complicated relationship with China when he assumed office in 2021. The Biden administration kept many of the tariffs put in place by the Trump administration, but it adopted a more global strategy and placed an emphasis on reestablishing partnerships. As part of a larger strategy toward China, the emphasis switched to addressing structural issues including human rights, labor standards, and climate change.

Relationship stabilization has been attempted in part through the resumption of diplomatic discussions and economic discussions. Tensions still exist, nevertheless, especially in light of the expanding geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific area, and a complete resolution is still difficult. ■



**S. Somanath,
ISRO Chairman**

-India's space economy is expected to grow from \$9 billion currently to \$45 billion in the next ten years, with the private sector playing a major role.

India's space program is now a potent representation of the country's aspirations, scientific prowess, and technical inventiveness. The change from launching sounding rockets in the 1960s to carrying out intricate interplanetary missions has been astounding. What started out as a little project to use space technology to advance society by enhancing resource management, education, and communication has grown into a key component of India's economic and strategic strategy. The Indian space industry has experienced a paradigm shift in the last ten years, growing significantly in size and sophistication. It has become a hub for scientific research as well as a rapidly expanding sector that spurs innovation, creates jobs, and draws in foreign capital.

India's accomplishments in low-cost, high-impact missions have won praise from around the world and established the nation as a trustworthy space technology partner. India is becoming one of the most intriguing frontiers in the global space competition thanks to the recent explosion of commercial space entrepreneurs and the loosening of government regulations. Reaching the stars is no longer the only goal of the Indian space economy; it also aims to

India's Space Economy

A Rising Star in the Global Space Race

unlock commercial possibilities, improve national security, improve governance through satellite services, and empower millions of citizens through space-based technologies. It is evident that India's space aspirations are based on both promise and purpose as it looks to the future.

Historical Evolution of India's Space Program The Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR), founded in 1962 under the visionary leadership of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, marked the beginning of India's space exploration. An important turning point in the institutionalization of the nation's space endeavors was the establishment of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) in 1969. India's space strategy has always prioritized useful applications meant to improve society. India's strategy focused on exploiting space technology for communication, education, weather forecasting, and natural resource management, in contrast to the space competition between the US and the USSR.

India was thrilled to launch its first satellite, Aryabhata, in 1975, which set the stage for the country's own launch vehicle development. The Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV), Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), and Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) are the products of later efforts. India was able to provide dependable and affordable space access because to these fundamental accomplishments. As ISRO's mission portfolio developed from Earth observation to deep space exploration, its credibility increased over time.

The Current Size and Scope of India's Space Economy

The Indian space industry is estimated to be worth \$8 billion as of 2024, making up 2% to 3% of the \$400 billion worldwide space sector. Despite being relatively small, this market share is expected to grow quickly, as the Indian government has set a goal of obtaining 10% of the worldwide market by 2030. The growing demand for satellite-based services, the availability of commercial launch prospects, and the growth of international partnerships all contribute to this objective.

The Indian space economy encompasses a number of important areas. These include of ground infrastructure, launch services, satellite manufacturing, and satellite-based applications such as Earth observation, communication, and navigation. Additionally, planetary missions, human spaceflight, and internet connectivity from space are gaining popularity. When combined, these areas form a complex ecosystem that combines strategic economic influence with technology innovation.

ISRO's Central Role and Key Achievements

The backbone of India's space program, ISRO is renowned globally for completing challenging missions at a fraction of the price. The company's success is now attributed to its reputation for "frugal innovation." The 2013 launch of the Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan) served as a perfect illustration of this. It was the most affordable Mars mission ever, costing only \$74 million, and it was the first country

to successfully put India's satellite into Martian orbit.

With the successful soft landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the lunar south pole in 2023, India cemented its position in space history. India became the first nation to successfully land in this difficult area as a result. Additionally, by launching 104 satellites in a single flight, the PSLV-C37 mission in 2017 broke the previous record. These accomplishments increase India's appeal as a low-cost launch service supplier while also boosting national pride. By providing services to clients around the world, ISRO's commercial divisions, Antrix Corporation and the more recent NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), play a key role in generating revenue from these capabilities.

The Emergence of the Private Space Sector

One of the most significant developments in recent years is the emergence of a vibrant private space sector in India. While earlier private companies mostly functioned as component suppliers for the rise of a thriving private space industry in India is among the most important recent developments. Private firms used to only supply ISRO with components, but now they are creating end-to-end solutions, which include data services, rockets, and satellites. With this change, India's space industry enters a new era of entrepreneurship.

Numerous startups have drawn interest both domestically and abroad. By launching the Vikram-S in 2022, Skyroot Aerospace became the first private Indian business to construct and launch a rocket. Known for using 3D-printed engines, Agnikul Cosmos is developing compact, adaptable launch vehicles. For high-resolution Earth observation, Pixxel, another emerging star, is launching a constellation of hyperspectral imaging satellites. Miniaturized satellite platforms are being developed by Dhruva Space for a variety of uses. With more than 150 space-tech companies already operating, this industry is rapidly emerging as a major force in innovation, drawing in venture

capital and developing skilled individuals.

Policy Reforms Driving Growth

Careful and forward-thinking policy changes have greatly boosted the growth of India's private space industry. The Indian government created the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACe) in 2020 after realizing the importance of private sector involvement. By serving as a regulator, promoter, and facilitator, IN-SPACe gives private companies access to ISRO's technology, infrastructure, and knowledge.

The duties of different stakeholders were further simplified under the Indian Space Policy of 2023. NSIL and private companies were given responsibility for commercial activities, while ISRO was assigned to concentrate on research, innovation, and high-risk missions.

This distinct division of responsibilities guarantees a sound separation between commercial exploitation and exploration, enabling each to thrive on its own.

The government's liberalization of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the space industry in 2024 marked another significant development. For satellite manufacture and launch services, the new policy allows up to 74% FDI through the automated route; for sensitive projects, up to 100% FDI is permissible with government permission. It is anticipated that this will draw in foreign cutting-edge technology, encourage joint partnerships, and draw in global finance.

International Collaborations

Active international cooperation has bolstered India's rise in the global space industry. The nation collaborates closely with national space agencies such as France's CNES, the European Space Agency (ESA), and NASA. The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission is a flagship project of this collaboration, with the goal of gathering comprehensive Earth data to track natural disasters and climate change.

India has demonstrated its willingness to taking part in multilateral deep-space missions by signing the Artemis Accords, a

framework for peaceful lunar exploration led by the United States. India's international ties have become even more diverse as a result of collaborations with Russia, Japan, and Australia, which have improved capacity building, technology sharing, and mission co-development.

Strategic and Defense Dimensions

Space has grown to be an essential part of India's strategic capabilities and defense, in addition to its civilian uses. The nation's emphasis on safeguarding its space assets is demonstrated by the creation of the Defence Space Agency (DSA) and the successful completion of an anti-satellite (ASAT) test in 2019 under Mission Shakti.

These days, satellite systems are essential to India's military setup. Both military and civilian users can get positioning services through the NavIC navigation system. A rising array of military satellites has also improved the capabilities of secure communication, surveillance, and reconnaissance. Space dominance is becoming just as important as air, land, or marine power as the world's competition heats up.

Applications and Economic Impact on Daily Life

In India, space-based services are revolutionizing daily life by enhancing governance, resource management, and efficiency. Satellite imaging is used in agriculture to forecast harvests, improve irrigation, and track crop health. In a nation where more than half of the population works as farmers, these instruments are very useful.

Remote sensing and early warning systems that help with flood prediction, cyclone tracking, and post-disaster recovery have greatly improved disaster management. Space data is used in urban planning to monitor infrastructure and create smart cities. By bridging the digital divide, satellite-based internet and communication services are increasing information access in underserved and rural areas. ■

India's Export Business Engine of Economic Growth and Global Integration

With its diverse population, abundant natural resources, and spirit of entrepreneurship, India has become one of the most dynamic economies in the world. The export industry has been one of the most important cornerstones assisting its rise on the international scene. India's exports have developed from traditional commodities to a sophisticated and broad array of goods and services, with their historical roots in the spice and textile trade routes. As a result of India's integration into the global economy, exports are now a major contributor to economic development, foreign exchange profits, and job creation.

With the help of reforms, technological developments, and a youthful, competitive labor force, India, the world's fifth-largest economy, has greatly increased its ability to trade internationally. India's export portfolio has expanded to include everything from pharmaceuticals and IT services to cars and agricultural products, aligning domestic capabilities with international demand. India is being seen as a possible candidate to become a major supplier in global value chains as the globe looks for alternatives to major manufacturing centers. India's export aspirations have consequences for regional and global trade balances in addition to its own prosperity at a time when countries are readjusting their trade policies in a post-pandemic, geopolitically fractured globe.

The Historical Evolution of India's Export Trade

India has a long history of exporting, having been a major hub in prehistoric trading networks for thousands of years. With the Roman Empire, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, Indian traders exchanged valuable stones, textiles, and spices. The handcrafted silk and cotton textiles from the subcontinent were highly sought after worldwide. India's natural trading patterns were distorted by the entry of European colonial powers, especially during British rule, when the country was used as a market for British manufactured goods and as a supply of raw materials.

India adopted an inward-looking economic strategy after gaining independence in 1947, emphasizing import substitution and self-reliance. During this period, the export industry was too controlled and underdeveloped. Exports didn't start to take off until 1991, when the Indian economy was liberalized. Economic reforms lowered tariffs, promoted private enterprise, and broke down trade obstacles. These adjustments made it possible for companies to compete globally and draw in foreign investment, laying the groundwork for India's present export-oriented prosperity.

Structure and Composition of India's Export Economy

The size and diversity of India's export-based economy are noteworthy.

It encompasses both high-growth contemporary businesses like pharmaceuticals, computer technology, and autos as well as more conventional sectors like textiles, agriculture, and gems and jewelry. This diverse portfolio increases India's resilience to outside shocks and lessens its reliance on any one market or product.

India's information technology (IT) and IT-enabled services (ITES) industries are among the most competitive in the world. Global brands like Wipro, Infosys, and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) export software solutions and services to customers in Asia, Europe, and North America.

This industry alone makes up a sizable portion of India's service export revenue and establishes the nation as a knowledge-based economy.

One of the leading exporters of pharmaceuticals worldwide, India provides more than 200 nations with reasonably priced generic medications. During the COVID-19 epidemic, when Indian companies sent vaccinations and essential medications to dozens of countries under the "Vaccine Maitri" campaign, the industry gained international recognition. Similar growth has been seen in the automotive and auto-components sector, with exports to Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia ranging from two-wheelers to tractors and spare parts.

The export environment still depends heavily on traditional industry. Millions of people are employed in the textile and garment sector, which also continues to contribute significantly to export earnings. Similarly, India's agrarian strength is demonstrated by the export of agricultural goods to different regions, such as rice, tea, spices, and marine items. With a special emphasis on diamond cutting and polishing, the gem and jewelry industry, which is based in Gujarat and Maharashtra, is a major source of foreign exchange earnings.

Key Export Destinations and Trade Agreements

India's bilateral and international trade partnerships are intimately linked to its export strategy. India's biggest export destination is the US, especially for engineering equipment, pharmaceuticals, and IT services. Among India's major export destinations are the United Arab Emirates, China, Bangladesh, the European Union, and countries in Southeast Asia. India is now less dependent on any one nation thanks to the variety of its relationships.

Access to markets for Indian goods has been made easier thanks in large part to trade agreements. India has signed a number of bilateral and regional trade agreements, such as those with South Korea, Japan, and ASEAN, as well as those under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA). India has recently sought Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with nations including Australia, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom, despite opting out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in 2020 amid worries about trade imbalances.

These agreements seek to guarantee mutual recognition of standards, eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers, and provide transparent regulatory frameworks. Additionally, they provide platforms for boosting India's competitiveness in high-value industries including green technologies, renewable energy, and digital trade.

Government Policies and Institutional Support

To encourage exports and assist companies involved in foreign trade, the Indian government has put in place a number of laws and programs. For exporters, the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) offers operational guidance and strategic direction. Even though the pandemic caused a delay in the most recent FTP, its most recent version places a strong emphasis on market diversification, removing logistical obstacles, and encouraging high-tech exports.

By lowering costs and promoting domestic production, programs like the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) program

and the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) seek to increase competitiveness. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) program provide further incentives in the form of infrastructural assistance and tax breaks.

Institutions that offer funding, policy support, and market intelligence include the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and the Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank). The digitization of customs procedures and connection with international logistics platforms have also improved trade facilitation measures, cutting down on the time and expenses involved in cross-border trade.

Challenges Facing India's Export Sector

India's export industry still faces some structural and policy-related obstacles in spite of tremendous advancements. Inefficiency in the infrastructure is one of the main problems. When compared to manufacturing giants like China or Vietnam, Indian exports are less competitive due to factors including inadequate port capacity, clogged highways, and expensive logistics expenses.

Persistent obstacles could include regulatory uncertainty and bureaucratic obstacles. Even though doing business in India is now easier, exporters frequently experience delays because of taxation, customs clearances, and compliance requirements. Furthermore, both exporters and foreign buyers may experience uncertainty due to frequent changes in trade policy and taxes.

India also grapples with supply chain fragmentation. Many small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of the export economy, lack access to modern technologies, capital, and global networks. This limits their ability to scale and upgrade their operations.

Finally, geopolitical factors and global economic volatility pose external risks. Fluctuations in oil prices, trade wars, currency instability, and shifting

global demand patterns can have disproportionate impacts on export volumes. The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare these vulnerabilities, disrupting both demand and supply chains.

Opportunities and the Road Ahead

Even if there are still obstacles to overcome, India's export industry has a lot of expanding prospects. India has an opportunity to become a preferred location for manufacturing and exporting as a result of the worldwide trend toward China-plus-one sourcing strategies, in which businesses look for suppliers outside of China. India can strategically place itself in global supply chains thanks to its sizable labor base, developing modern manufacturing capabilities, and expanding infrastructure.

New export opportunities have been made possible by the drive for digitization and e-commerce. Digital platforms have made it possible for Indian service providers, small businesses, and craftsmen to reach international markets. Cross-border e-commerce exports and government programs to encourage digital literacy are starting to pay off, particularly for high-margin, specialty goods.

Additionally, India has the potential to become a leader in sustainable and green exports, especially in fields like electric vehicles, solar energy, organic farming, and climate-resilient technologies. Indian exporters who adhere to environmental and social governance (ESG) norms stand to benefit from a competitive edge as global markets grow more sustainability-focused.

Additionally, capacity may be increased in cutting-edge industries like semiconductor design, artificial intelligence services, and aerospace components by utilizing India's young population and innovation ecosystem. India can advance up the value chain and export high-tech, value-added goods and services by encouraging industry-academia cooperation and upskilling its labor force. ■

Weaving a Greener Future: Sustainable Fashion



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

"We believe that taking care of nature is our moral and fundamental duty. India is the first G-20 country to have fulfilled the commitments it made under the Paris agreement, ahead of time."



Fashion is no more just a means of dressing or an art form; it has developed into a potent symbol of culture, identity, and beliefs. The society and surroundings we live in are frequently reflected directly in the clothes we choose to wear. The fashion business is experiencing a paradigm shift as a result of global concerns about climate change, environmental degradation, and ethical consumption. Previously regarded as a luxury or a status symbol, fashion is now closely examined for its effects on the environment and its inhabitants. The growing demand for sustainability, a concept that is not new but is currently gaining extraordinary support globally, particularly in India, is at the center of this transition. India, which has a long history of



craftsmanship, colorful textiles, and traditional weaving methods, is at a turning point in its history. On the one hand, it is home to some of the most prestigious textile arts in the world, where long-standing customs like silk manufacture, handloom weaving, and natural dyeing are still practiced today. Due to their low automation and use of organic resources, these methods have long been associated with sustainability. However, urbanization, rising affluence, and the expanding influence of international fashion trends are also contributing to the nation's extraordinary increase in fast fashion consumption. The environmental and social effects of India's explosive growth in the textile and apparel sector are becoming increasingly noticeable.

Both the environment and the workers in the sector have suffered greatly as a result of the need for inexpensive, mass-produced clothes, which is frequently

evident in the form of inexpensive apparel offered for sale at high-street retailers and online. Growing amounts of textile waste, wasteful use of water and synthetic fibers, and unethical labor practices that frequently accompany mass production have all been exacerbated by the rise of fast fashion. India's clothing manufacturers are operating at full capacity, generating millions of garments annually due to the country's rising need for reasonably priced clothes. However, a large portion of this output has a tremendous cost to human rights and the environment.

India's fashion scene is both challenging and fascinating due to the fusion of ancient textile skill with the contemporary difficulties of industrial-scale production. The nation is home to several eco-conscious designers, craftspeople, and companies that are promoting sustainable practices, even as the demand for stylish, reasonably priced apparel rises.

These companies are utilizing creative approaches to combine ancient Indian textile practices with modern designs that support environmental responsibility, ethical labor, and sustainability.

Therefore, sustainable fashion in India is more than just a fad; it is a reflection of the nation's efforts to make peace with its history and its future. In addition to incorporating contemporary solutions to address the present environmental challenges, it draws from the values of ancient Indian textile methods, which have always had a deep respect for nature. India's sustainable fashion movement is rooted in both innovation and cultural tradition, as seen by the production of organic cotton, the use of plant-based dyes, the resurgence of handloom weaving, and the promotion of zero-waste fashion.

India's Traditional Roots in Sustainable Fashion



India has a rich cultural and historical heritage with regard to fashion. Indian apparel and textiles have long been prized for their intricate dyeing methods, use of natural fabrics, and craftsmanship. The traditional techniques for creating and dying cloth were naturally sustainable, and the subcontinent used to be the world's top producer of cotton textiles. In addition to being common, practices like handloom weaving, natural dyeing, and the usage of biodegradable textiles were emblematic of India's close ties to the natural world. Perhaps the first example of sustainable fashion before the term became popular in the modern era was the Khadi movement, which Mahatma Gandhi supported during India's fight for independence. Khadi stood for both economic independence and a deliberate break from the British Empire's exploitative, industrialized textile factories.

The Rise of Fast Fashion and Its Environmental Impact

In spite of this heritage, the Indian fashion industry is currently facing a

conundrum. On the one hand, it still supports millions of handloom weavers, dyers, embroiderers, and craftspeople, making it home to one of the biggest artisanal sectors globally. However, it has also emerged as a key participant in the global fast fashion ecosystem, providing mass-produced clothing that frequently violates ethical and environmental standards to both domestic and foreign markets. The need for reasonably priced, stylish apparel has increased in India due to rising incomes and a developing middle class. But this increase has come at a heavy cost: rivers contaminated by dye effluents, landfills overflowing with textile waste, and subpar working conditions for garment workers.

In India, fashion has a big impact on the environment. One of the most resource-intensive industries, the textile sector contributes to carbon emissions, water pollution, and land degradation. It takes up to 10,000 liters of water to produce one kilogram of cotton, the fabric most frequently used in apparel. Hazardous chemicals are released

into water bodies during the dyeing and finishing operations, impacting both human health and ecosystems. Furthermore, microplastics have been released into the environment due to the growth of synthetic fibers like polyester, causing long-term ecological risks. Another urgent problem is waste. More clothing is being thrown away than ever before as a result of the fast fashion model's promotion of rapid consumption. Over a million tonnes of textile waste are produced in India each year, with a large portion of that material ending up in incinerators or unofficial landfills.

The Resurgence of Sustainable Fashion in Contemporary India

In light of this, it is both vital and timely for sustainable fashion to emerge in India. The sustainable fashion movement has its roots in revival and reinvention in India, as opposed to the West, where it started as a counterculture to mainstream consumerism. In order to make fashion more sustainable, designers,

businesspeople, and ethical shoppers are increasingly taking inspiration from India's ancient textile legacy while also embracing contemporary technologies. To lessen their influence on the environment, a number of Indian designers have resorted to using organic textiles, plant-based dyes, and age-old artisanal methods. Their strategy demonstrates that sustainability should not sacrifice flair by fusing ethics and aesthetics.

More and more fashion brands have adopted eco-friendly methods in recent years. Natural fabrics that are biodegradable and use less water and chemicals, such as organic cotton, hemp, bamboo, and khadi, are given priority by these manufacturers. Others include recycling and upcycling, making clothing out of leftover fabrics or textile waste. This prolongs the lives of materials that might otherwise go unused and lessens the load on landfills. Technological advancements in textiles are also contributing; several firms are investigating the production of sustainable yarns from agricultural waste, such as the fibers of bananas and pineapples.

Ethical Practices and Social Sustainability

However, sustainability in fashion encompasses more than just production methods or materials. It also involves minimizing overproduction, encouraging conscientious consumerism, and guaranteeing moral labor practices. Sustainability must also address social justice in India, where the garment industry provides a living for millions of workers, especially women. Any truly sustainable model must include respect for traditional knowledge systems, safe working conditions, and fair remuneration. In addition to preserving cultural heritage, assisting regional craftspeople and dispersed, small-scale production facilities boosts rural economies.

Challenges to Sustainable

Fashion in India

Notwithstanding these positive advancements, there are still several obstacles in India's way of the broad adoption of sustainable fashion. The cost is one of the main challenges. Many people believe that only the metropolitan elite can afford sustainable clothes. Consumers eventually bear the price of low-volume production, eco-friendly materials, and ethical labor, which reduces the competitiveness of such products in a market where rapid fashion is the norm. Cost is still a major consideration for people who are price sensitive while making purchases.

Awareness is another obstacle. Many Indian customers are still ignorant of the social and environmental consequences associated with the clothes they buy. For a long time, fashion marketing has prioritized price, trends, and aesthetics over sustainability. A cultural transformation that prioritizes longevity over novelty and quality over quantity is necessary to change consumer behavior. Public awareness-raising initiatives, brand narratives, and increased media attention can all be crucial. It is also the duty of fashion leaders, influencers, and celebrities to popularize sustainable options and shape consumer tastes.

Greenwashing is a further danger. Many firms make flimsy or deceptive statements about their environmental practices without taking meaningful action, as sustainability turns into a trendy phrase. In addition to confusing customers, this undercuts the efforts of companies that are truly sustainable. Third-party audits, accreditation programs, and regulatory frameworks that can offer accountability and transparency are becoming more and more necessary to address this. By encouraging eco-friendly businesses, funding R&D, and offering incentives for sustainable practices, the Indian government may play a significant role.

Policy Initiatives and Government Support

Interventions at the policy level are starting to take shape. The Ministry of Textiles has implemented programs to support traditional crafts, handlooms, and natural fibers. Awareness of India's artisanal heritage has increased because to occasions like National Handloom Day. In addition, the Bureau of Indian Standards is developing eco-labels to assist customers in recognizing sustainable goods. However, there is still considerable work to be done to mainstream sustainability in the fashion and textile industries. To create a strong and resilient ecosystem for sustainable fashion, cooperation between the public sector, private sector, academic institutions, and civil society is crucial.

Technology and the Future of Sustainable Fashion in India

Integrating tradition and technology is key to the future of sustainable fashion in India. Modern techniques like artificial intelligence, blockchain for supply chain transparency, and digital platforms for artisan outreach might improve India's centuries-old textile-making knowledge, including water-efficient dyeing, natural fabric blending, and handloom weaving. Waste can be greatly decreased by using circular fashion models, in which clothing is made to be recycled, resold, and reused. Platforms for renting and buying used clothing are also becoming more and more well-liked, particularly among young people in cities who care about the environment.

Sustainable fashion is a long-term need rather than a passing fad. It offers India a special chance to set an example. India can develop a fashion business that is not only competitive on a global scale but also socially and environmentally conscious by leveraging its cultural assets and embracing innovation. A new narrative is evolving as designers, customers, legislators, and entrepreneurs continue to work together: one in which fashion is not environmentally costly and each item of clothing reflects a story of consciousness, care, and craftsmanship. ■

DEMOCRATIC AI NEW ERA

Recently, OpenAI announced a ground-breaking global initiative called "Democratic AI," which represents a major turning point in the creation and application of artificial intelligence technologies based on democratic ideals. This endeavor is a daring attempt to tackle one of the most important issues of the AI era: how to make sure that the use of AI is in line with the interests and values of many populations rather than being dominated by a small number of influential organizations or governments.

The Democratic AI initiative's fundamental tenet is decentralizing artificial intelligence's power and giving local governments and communities the authority to develop, modify, and manage AI systems in ways that are specific to their own cultural, social, and economic contexts. With the help of OpenAI, countries—particularly those in the Global South and underdeveloped areas—will be able to fully utilize AI's promise without compromising their sovereignty, equity, or moral principles.

During the event, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman stressed the need of inclusion in AI development. AI should benefit humanity as a whole, not just a select few, he said. Making sure that every country has the resources, infrastructure, and voice to influence how AI affects its future is the goal of democratic AI. In contrast to the previous, more centralized models of AI dissemination, this vision calls for a collaborative and participatory strategy that solicits feedback from a broad range of stakeholders, including governments, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and indigenous populations.

The introduction of ethical governance frameworks adapted to the legal and moral environments of various nations is a key element of the Democratic AI initiative. OpenAI will offer ethical toolkits, policy guidelines, and technical support, but it won't impose universally applicable



solutions. Rather, the corporation wants to collaborate with regional organizations to jointly develop AI regulations that include democratic principles like accountability, transparency, equity, and participatory decision-making.

The Democratic AI initiative also recognizes the dangers of algorithmic bias, disinformation, and surveillance that have dogged previous AI technology implementations. As a result, OpenAI is putting strong transparency measures in place, such as audit logs that are available to the public, explainable AI systems, and citizen review boards that will supervise regional AI tool deployments. By fostering trust between AI developers and the communities they serve, these steps hope to promote candid discussions about the limitations and effects of the technology.

The initiative's two main areas of focus have been determined to be healthcare and education. Democratic AI will help the healthcare industry build AI systems that help with patient monitoring, diagnoses, and health record

administration, particularly in areas with limited access to medical expertise. Strict data privacy guidelines will guide the design of these tools, and ethics boards and local health ministries will work together to assess them. In order to fill in the gaps in teacher availability and educational resources, the initiative will support personalized learning platforms in education that adjust to students' learning styles, languages, and curriculum requirements.

Kenya, Brazil, Indonesia, and Ukraine are among the nations that have already started early experimental programs. For example, OpenAI and the Ministry

of Education in Kenya have collaborated to create an AI tutor in Swahili that helps children in distant locations with science and arithmetic. In the meantime, a regional AI system in Brazil is being trained on medical records in Portuguese to help underprivileged rural clinics increase the accuracy of their diagnoses. These pilots act as learning and proof of concept opportunities, enabling OpenAI and its partners to improve their strategy in response to practical input.

The Democratic AI initiative's focus on democratic feedback methods is among its most inventive features. OpenAI will support the creation of citizen advisory councils in each participating location, which will be made up of locals with direct control over the implementation and oversight of AI. These councils will have the authority to voice concerns, make recommendations for enhancements, and guarantee that AI technologies are in line with the priorities and values of the community. ■

COACHELLA 2025

As a thriving celebration of music, culture, and activism, Coachella 2025 solidified its place as a top international music festival and a cultural landmark that goes beyond simple amusement. This year's event, which took place at the sun-drenched Empire Polo Club in Indio, California, over two weekends in April, was more than just a star-studded musical extravaganza; it was a vibrant fusion of social consciousness, international voices, and artistic expression.

Festival attendees were immediately engrossed in a creatively liberated environment where music, visual arts, fashion, and technology all blended together harmoniously. The actual grounds were converted into a sensory playground with interactive experiences created by globally recognized artists, immersive digital exhibits, and expansive art installations. The festival's already rich musical tapestry gained dimension from these visual spectacles, which also created an environment that was as much about interaction and discovery as it was about amusement.

Coachella 2025 featured one of its most varied musical lineups to yet. The roster was carefully chosen by the organizers to highlight geographical diversity and intercultural cooperation in addition to covering a wide range of genres, from Latin pop, Afrobeats, and K-pop to indie rock, EDM, and hip-hop. This strategy established Coachella as a venue for up-and-coming international voices to reach a wide-ranging, worldwide audience, reflecting a larger movement in the global music business toward inclusiveness and representation.

The main acts at the event gave performances that were both magnificent and thought-provoking. Lady Gaga became just the second female headlining Coachella as she made a comeback to the stage. Her set, which included a dramatic performance of "Poker Face" amid a dance duel with a chess theme, was praised for its theatricality and emotional depth. In their Coachella debut, Green Day addressed political topics, including a criticism of former President Donald Trump, while electrifying the audience with their punk anthems. Post Malone left



a lasting impression on the audience with a performance that blended pop, rap, and country music as the festival's finale.

Beyond the main acts, Coachella 2025 featured a number of noteworthy events and partnerships. Clairó was presented by Senator Bernie Sanders, who took the occasion to talk about economic equality, women's rights, and climate change. Fans were delighted by Lorde's unexpected duet with Charli XCX as they sang a remix of "Girl, so confusing" during their infrequent performance. Fans and other artists took notice of Blackpink member LISA's first solo performance.

International performers from a wide range of genres were also included during the festival. From Spanish band Judeline's flamenco-inspired performance to Mexican musician Junior H's corridos, Coachella 2025 demonstrated how international modern music is. The festival's dedication to presenting a diverse range of musical genres was highlighted by the participation of

musicians such as Tyla, who made her stage debut with an unexpected duet with Becky G, and the dominance of electronic bands on the dance stages.

The festival wasn't without controversy, though. Kneecap, an Irish hip-hop band, provoked controversy with their politically heated concerts that called for Palestinian liberation and criticized US support for Israel. The group experienced outrage, including the cancellation of several shows and the loss of U.S. representation, after their set was taken out of the event's webcast.

In spite of these conflicts, Coachella 2025 managed to provide a vibrant and complex event. The festival's standing as a major player in the music industry was reinforced by its ability to combine well-known acts with up-and-coming artists, political debate, and ethnic variety. Attendees left the desert grounds with recollections of a festival that sparked discussion and thought in addition to providing entertainment. ■

MET GALA 2025: GLAMOUR AT PEAK

An iconic occasion in the fashion industry, the Met Gala 2025 took place on May 5 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style," the evening's subject, was a deep dive into Black dandyism and its important influence on Black identities throughout the Atlantic diaspora. Highlighting the development and significance of Black sartorial expression spanning centuries, this was the first menswear-only show at the Costume Institute since "Men in Skirts" in 2003.



The 2009 book *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity* by Monica L. Miller served as the basis for the exhibition, which was curated by Andrew Bolton. Miller's work

highlighted how Black people have utilized fashion to question social norms and proclaim their identities, positioning Black dandyism as both an aesthetic and political concept. Twelve theme areas, each representing a distinct aspect of Black dandyism from the 18th century to modern interpretations, made up the exhibition.

"Tailored for You," the dress code that went along with it, encouraged guests to interpret the concept through custom-tailored outfits. This free-form instruction promoted a celebration of uniqueness and artistry, enabling attendees to use their clothing to convey how they understood the theme. The event's co-chairs were a broad and powerful group, including Vogue editor-in-chief Anna Wintour, rapper A\$AP Rocky, Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton, actor Colman Domingo, and singer Pharrell Williams. LeBron James, a basketball legend, was the honorary co-chair. Their participation demonstrated the event's dedication to celebrating Black

talent across a range of disciplines and its understanding of the relationship between identity, culture, and fashion.

Celebrities wore outfits that honored Black dandyism on the red carpet, which served as a visual representation of the evening's theme. Wearing a beautifully fitted Marc Jacobs ensemble that combined traditional tailoring with contemporary sensibility, Rihanna flaunted her pregnancy. Janelle Monáe embodied avant-garde dandyism with her disassembled Thom Browne suit and clock monocle, while Teyana Taylor dazzled in a crimson outfit she designed herself with dramatic silhouettes. Other noteworthy appearances included Jenna Ortega's whimsical dress inspired by a Balmain ruler, Lupita Nyong'o in Chanel, Zoe Saldana in Thom Browne, and Doechee in a contemporary androgynous Louis Vuitton ensemble.

With a stunning fashion reveal inspired by Formula One racing, Damson Idris made a dramatic arrival. He showed up wearing a white racing outfit that had been custom-made by Tommy Hilfiger, complete with emblems, and a red, white, and black helmet that had about 20,000 Swarovski crystals set into it. In a dramatic moment, two helpers took off the racing suit to reveal a crimson tuxedo with satin lapels and a red and gold tartan print, which was also Hilfiger's creation. A custom emerald brooch and jewelry from Idris' own brand, DIDRIS, which he claimed draws inspiration from his mother's goals that were sacrificed and his own developing sense of taste, completed the look.

In addition to celebrating fashion, the

event offered insight into the cultural and historical relevance of Black dandyism. From the 18th century to the present, the exhibition's clothing, photos, artwork, writings, and artifacts documented the development of Black men's fashion. The exhibit had sections that focused on themes including "Ownership," "Juke," and "Cosmopolitanism," each of which examined a distinct facet of Black fashion and how it shapes identity.

The public can view "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style" from May 10 to October 26, 2025. The show provides a thorough examination of how Black people have reinterpreted ideas of masculinity and identity, challenged social conventions, and used fashion as a means of self-expression and resistance. The Met Gala 2025 served as evidence of Black dandyism's continuing impact on world fashion. It emphasized how critical it is to acknowledge and honor Black people's contributions to the fashion industry and beyond. The event demonstrated the ability of fashion as a storytelling and cultural expression medium through its topic, dress code, and varied audience. To sum up, the Met Gala 2025 was a significant celebration of Black history, identity, and style rather than merely a dazzling occasion. The evening's emphasis on Black dandyism paid tribute to the history of Black people who have challenged social standards and asserted their identities via fashion. The exhibition and red carpet provided a forum for discussion and introspection on the relationship between fashion, culture, and identity while showcasing the diverse range of Black fashion. ■



Rugby Premier League 2025: India's Bold Professional Leap

India will enter the world of professional rugby sevens in June 2025 with the launch of the Rugby Premier League (RPL), a historic development for Indian sports. This first season, which will take place in Mumbai's Andheri Sports Complex from June 1 to June 15, is expected to revolutionize the sport there.

Being the first franchise-based rugby sevens league in history, the RPL represents a major turning point for Rugby India and evidence of the sport's rising appeal. The Bengaluru Bravehearts, Chennai Bulls, Delhi Redz, Hyderabad Heroes, Kalinga Black Tigers, and Mumbai Dreamers are the league's six city-based teams. With a 34-match schedule, these clubs will provide Indian fans with exciting rugby action.

The RPL's partnership with GMR Sports, a prominent player in India's sports industry, is a crucial component. In an effort to raise rugby's profile in the nation, GMR Sports has teamed up with Rugby India to start the league. This collaboration demonstrates a dedication to supporting grassroots growth and building a long-lasting sport ecosystem. GMR Sports, renowned for its prosperous forays into cricket and kabaddi, contributes invaluable experience to the RPL, guaranteeing its prosperity and durability.

The structure of the league is intended to highlight rugby sevens' dynamic nature. The RPL delivers fast-paced, high-energy

games that are sure to enthrall viewers because matches are played over a short amount of time. The league's desire to have a big impact is further highlighted by the choice to hold the first season in Mumbai, a city with a growing sports culture.

International rugby stars playing in the RPL is one of its most thrilling features. From rugby powerhouses including New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Fiji, Argentina, Great Britain, Ireland, the USA, and Spain, the league has drawn 30 top players. Due to their extensive experience and skill, these players raise the league's level of competition.

Mohit Khatri has become one of the most talented Indian players. Khatri secured a position with the Bengaluru Bravehearts by being the most expensive Indian player in the player draft and auction that took place in Mumbai. His choice demonstrates the breadth of Indian talent and the opportunity for domestic athletes to establish themselves on the global scene.

Additionally, the RPL gives Indian

players a stage on which to display their abilities and obtain recognition. With a blend of seasoned pros and up-and-coming talent, the league provides players with a rare chance to compete at a high level, pick the brains of international coaches, and become well-known in the rugby world.

The influence of the league is not limited to the field. It is anticipated that the RPL would motivate a new generation of Indian rugby fans, promoting youth involvement and developing a greater love for the game. By ensuring that the league reaches a large audience, big broadcasters like JioHotstar and Star Sports help to further promote rugby's rise in the nation.

All things considered, the Rugby Premier League 2025 marks a major advancement for rugby in India. Through the integration of professional competition and international cooperation, the league lays the groundwork for the growth and advancement of the sport in the nation. Anticipation is growing for what is expected to be a historic moment in Indian sports as the first season draws near. ■

Backbone of India's Telecom Network

The Saga of BSNL's Rise, Decline, and Revival



Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), which was once the backbone of India's telecom revolution, is now seen as a representation of both early greatness and systematic failure. Established with the admirable goal of providing accessible and reasonably priced telecom services throughout the country, particularly in rural and isolated areas, BSNL was instrumental in establishing the groundwork for India's digital connectedness. For many years, it served as the only conduit between millions of Indians and the outside world, whether via early internet services or fixed-line telephones. In addition to providing services, BSNL, a state-owned company, operated as a social inclusion tool and a technical link to the future for marginalized communities.

However, BSNL started to struggle as competition increased and the telecom industry in India became more liberalized. The slowness and inefficiencies ingrained in BSNL's bureaucratic structure were made clear by the entry of nimble, privately held competitors, equipped with aggressive pricing strategies, cutting-edge technologies, and customer-centric models. Innovation stalled, crucial choices were bogged down in bureaucratic red tape, and the business started to lose its competitive edge. As the private sector



Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar,

Minister of State for
Communications and Rural
Development

**"Time and again, BSNL
has stood as the nation's
backbone, providing
telecom services in remote,
challenging terrains."**

adopted 3G and 4G technology, BSNL was unable to improve its networks or provide high-speed services to a user base that was becoming more and more demanding due to regulatory and procedural red tape.

The company's decline was slow rather than sudden; it was characterized by a progressive loss of market share, unstable finances, antiquated infrastructure, and a rising public opinion that BSNL was an institution that had not changed. The situation was made worse by internal issues like a bloated workforce, political meddling, and a lack of autonomy. Once a byword for connectivity in India, BSNL was in dire straits by the late 2010s and was dependent on government lifelines to stay afloat.

However, BSNL has never been entirely written off, even with the decline. Understanding its strategic significance, particularly in the areas of national security, digital inclusion, and rural



telephony, the Indian government has worked hard to bring the struggling behemoth back to life. With a focus on domestic 4G and 5G technologies, a number of rescue packages, and ambitious plans for recovery, BSNL's prospects have been given new life. The company is currently at a crossroads as it looks to capitalize on its capabilities in areas where private firms are still not very interested while simultaneously trying to reinvent itself in a fiercely competitive digital economy.

This page provides a thorough account of BSNL's incredible journey, including its ascent to prominence, the causes of its decline, and the current tactics being used to save it.

The Rise of BSNL

Formation

BSNL was incorporated on October 1, 2000, as a completely government-owned enterprise. It was tasked with taking over the telecom services and network management industry when it broke away from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). Providing communications services throughout India was the main goal, particularly in underdeveloped and rural areas where



private companies found it less profitable to operate.

BSNL swiftly rose to prominence as India's biggest telecom provider thanks to the extensive infrastructure it inherited from the DoT, which included hundreds of phone exchanges and a broad landline network. It was regarded as a representation of national connectedness as well as a service provider.

Early 2000s

BSNL was one of India's leading telecom providers in the early 2000s. It had a significant market share in the fixed-line sector and offered landline, broadband, and mobile services. It had unparalleled rural penetration and was essential in enabling the general public to have access to basic telephone service.

In 2005, BSNL took a big stride toward digital inclusion by launching reasonably priced broadband services under the DataOne brand. It enjoyed a leadership position in broadband connectivity for numerous years, notably in semi-urban and rural India.

The Fall

As private telecom firms like Bharti Airtel, Vodafone, and later Reliance Jio joined the market with aggressive pricing, superior customer service, and quick technology advancements, BSNL started to fail despite its strong start and

infrastructural advantage.

1. Bureaucratic Inefficiencies

The bureaucratic structure of BSNL was one of its main drawbacks. Being a state-owned business, government procedures had a significant impact on how it operated, delaying decision-making. Private companies, on the other hand, were able to quickly adjust to changes in the market.

Red tape frequently caused protracted delays in crucial decisions including the purchase of equipment, network expansion, and service enhancements. Private businesses quickly deployed 3G and 4G, although BSNL faced challenges due to antiquated infrastructure and drawn-out approval procedures.

2. Political Interference and Policy Paralysis

Excessive political meddling also contributed to the company's demise. The long-term plan was inconsistent as a result of the many changes in leadership. In addition, there were numerous problems surrounding telecom policy in the 2000s and early 2010s, including the 2G spectrum fraud, which further harmed public sector organizations like BSNL.

BSNL was unable to function as a competitive commercial entity due to its lack of autonomy. Proposals for strategic partnerships, equipment upgrade, and spectrum purchase were either postponed or discarded due to governmental indecision.

3. Delay in 4G Rollout

Possibly the biggest setback for BSNL was its tardy foray into the 4G market. Between 2012 and 2016, when private companies started deploying 4G networks, BSNL was still fighting for procurement approvals and spectrum distribution. Its capacity to retain mobile subscribers was significantly hampered by this delay, as many of them switched to speedier networks provided by private rivals.



With incredibly low data rates and an all-IP network, Reliance Jio had already upended the market and redefined customer expectations by the time BSNL started pilot testing 4G services in a few areas.

4. Financial Losses and Market Share Decline

BSNL's customer base shrank significantly after it was the market leader in fixed-line and a major participant in mobile services. It started losing money year after year. The total losses incurred by BSNL by 2019 exceeded ₹90,000 crore.

It became more and more dependent on government assistance to keep afloat as its market share in the mobile sector fell to single digits. Costs associated with employees, which made up a significant amount of company expenses, further increased the financial burden.

Current Status: revival

BSNL has not disappeared in spite of its demise. In actuality, it continues to be a major force in some telecom market segments, especially in rural and isolated locations. The Indian government has made several attempts to bring BSNL back to life after realizing its strategic significance.

1. Revival Packages and Government Support

In 2019, the Indian government announced a comprehensive revival package for BSNL (and MTNL), which included a ₹69,000 crore package and merger plans with MTNL.

More than 78,000 BSNL workers chose to retire early under the VRS, which was a significant step in lowering the pay load. This gave the business some breathing room and drastically reduced the salary expense.

A second revitalization program, valued at ₹1.64 lakh crore, was revealed



in 2022.

2. 4G and 5G Rollout Plans

Using in-house technology created by ITI Limited and TCS in partnership with C-DoT, BSNL has started rolling out 4G services nationwide as of 2025. In an effort to increase independence and lessen reliance on outside suppliers, BSNL is becoming the first telecom company in India to try a full-scale domestic 4G deployment.

Phased completion of the 4G deployment is anticipated, with commercial launches taking place in multiple states. In the upcoming years, there are also plans to update this infrastructure to 5G.

3. Rural Dominance and Strategic Importance

In rural India, BSNL is still relevant even if it has lost a large portion of its urban business. In isolated and distant regions like Ladakh, the Northeast, and portions of Jammu & Kashmir, it is the only operator offering connectivity. It continues to play a crucial role in disaster management and national security communications.

Many of BSNL's rural initiatives are funded by the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). The company is essential to the BharatNet effort, which aims to provide broadband to every gram panchayats, and it keeps installing optical cable in underserved areas.

4. Broadband and Enterprise Solutions

By providing fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) solutions under the "Bharat Fiber" brand, BSNL has refocused its attention on enterprise and broadband services. There has been considerable success with this, particularly in tier-2 and tier-3 cities where JioFiber and Airtel Xstream are now direct competitors of BSNL.

Its enterprise business provides consistent, if constrained, revenue streams by serving public sector organizations and government entities.

Challenges Ahead

Despite the efforts to revive, BSNL still confronts many obstacles:

- **Technological Delay:** It will be challenging to catch up to private companies who are currently implementing 5G services.
- **Client Perception:** BSNL's brand name has been harmed by years of subpar service and delays.
- **Operational Effort:** BSNL needs to change from being a bureaucratic company to an agile, customer-focused one.
- **Revenue Generation:** It's still difficult to manage expenses and few resources while competing with private companies on price.
- **Private Rivalry:** BSNL faces fierce competition from well-funded, technologically sophisticated, and aggressively marketed companies like Reliance Jio and Airtel. ■



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The RISE of HYDROGEN Energy in India

India, one of the world's fastest-growing economies, has a difficult time striking a balance between environmental sustainability and its energy needs. Energy consumption is predicted to increase significantly over the next few decades as the country continues to industrialize and urbanize. Legislators and business executives now place a high premium on meeting this expanding demand while reducing environmental damage. India's dependence on fossil resources including coal, oil, and natural gas has made it the world's third-largest producer of greenhouse gases. In addition to aggravating environmental problems, this reliance leaves the nation open to price fluctuations and disruptions in the global supply chain.

As worries about climate change, reliance on fossil fuels, and the need for energy security grow, the nation is quickly moving toward renewable energy sources including biomass, wind, and solar. Despite their notable contributions to the energy mix, these sources have drawbacks, especially when it comes to storage issues and intermittency.

India is investigating complementary technologies to overcome these constraints and guarantee a dependable, sustainable, and clean energy future.

Hydrogen energy, especially green hydrogen, has become a viable choice among the newer options. Green hydrogen is created by electrolyzing water with renewable energy, which produces no carbon emissions. For decarbonizing hard-

to-abate industries like steel, cement, and transportation, it provides a flexible and scalable solution. Because of its versatility in terms of storage, transportation, and application, hydrogen is a crucial component in the energy shift.

Countries have been investing in research, pilot projects, and international alliances as the global momentum surrounding hydrogen energy has accelerated in recent years. India is establishing itself as a key participant in the hydrogen economy after realizing this worldwide trend. To increase the production and use of hydrogen, the government has started bold projects backed by business and academia.

The growth of hydrogen energy in India is examined in this essay, along with its historical context, regulatory initiatives, scientific advancements, industry engagement, economic and environmental ramifications, difficulties, international partnerships, and prospects. The essay seeks to shed light on how hydrogen might transform India's energy environment and support a resilient and sustainable future through a thorough study.

Historical Context

In India, hydrogen energy is not a novel idea. The National Hydrogen Energy Road Map (NHERM), which was created in 2003, marked the beginning of the journey in the early 2000s. The strategy sought to advance hydrogen as a fuel for power generation and transportation. However, its advancement was hampered by a lack



Nitin Gadkari

Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India
Highlighting the importance of affordability in hydrogen energy adoption, Gadkari has set an ambitious target to reduce the production cost of hydrogen to \$1 per kilogram. He believes that achieving this goal is challenging but attainable through dedicated research and innovation.

of infrastructure, high production costs, and restricted technological capabilities. Although the early efforts set the stage for later developments, until recently there was no significant, consistent policy drive.

National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM)

The Indian government established the National Green Hydrogen Mission in January 2023 after realizing the potential of hydrogen energy. The mission's lofty goals include developing 125 GW of related renewable energy generation and producing 5 million metric tons of green hydrogen annually by 2030. An important part of this aim is the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) initiative, which offers financial incentives for the manufacture of electrolyzers and green hydrogen. The mission, which has a budget of more than INR 19,000 crore, is a significant step in India's energy revolution.

State-Level Initiatives



State and federal governments are collaborating to advance hydrogen energy. To encourage innovation and draw in investments, a number of states have introduced their own green hydrogen policies. For example, in 2024, Uttar Pradesh introduced its Green Hydrogen Policy, which included land distributions, capital incentives, and energy tariff exemptions. In a similar vein, Haryana's policy supports enterprises financially and non-financially in order to achieve its goal of producing one million tons of green hydrogen yearly by 2030. These regulations highlight India's inclusive and decentralized strategy for expanding hydrogen energy.

Technological Advancements

India's hydrogen strategy is centered on technological innovation. Enhancing electrolyzer efficiency, cutting production costs, and creating reliable storage and transportation systems are the main goals. To satisfy domestic demand, electrolyzer manufacturing capacity is being rapidly increased. Hydrogen manufacturing is kept genuinely environmentally friendly through integration with renewable energy sources like solar and wind. In order to support end-to-end solutions, from production to consumption, hydrogen hubs and industrial clusters are being established. Furthermore, pilot projects in industries including steel, fertilizers, and refineries are evaluating the practicality of hydrogen.

Industrial Participation

An important part of India's hydrogen journey is the private sector. Public sector enterprises (PSUs) that are actively involved in hydrogen projects include GAIL,

NTPC, and Indian Oil Corporation. The private sector is just as excited. Large investments in green hydrogen have been announced by firms such as Larsen & Toubro, Adani Group, and Reliance Industries.

There is also an increase

in international cooperation. For instance, BPCL and Singapore-based Sembcorp have teamed up to build infrastructure for renewable energy and green hydrogen. Startups are making contributions with advancements in storage technologies, mobility applications, and hydrogen fuel cells.

Economic Implications

There are substantial financial prospects with hydrogen energy. By 2030, it is anticipated that the National Green Hydrogen Mission will have drawn investments totaling more than INR 8 lakh crore. An estimated 600,000 employment will be created in a variety of sectors as a result, having a multiplier effect on the economy. These consist of operations, research & development, production, and construction. Hydrogen energy can also lessen India's reliance on imported fossil fuels, improving energy security and saving billions of dollars in foreign cash.

Environmental Benefits

Emissions of greenhouse gases can be considerably decreased by switching to hydrogen energy. Green hydrogen is a clean substitute for traditional fuels since it is made with renewable energy sources and produces no carbon dioxide. Hard-to-abate industries like steel, cement, and transportation especially benefit from it. Hydrogen can assist India in reaching its net-zero emissions goal by 2070 by taking the place of fossil fuels in several areas. However, as electrolysis necessitates a large amount of water input, it is crucial to guarantee sustainable water consumption in hydrogen synthesis. Therefore, effective water management and recycling technologies are essential.

Challenges

In India, hydrogen energy has a number of obstacles despite its potential. Although economies of scale and technical developments are predicted to lower pricing, high production costs continue to be a significant obstacle. There is inadequate distribution, transportation, and storage infrastructure. Building investor confidence also requires consistency and clarity in regulations. To maintain the hydrogen ecosystem, professional labor and public awareness are also required. Government, business, academia, and civil society must work together to address these issues.

International Collaborations and Global Positioning

To improve its hydrogen ecosystem, India is actively participating in international partnerships. It has negotiated agreements for technology transfers, joint ventures, and information sharing with nations like Australia, Japan, and Germany. These collaborations improve India's access to international market possibilities and best practices. India wants to establish itself as a global center for the production and export of green hydrogen. With a sizable local market and an abundance of renewable resources, the nation is ideally positioned to spearhead the worldwide hydrogen revolution.

In India, hydrogen energy appears to have a bright future. It takes a multifaceted approach to meet the NGHMT targets. This entails encouraging R&D, expanding the capacity of renewable energy sources, and establishing a supportive regulatory framework. Efficiency can be increased by creating linked supply chains and hydrogen corridors. Programs for skill development should be started in order to get the workforce ready for new opportunities. In order to stimulate investment and innovation, public-private partnerships need to be reinforced. India has the potential to become a global leader in hydrogen energy with the correct policy and implementation. ■

Buddha Purnima

Spirit of Buddhism in India

As the sun rises on the sacred day of Buddha Purnima, India finds herself enveloped in a serene wave of devotion and reflection. Observed on the full moon day in the Hindu month of Vaishakha, Buddha Purnima commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and mahaparinirvana (death) of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha.

Across the length and breadth of the country, chants of "Buddham Sharanam Gachhami" resonate from monasteries, stupas, and meditation halls, invoking the deep peace and wisdom the Buddha represents. This day is not just a celebration; it is a reaffirmation of values—compassion, mindfulness, detachment, and inner transformation—that form the very essence of Buddhist spirituality.

India, the land of the Buddha, holds a unique place in the spiritual cartography of the world. Here, amidst the Himalayan foothills, Gangetic plains, and the forests of Bihar, the gentle prince of Kapilavastu renounced his regal life to seek answers to the eternal questions of suffering, birth, and death. His journey of inner realization, culminating under the Bodhi tree in Bodhi Gaya, continues to inspire countless souls seeking liberation from the cycle of suffering. For followers of Buddhism, Buddha Purnima is a powerful reminder of this path—a chance to reengage with the Dharma (teachings) and rediscover the light within.

The Essence of Buddhist Spirituality

Buddhist spirituality is rooted in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. These foundational principles do not revolve around blind faith, but rather direct experience, introspection, and ethical living. At its core lies the recognition of dukkha—the inherent unsatisfactoriness of worldly life—and the path toward its cessation through disciplined living and mental purification.

Unlike many spiritual traditions that

lean on theistic devotion, Buddhism is inward-facing. It encourages practitioners to examine their minds, tame their thoughts, and foster mindfulness (sati) and equanimity (upekkha). Practices such as Vipassana meditation, derived directly from the Buddha's teachings, emphasize insight into the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless nature of all phenomena.

Buddhist spirituality does not offer dogmas but rather tools for awakening. Its emphasis on compassion (karuna) and loving-kindness (metta) nurtures a heart that remains open, even in the face of adversity. The life of the Buddha exemplifies this harmony between wisdom and compassion. In a world increasingly torn by divisions, materialism, and unrest, Buddhist teachings offer a sanctuary—a quiet revolution that begins within.

On Buddha Purnima, the spiritual message resonates more strongly than ever. Devotees often spend the day engaging in meditation, reading scriptures like the Dhammapadam, making offerings at temples, and performing acts of kindness. The celebration is less about festivity and more about introspection and awakening, a time to rekindle the flame of mindfulness.

The Buddhist Community in India: A Tapestry of Diversity

While Buddhism originated in India, its historical trajectory took it across borders—to Sri Lanka, Tibet, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia—where it flourished and evolved into diverse schools such as Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna.

However, India has remained a spiritual homeland for Buddhists worldwide.

The modern Buddhist community in India is a tapestry of many threads. A significant resurgence of Buddhism occurred in the mid-20th century under the leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who, in 1956, embraced Buddhism along with nearly half a million followers. This historic conversion was not just a spiritual shift but also a socio-political movement, offering a path of dignity and liberation to the marginalized Dalit community. Today, Navayana Buddhism, the school based on Ambedkar's interpretations, is a living, vibrant part of Indian Buddhism, particularly in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.

In regions like Ladakh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh, Tibetan Buddhism thrives. These areas are home to spectacular monasteries such as Tawang, Hemis, and Key, which are not just religious centers but also cultural and educational hubs. Monks in ochre and crimson robes, prayer wheels, and the melodious chanting of mantras create an atmosphere of tranquility that defines life in these Himalayan enclaves.

Moreover, in states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, Buddhism remains deeply rooted due to their historical connection with the Buddha's life. The cities of Sarnath, Kushinagar, and Rajgir have a living Buddhist presence with temples, study centers, and international monasteries.

India is also home to several international Buddhist organizations and centers, such as the Mahabodhi Society



founded by Anagarika Dharmapala, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in Dharamshala led by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, and various meditation retreats promoting Vipassana and Zen practices. These centers attract both monastics and lay practitioners, bridging the gap between ancient traditions and modern seekers.

Pilgrimage and Tourism: Following in the Footsteps of the Buddha

India's spiritual landscape is dotted with sacred sites associated with the Buddha's life, teachings, and legacy. These destinations not only draw pilgrims but also tourists, scholars, and cultural enthusiasts from across the globe. Buddhist tourism, in this sense, is both a spiritual journey and a cultural odyssey.

The most revered sites are collectively known as the Buddhist Circuit, comprising Lumbini (in Nepal, where the Buddha was born), Bodh Gaya (where he attained enlightenment), Sarnath (where he gave his first sermon), and Kushinagar (where he entered parinirvana). Among these, Bodh Gaya holds paramount importance. The Mahabodhi Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, stands tall beside the Bodhi tree under which Siddhartha attained Buddhahood. Pilgrims from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Japan, Tibet, Bhutan, and the West come here to meditate, chant, and offer prayers.

In Sarnath, near Varanasi, the Dhamek Stupa and the Ashoka Pillar stand as powerful symbols of the Buddha's first turning of the Wheel of Dharma. Nearby, museums and temples built by various nations reflect the global embrace of Buddhism. Similarly, Kushinagar, in Uttar Pradesh, draws visitors to its serene environs and the reclining Buddha statue

that marks his final passing.

Rajgir and Nalanda in Bihar offer further richness. Rajgir was one of the Buddha's favorite retreats, and Nalanda was home to the ancient Nalanda University, one of the world's first residential universities and a major center for Buddhist learning. The recently inaugurated Nalanda Mahavihara project aims to revive this scholarly legacy.

Ajanta and Ellora Caves in Maharashtra showcase exquisite Buddhist art dating back over a millennium. Carved into rock, these caves narrate Jataka tales through intricate frescoes and sculptures, offering a visual feast of the Buddha's past lives and teachings.

Tourism in these areas is undergoing transformation, with state governments and the Ministry of Tourism developing infrastructure, international airports (such as in Gaya and Kushinagar), Buddhist museums, and spiritual resorts. Cultural festivals, like the Kalachakra Initiation and International Buddhist Conclave, promote dialogue between spiritual traditions and showcase India as a global center for Buddhist heritage.

Furthermore, there has been a growing trend in spiritual tourism. Many travelers are no longer content with sightseeing; they seek immersion. Meditation retreats, mindfulness camps, and Dhamma yattras offer such experiences, connecting people not just with the geography of Buddhism but also its inner path.

Preserving a Sacred Legacy

While Buddhism has experienced revivals and global popularity, its heritage in India also faces challenges. Many ancient monuments need conservation, and historical awareness among local populations remains limited. Additionally, the true essence of Buddhist teachings can sometimes be overshadowed by commercialization in the tourism sector.

However, new efforts are being made. Institutions like the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) and various universities are reviving Pali and Buddhist philosophy studies. Collaborations with countries like Japan, Thailand, and Sri



“The purpose of all major religious traditions is not to construct big temples on the outside, but to create temples of goodness and compassion inside, in our hearts.”
Dalai Lama

Lanka support archaeological research, monastic exchanges, and cultural restoration projects.

Moreover, with global interest in mindfulness, meditation, and non-violence, Buddhism is being rediscovered not just as a religion, but as a universal philosophy. Indian spiritual teachers and lay Buddhists are increasingly participating in global dialogues on mental health, ethics, and sustainability, bringing the Buddha's teachings into modern relevance.

A Living Light

Buddha Purnima, thus, is more than a ritual—it is a moment of reawakening. It invites us to pause in our frantic lives and look within. As lamps are lit in temples, and prayers offered under moonlit skies, the Buddha's silent presence continues to guide those who seek not just belief, but wisdom.

India, the cradle of his awakening, holds the sacred responsibility of keeping this flame alive—not just through rituals or tourism, but by living the Dhamma in everyday life. In its ancient groves, majestic stupas, and humble meditation centers, the Buddha still walks, quietly urging humanity toward peace, awareness, and liberation. ■

Badminton in India

From Colonial Pastime to Global Powerhouse



P. V. Sindhu

Indian Badminton Player
"You have to keep working all the time. How much you learn, there is always room for learning; you will have to keep improving all the time."

In India, badminton—a sport that blends speed, accuracy, and strategy—has experienced a dramatic metamorphosis that reflects the country's own changes in the political, social, and economic spheres. What started out as a relaxed colonial hobby has developed into a vibrant, highly competitive sport that attracts national attention and garners international acclaim. The history of badminton in India is a tale of aspiration, resiliency, and cultural transformation rather than merely the game's growing popularity. Over the years, badminton has captivated millions of people from a wide range of backgrounds, ages, and classes, surpassing its beginnings in

exclusive clubs and garrisons.

Historical trends, the foresight of trailblazing athletes, the rise of top-tier coaching facilities, aggressive government assistance, and the unwavering devotion of innumerable young athletes nationwide have all contributed to this transition. Across the country, living rooms, schools, and stadiums are celebrating what was previously seen of as a pastime as a viable career path. Indian shuttlers are now Olympic medalists, world champions, and national heroes rather than being underdogs in the global arena.

India's changing cultural interests are also reflected in the sport's rising popularity. Badminton is a perfect illustration of how targeted funding,

well-organized grassroots initiatives, and inspirational leadership can revolutionize a sport as the nation shifts to a more diverse sports environment outside of cricket. The story has changed as a result of the rise of leagues like the Premier Badminton League, the accomplishments of players like Saina Nehwal, P.V. Sindhu, and Kidambi Srikanth, and the success of academies like the Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy.

The fascinating history of badminton in India—from its colonial beginnings to its present status as a source of pride for the country and international recognition—will be examined in this essay. We shall explore its origins, follow the development of institutional structures, commemorate

the ascent of legendary athletes, and assess the sport's present situation. By doing this, we reveal not just the significant events in Indian badminton history, but also the character of a country that is dedicated to achieving excellence both on and off the court.

Colonial Beginnings

In the middle of the 19th century, during the British Raj, badminton first appeared in India. A popular game among British army officers stationed in India was called "Poona," after the garrison town of Pune (formerly Poona). Players used rackets to hit a feathered shuttle across a net in this game, which was a hybrid of battledore and shuttlecock. The rules of the contemporary game were first developed in India, and the sport later arrived in England, where it was officially recognized.

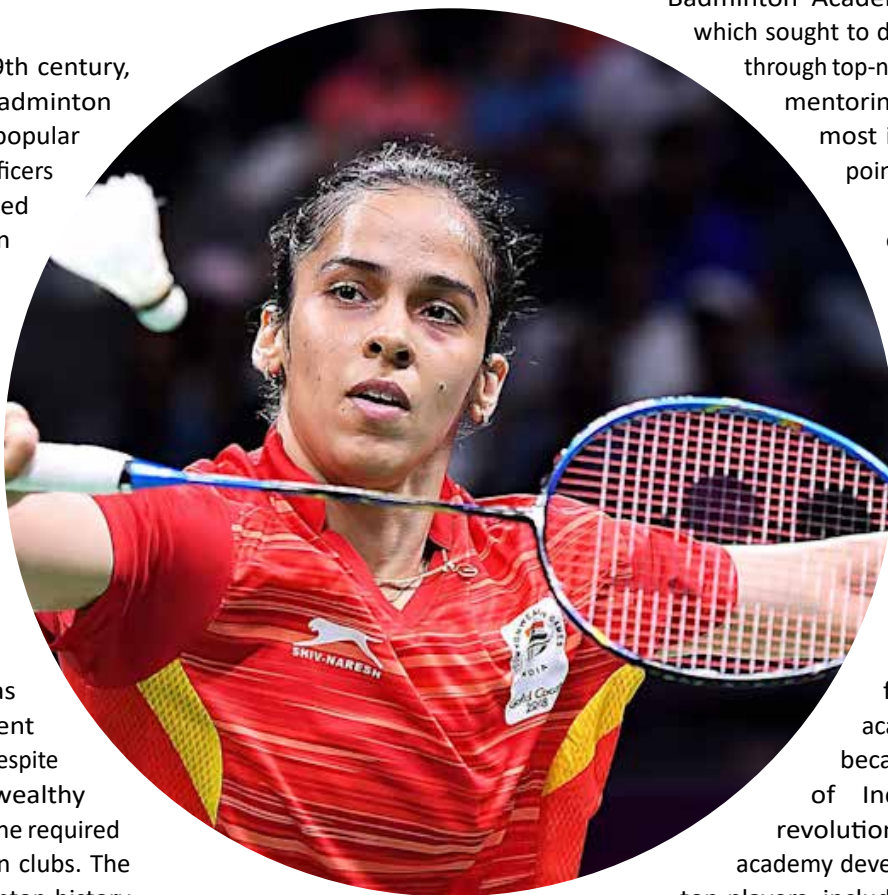
At first, badminton was restricted to the affluent segments of Indian society, despite its colonial origins. The wealthy classes, who had access to the required facilities, played it mostly in clubs. The country's organized badminton history began in 1934 with the founding of the All India Badminton Association (AIBA). Although its reach was still restricted in the early decades, the association assisted in formalizing tournaments and providing a framework for the sport's development.

Post-Independence Expansion

Following India's 1947 declaration of independence, there was a renewed emphasis on nurturing domestic sports and encouraging athletic ability throughout the nation. As badminton gained traction outside of urban elite circles, it gradually made its way into rural areas and into schools and universities. Aspiring athletes were given a stage on which to display their abilities with the creation of state associations and the

holding of national championships.

For Indian badminton, the rise of Prakash Padukone in the 1970s was a turning point. In 1980, Padukone, a native of Karnataka, became the first Indian to win the All England Open Badminton Championships. In addition to



raising badminton's prominence in India, his triumph encouraged a new generation of sportsmen to take the game seriously. The foundation for a professional badminton ecosystem in India was established by Padukone's international success and methodical approach.

After Padukone, other well-known badminton players including Madhumita Bisht, U Vimal Kumar, and Syed Modi helped elevate India's profile. These trailblazers showed that Indian athletes could succeed on the global scene and contributed to the development of a competitive atmosphere.

Institutional Support

The growth of infrastructure and

institutional support has been directly tied to the development of badminton in India. Athletes with promise were sponsored, training academies were established, and coaching standards were raised in the 1990s and early 2000s. The founding of the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy in Bangalore, which sought to develop fresh talent through top-notch instruction and mentoring, was one of the most important turning points in this area.

The establishment of the Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy in Hyderabad in 2008 was another revolutionary event. Pullela Gopichand, a former All England champion, founded the academy, which soon became the birthplace of India's badminton revolution. Gopichand's academy developed a number of top players, including Saina Nehwal, P.V. Sindhu, Kidambi Srikanth, and B. Sai Praneeth, by placing a significant focus on discipline, scientific training methods, and mental conditioning.

The development of badminton was also significantly influenced by government initiatives. Initiatives like Khelo India, the Sports Authority of India (SAI), and the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) provide infrastructure development, coaching help, and financial aid. These programs made it easier to spot talent at the local level and paved the road for young athletes to compete on a national and worldwide scale.

The Golden Era:

In India, badminton has had an unheard-of increase in popularity and



quality over the past 20 years. With her bronze at the 2012 London Olympics, Saina Nehwal became the first Indian woman to rank #1 in the world and the first to win an Olympic medal in badminton. Her accomplishments dismantled gender stereotypes and popularized badminton among Indian sports enthusiasts.

India's position as a badminton powerhouse was further solidified by P.V. Sindhu's win at the 2019 BWF World Championships and silver medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics. Sindhu became a world icon due to her towering appearance on the court, as well as her perseverance and consistency. In addition to her, players like Kidambi Srikanth, who topped the global rankings in men's singles, and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and

Chirag Shetty, who play in doubles, have enhanced India's badminton credentials by adding depth and variety.

The nation as a whole has been impacted by these athletes' achievements. Corporate sponsorship has grown, television viewership has skyrocketed, and badminton academies have multiplied. Young athletes are now supported by both the governmental and private sectors, and the sport is regarded as a feasible career choice.

Professionalization

Another step toward the professionalization of badminton in India was the establishment of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) in 2016. The PBL, which was based on the franchise

system of cricket's Indian Premier League (IPL), brought together domestic and international players in a fast-paced setting. The league has been crucial in raising awareness of the sport, drawing in new followers, and giving Indian athletes the chance to play with and against some of the greatest in the world.

The league system has further increased the popularity of the sport by offering financial incentives and media attention. Additionally, the format has fostered an aspirational culture around badminton and encouraged young players to have huge dreams.

Challenges and the Road Ahead

Indian badminton still confronts a number of obstacles in spite of the



advancements. Rural and isolated communities continue to lack access to high-quality facilities and coaching due to the unequal distribution of infrastructure. Concerns regarding sustainability and talent diversification are raised by the sport's reliance on a small number of important academies. Top athletes' injuries and fatigue also highlight the need for improved workload management and sports science assistance.

Furthermore, although singles players have experienced significant success, India has yet to consistently thrive in the doubles and mixed doubles divisions. To close these gaps, funding for expert coaching and participation in international competitions will be essential.

India's ability to capitalize on its current advantages while resolving these structural problems will determine the sport's future. Maintaining and expanding on previous achievements will require bolstering grassroots development, improving coach education, and expanding the talent pipeline.

Conclusion

The development of badminton in India is a potent illustration of the country's expanding sports culture, which places an emphasis on athletic success in a variety of sports rather than simply in cricket and other traditional strongholds. It demonstrates how a sport can rise from the fringes to the mainstream and win the interest and adoration of a whole nation when vision, tenacity, and solid institutional support are combined.

In India, badminton has advanced significantly since its inception as a colonial pastime played in upscale clubs in Pune. From young professionals in urban areas to toddlers in rural villages, people all over the nation now enjoy and participate in what was formerly only available to the wealthy. Packed stadiums during international events, fervent fan bases, and higher television viewing all serve as symbols of the sharp growth in interest and participation. The loud, subdued bouts of the early days are a far cry from the thunderous cheers of the fans for Olympic medalists like Saina Nehwal and P.V. Sindhu. These stadiums are more than just places to play; they are a symbol of how ingrained badminton is in Indian culture.

India's presence on the global badminton stage today:

Players that are not only competitive but also dominate in international competitions, such as World Championships, Super Series events, and the Olympics, have been continuously produced in the nation. This increasing impact demonstrates that Indian badminton has arrived rather than just emerging. This status also carries responsibility, including upholding high standards, expanding the talent pool, and advancing the sport.

Additionally, badminton has the power to motivate upcoming generations. Millions of young Indians find inspiration in the tales of athletes who ascended from humble beginnings to international fame. These stories—of conquering obstacles, pursuing greatness, and honoring the nation—promote a culture of sportsmanship, hard work, and aspiration. Additionally, they aid in changing public attitudes by motivating communities and parents to endorse athletics as a respectable career choice.

Innovation, inclusive development, and sustained investment are essential to maintaining and advancing this achievement. Infrastructure, training, and global exposure all require financial support from the public and commercial sectors. Top players' careers can be prolonged and the development of future ones enhanced by innovative coaching methods, sports science, analytics, and injury management. Most significantly, a more comprehensive and strong foundation for the sport depends on inclusivity—making sure that talent from all areas, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds is developed. In conclusion, the history of badminton in India is a tale of how a nation can change its sports identity through willpower, focused efforts, and persistent devotion. It is not just about winning games or medals. Indian badminton is positioned to not just shine but also rule the world arena for many years to come if present trends continue and obstacles are approached creatively and resolutely. ■

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