

The Progressive Punjab Investors' Summit 2026

BUREAUCRACY INDIA

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War,
Volatility
and
Strategic
Shift
Towards
Resilience





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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
सूक्ष्म, लघु और मध्यम उद्यम मंत्रालय
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- Jyoti Mayal

Prominent Speakers on the Panel



H.E. Ms. Pradeepa Mahishini Colonne
High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to India, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka



Ratna Chadha
CEO, TIRUN Travel Marketing, India Representative - Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.



Yummi Talwar
Chief Operating Officer - South Asia, VFS Global



Parikshit Choudhary
Chief Business Officer - B2B & Customer Contact Group



Sandeep Dwivedi
Managing Director, Amadeus South Asia



Anil Parashar
Executive Director, ITQ Technologies Pvt. Ltd.



H.E. Aliko Koutsomitopoulou
Ambassador of Greece to India, Embassy of the Hellenic Republic - Greece



H.E. Mr. Kamel Zayed Kamel Galal
Ambassador of Egypt to India, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt in New Delhi



Meena Bhatia
Vice President & General Manager at Le Meridien New Delhi



Nikhil Sharma
Managing Director & Chief Operating Officer, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group



Jyoti Mayal
Chairperson of the Tourism and Hospitality Sector Skill Council (THSC)



JB Singh
Director at InterGlobe Air Transport Ltd. & President & CEO at InterGlobe Hotels



Vasudha Sondhi
MD, Outbound Marketing Pvt. Ltd.



Ranju Alex
Chief Executive Officer - India & South Asia at Accor



Manish Puri
Head of Global Sales - Air India & Air India Express

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In times of global uncertainty, the role of governance, policy, and leadership becomes sharper, and more visible. As we bring you this edition of Bureaucracy India, our cover story, “**Energy at the Crossroads: War, Volatility & India’s Strategic Shift toward Resilience**”, captures the ongoing geopolitical tensions that have transformed energy from a sectoral concern into a strategic imperative. For India, the challenge is layered: ensuring energy security for a growing economy while navigating volatility, accelerating transition, and safeguarding affordability.

Yet, this issue is equally about momentum, opportunity, and celebration of progress.

At the forefront is our extensive coverage of **The Progressive Punjab Investor’s Summit**, a powerful reflection of Punjab’s evolving investment landscape, its push for industrial revival, and its strategic positioning as a hub for innovation and enterprise.

Beautifully complementing this narrative, is our feature on the **Pre-Holi Floral Soirée** — an evening that redefined celebration through elegance, creativity, and meaningful engagement. Hosted in a setting that blended culture with conversation, the soirée was not just an event, but an experience, bringing together voices from across sectors in a softer, more reflective atmosphere.

Alongside these, we bring you a rich tapestry of **exclusive event coverages**, and focused feature of **Law and Healthcare**.

We hope this edition not only informs, but also inspires a deeper understanding of the forces shaping our present and the possibilities defining our future.

Suhani Nagpal

Suhani Nagpal
Editor-in-Chief



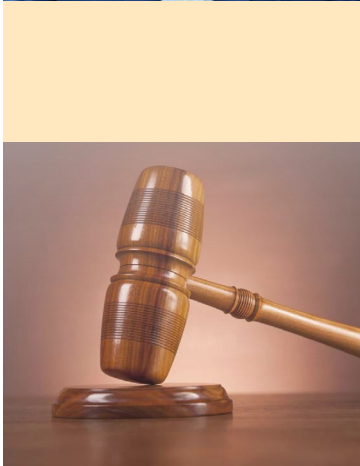
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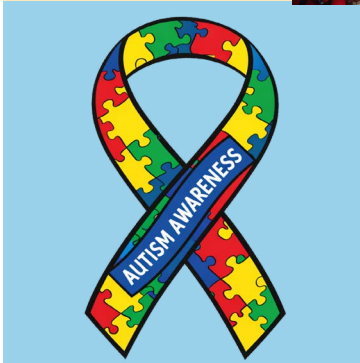


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The War Within

IAS Santanu Kumar Agrahari appointed Director, NPPA

IAS Santanu Kumar Agrahari (2012 batch, Jharkhand cadre) has been appointed as Director in the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), a key regulatory body under the Department of Pharmaceuticals. The appointment places him at the centre of India's drug pricing ecosystem, where affordability and regulation remain critical policy priorities.

With experience in administrative governance and policy execution, Agrahari is expected to contribute to strengthening pricing oversight and ensuring accessibility of essential medicines. His role gains importance amid increasing focus on healthcare reforms and balancing industry growth with consumer protection.



IAS Amit Satija appointed Joint Secretary, 8th Central Pay Commission

IAS Amit Satija (2008 batch, AGMUT cadre) has been appointed as Joint Secretary in the 8th Central Pay Commission, a crucial body responsible for reviewing and recommending salary structures for central government employees. His appointment comes at a time when groundwork for the next pay revision cycle is gaining momentum.

Satija brings significant administrative experience from key postings across the AGMUT cadre. His role will involve policy formulation, coordination, and analysis impacting millions of government employees, making it a strategically important position within India's administrative framework.



IAS Gunjan Dwivedi appointed Mission Director, Swachh Bharat Mission (Jharkhand)

IAS Gunjan Dwivedi (2010 batch, Jharkhand cadre) has been appointed as Mission Director for the Swachh Bharat Mission in Jharkhand as part of a state-level administrative reshuffle.

The role places her at the forefront of sanitation and rural development initiatives in the state.

With prior experience in governance and district administration, Dwivedi is expected to accelerate implementation of sanitation programmes and improve rural infrastructure outcomes. The appointment reflects the government's continued emphasis on strengthening flagship schemes at the grassroots level.

IFS Surinder Bhagat appointed High Commissioner of India to Ghana

IFS Surinder Bhagat (2007 batch) has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to Ghana, marking a significant diplomatic posting in West Africa. Currently serving as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, Bhagat brings extensive experience in foreign policy and international relations.

His appointment is expected to strengthen India's diplomatic engagement with Ghana, particularly in areas of trade, investment, and development cooperation. The move aligns with India's broader strategy of enhancing its presence and partnerships across the African continent.



IAS Gautam Thapliyal appointed Deputy Director, LBSNAA

IAS Gautam Thapliyal (2011 batch, Uttarakhand cadre) has been appointed as Deputy Director at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie, the premier institution responsible for training India's civil servants. The role places him at the core of capacity-building and institutional training frameworks that shape the country's future administrative leadership.

With prior experience in field administration and governance, Thapliyal is expected to contribute to strengthening training methodologies, curriculum design, and leadership development programmes at the academy. His appointment gains significance as LBSNAA continues to evolve its training approach to meet emerging governance challenges, technological changes, and the growing need for responsive and citizen-centric administration.



LBSNAA has in recent years expanded its focus on mid-career training, digital governance, and mission-mode programme delivery, reflecting the changing demands of public administration. The academy annually trains hundreds of officer trainees and in-service civil servants across batches, making leadership roles within it critical for shaping administrative thinking, ethics, and policy execution capabilities in the Indian bureaucracy.

IAS Rahul Pachori appointed OSD to Minister for Skill Development

IAS Rahul Pachori (2010 batch, AGMUT cadre) has been appointed as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to the Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Jayant Chaudhary. The appointment places him in a key support role within a ministry focused on youth employment and skill-building initiatives.

Pachori's role will involve assisting in policy coordination and programme implementation at the ministerial level. Given the increasing emphasis on skilling as a driver of economic growth, his appointment is seen as strategically important in advancing national workforce development goals.

The appointment also reflects the government's increasing focus on strengthening institutional support within key ministries, particularly those driving youth-centric policies. With India's demographic dividend at the forefront, the Skill Development Ministry plays a critical role in aligning education, training, and employment opportunities, making such administrative support positions vital for effective policy execution and outreach.



IFS Pranay Verma appointed Ambassador to Belgium, EU & Luxembourg

IFS Pranay Verma (1994 batch) has been appointed as India's Ambassador to Belgium, the European Union, and Luxembourg, a strategically significant diplomatic posting in Europe. He brings extensive experience in foreign policy, having previously served as Ambassador to Vietnam and held key positions within the Ministry of External Affairs, particularly in East Asia and multilateral engagements.

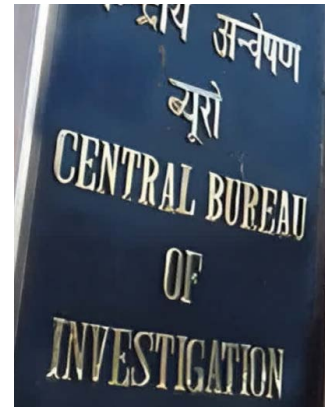
His appointment comes at a time when India is deepening its engagement with the European Union across trade, technology, and geopolitical cooperation. Verma's diplomatic expertise is expected to play a crucial role in advancing India-EU relations, strengthening bilateral ties with Belgium, and enhancing India's presence in European institutional frameworks.

The posting gains further significance as India and the European Union continue negotiations on a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, alongside cooperation in digital governance, climate action, and strategic security. With Brussels serving as the headquarters of the EU, the role demands nuanced diplomatic engagement at both bilateral and multilateral levels, positioning Verma at the centre of India's European outreach.



IAS Vijendra Kumar appointed Joint Director, CBI

IAS Vijendra Kumar (2007 batch, AGMUT cadre) has been appointed as Joint Director in the Central Bureau of Investigation. The posting strengthens leadership within India's premier investigative agency and comes at a time of increased focus on high-profile investigations and institutional accountability.



IAS Prashant Goyal appointed Additional Chief Secretary, Delhi



IAS Prashant Goyal (1993 batch, AGMUT cadre) has been appointed as Additional Chief Secretary, Food & Civil Supplies, in the Delhi government. The appointment is part of a broader administrative reshuffle aimed at strengthening governance and service delivery in key departments.

IAS Saumya Saurabh appointed District Magistrate, North-West Delhi

IAS Saumya Saurabh (2014 batch, AGMUT cadre) has been appointed as District Magistrate of North-West Delhi. The posting places her in charge of district administration, with responsibilities spanning law and order, governance, and public service delivery.





IAS K. Manivasan appointed Home Secretary, Tamil Nadu

IAS K. Manivasan (1999 batch, Tamil Nadu cadre) has been appointed as Home Secretary of Tamil Nadu, a crucial position responsible for overseeing internal security, law and order, and coordination with central security agencies. The role involves supervision of police administration, intelligence inputs, and crisis management across the state. His appointment comes at a time when effective governance and security coordination remain key priorities, placing him at the centre of Tamil Nadu's administrative and law enforcement framework.

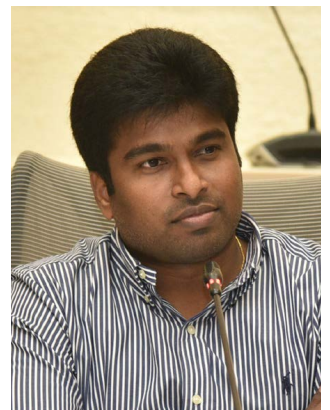
IAS Dr. Hardik Satishchandra Shah appointed as Private Secretary to PM Modi

IAS officer Dr. Hardik Satishchandra Shah of the 2010 Gujarat cadre has been appointed as the personal secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the level of joint secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The appointment has been made on a coterminous basis, meaning his tenure will continue alongside that of the Prime Minister. Dr Shah, who has been associated with the PMO since 2019, will now officially hold this position until May 31, 2029.



IAS M. Abhishikth Kishore appointed Collector, Visakhapatnam

IAS Muttimbaku Abhishikth Kishore (2012 batch, Andhra Pradesh cadre) has been appointed as Collector and District Magistrate of Visakhapatnam. The role involves overseeing urban development, investment facilitation, and administrative governance in one of Andhra Pradesh's key economic hubs.



IAS Ramesh Gholap appointed Commissioner, Social Welfare, Maharashtra

IAS Ramesh Gholap (2012 batch, Maharashtra cadre) has been appointed as Commissioner, Social Welfare. The role focuses on implementing welfare schemes, social justice initiatives, and inclusive development programmes across the state.



IAS Pooja Singhal given key departmental responsibility in Jharkhand reshuffle

IAS Pooja Singhal (2000 batch, Jharkhand cadre) has been assigned significant departmental responsibilities as part of a Jharkhand administrative reshuffle. The move places her back in an important governance role, handling key administrative functions.

Bureaucrats that retired

IAS Taru Talo (AGMUT cadre)

A senior officer of the AGMUT cadre, Taru Talo has held several key administrative assignments across Union Territories, contributing to governance, policy execution, and institutional administration with a focus on public service delivery and administrative efficiency.

IAS Mridul Kumar Mahanta (Assam-Meghalaya cadre)

Mridul Kumar Mahanta served extensively in the Assam-Meghalaya cadre, handling diverse administrative and developmental roles, and played a significant part in strengthening governance frameworks and regional policy implementation.

IAS Riju Gogoi (Assam-Meghalaya cadre)

Riju Gogoi held important administrative positions in the Assam-Meghalaya cadre, contributing to district and state-level governance with a focus on efficient service delivery and administrative coordination.

IAS Monita Borgohain (Assam-Meghalaya cadre)

Monita Borgohain served as a senior officer in the Assam-Meghalaya cadre, where she contributed to public administration and development initiatives, particularly in strengthening governance mechanisms at various levels.

IAS H J Desai (Gujarat cadre)

H J Desai held several key roles within the Gujarat administration, contributing to policy execution and governance reforms, and was known for his involvement in strengthening administrative processes in the state.

IAS K B Thakkar (Gujarat cadre)

K B Thakkar served in multiple administrative capacities in Gujarat, playing a role in state governance and policy implementation while contributing to institutional strengthening and public administration.

IAS Mukesh Kumar Ahuja (batch, Haryana cadre)

Mukesh Kumar Ahuja held senior positions in Haryana, where he was associated with key departments and contributed to administrative leadership, policy implementation, and governance reforms.

IAS Gopal Chand (Himachal Pradesh cadre)

Gopal Chand served in various important roles in Himachal Pradesh, contributing to governance and public administration while focusing on development-oriented initiatives in the state.

IAS Shailesh Kumar Singh (Jharkhand cadre)

Shailesh Kumar Singh held significant administrative positions in Jharkhand, contributing to governance, infrastructure development, and effective policy implementation across departments.

IAS Rajesh Kumar Sinha (Kerala cadre)

Rajesh Kumar Sinha served as a senior officer in the Kerala cadre, contributing to administrative efficiency and governance through his roles in various departments and policy execution frameworks.

in March 2026



IAS Smita Bharadwaj (Madhya Pradesh cadre)

Smita Bharadwaj held key administrative roles in Madhya Pradesh, where she contributed to governance and development initiatives, particularly in strengthening administrative systems and policy delivery.

IAS Bhushan A Gagarani (Maharashtra cadre)

Bhushan A Gagarani served in senior administrative roles in Maharashtra, contributing to governance reforms, policy implementation, and strengthening institutional frameworks within the state administration.

IAS Ganesh B Patil (Maharashtra cadre)

Ganesh B Patil held various administrative responsibilities in Maharashtra, contributing to governance and development initiatives while playing a role in strengthening administrative operations.

IAS Manoj Kumar M Suryavanshi (Maharashtra cadre)

Manoj Kumar M Suryavanshi served in key roles within the Maharashtra administration, contributing to governance, public administration, and policy implementation across departments.

IAS Temsunaro Aier (Nagaland cadre)

Temsunaro Aier served as a senior officer in Nagaland, contributing to governance and development initiatives while focusing on strengthening administrative structures in the state.

IAS Saroj Kumar Sethi (Odisha cadre)

Saroj Kumar Sethi held important administrative positions in Odisha, contributing to governance and policy implementation, and played a role in strengthening public administration systems.

IAS Anurag Agarwal (Punjab cadre)

Anurag Agarwal served in multiple administrative roles in Punjab, contributing to governance, departmental administration, and policy execution during his tenure.

IAS J M Balamurugan (Punjab cadre)

J M Balamurugan held key roles in the Punjab administration, contributing to governance and administrative efficiency while being involved in various developmental and policy initiatives.

IAS Bhupinder Singh (Punjab cadre)

Bhupinder Singh served as a senior IAS officer in Punjab, holding significant administrative responsibilities and contributing to governance and public administration.

IAS Sima Sarkar (West Bengal cadre)

Sima Sarkar served in the West Bengal cadre in key administrative roles, contributing to governance and policy implementation while strengthening administrative systems in the state.

The retirement of these senior officers marks a significant generational transition within the Indian Administrative Service, opening leadership space for the next cohort of policymakers and administrators. **BI**



PGCIL announces 668 Diploma Trainee vacancies

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) has released its 2026 recruitment notification for 668 Diploma Trainee posts across multiple engineering disciplines. The online application process is set to begin from April 20, with selection through a computer-based test. The recruitment drive aims to strengthen technical manpower in India's power transmission sector, supporting expansion projects and ensuring operational efficiency across its nationwide grid network.

PSU oil companies expand LPG outreach with nationwide camps

Public sector oil marketing companies have conducted over 6,400 awareness camps across the country to promote the adoption of 5 kg LPG cylinders, with a special focus on rural, remote, and low-income households. The initiative has benefited more than 90,000 consumers so far by improving accessibility to affordable clean cooking fuel. These camps include live demonstrations, safety training, and on-the-spot registration for new connections. The drive is part of a broader government push to enhance LPG penetration, reduce dependence on traditional biomass fuels, and improve health outcomes by promoting cleaner energy usage nationwide.

Officials noted that smaller LPG cylinders are particularly beneficial for migrant workers and economically weaker sections, offering flexibility and lower upfront costs compared to standard cylinders. PSU companies are also working to strengthen last-mile distribution networks and expand retail touchpoints, ensuring sustained adoption and long-term behavioural change toward cleaner fuel consumption.

Auto LPG demand surges 70% amid PSU-led expansion



Auto LPG demand has witnessed a sharp 70% increase, driven by aggressive expansion of distribution networks and targeted awareness campaigns by PSU oil companies. More than 17 lakh 5 kg cylinders have been sold since late March, with significant uptake in states like Karnataka, Telangana, and Maharashtra. The growth reflects a gradual shift toward cleaner and cost-effective fuel alternatives in the transport sector. The government and PSUs are also focusing on increasing LPG dispensing stations, aiming to strengthen infrastructure and encourage wider adoption of eco-friendly fuel solutions.

BEL acquires land for indigenous 'Kusha' air defence system

Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has acquired around 75 hectares of land in Uttar Pradesh's defence corridor to develop advanced missile systems, including the indigenous 'Kusha' air defence project. The initiative marks a significant push toward self-reliance in defence manufacturing under the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission. The facility is expected to enhance domestic production capabilities and reduce dependence on imported defence technologies.



SECL launches major hiring drive with 1,055 vacancies

South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), a key subsidiary of Coal India Limited, has announced 1,055 vacancies for Mining Sirdar and Deputy Surveyor roles. The recruitment is aimed at enhancing operational efficiency across coalfields and boosting production capacity. The move aligns with India's continued reliance on coal for energy security and reflects PSU efforts to strengthen workforce availability in critical mining operations.



CMPDI begins deep coal exploration in BCCL's Chanch block

Central Mine Planning and Design Institute (CMPDI) has initiated deep-seated coal exploration in Bharat Coking Coal Limited's Chanch block, aiming to identify additional reserves and enhance long-term coal availability. The exploration involves advanced geological surveys and drilling techniques to assess deeper coal seams. This move is part of PSU-led efforts to strengthen domestic coal production and reduce reliance on imports. It also supports India's energy security strategy, ensuring a steady supply of coal for power generation and industrial use.



PNGRB clears Indian Oil's Kochi – Thoothukudi pipeline project

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has approved Indian Oil Corporation's 425-km Kochi-Thoothukudi natural gas pipeline project, marking a significant step in strengthening gas infrastructure in southern India. The pipeline is expected to enhance gas availability for industries, power plants, and households across Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It will also improve regional connectivity and facilitate the transition toward cleaner energy sources. The project aligns with India's broader vision of increasing the share of natural gas in the energy mix and developing a robust gas-based economy.

PSU mutual funds record ₹4,498 crore outflow in March

PSU-backed mutual funds recorded a net outflow of ₹4,498 crore in March 2026, indicating continued cautious investor sentiment despite a slight improvement compared to February's higher outflows. The trend reflects concerns over market volatility and performance of public sector-linked investment instruments. Analysts suggest that while the pace of outflows has moderated, sustained investor confidence will depend on improved returns, macroeconomic stability, and policy support. The data highlights evolving investor preferences within India's mutual fund landscape.

RVNL appoints Ashutosh Gautam as Executive Director (Civil)

Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) has appointed Ashutosh Gautam as Executive Director (Civil), reinforcing its leadership team amid ongoing expansion of railway infrastructure projects. The appointment is expected to enhance project execution capabilities, particularly in civil engineering works such as track laying, bridges, and station development. With multiple large-scale rail projects underway across the country, the move aims to improve efficiency, ensure timely delivery, and strengthen technical oversight within the PSU's operations.



India Post Accelerates Into the Future with Premium Express Services

by Anjali Bhardwaj

24 SPEEDPOST PARCEL

24 SPEEDPOST PARCEL

24 SPEEDPOST PARCEL

भारतीय डाक
डाक सेवा-जन सेवा



India Post
Dak Sewa-Jan Sewa



In a decisive step towards redefining public logistics in India, India Post unveiled three new premium delivery services on **March 15, 2026**, at the **Rang Bhawan Auditorium, Akashwani Bhawan in New Delhi**. The launch marks a pivotal moment for one of the world's largest postal networks, as it positions itself to compete in an increasingly time-sensitive and technology-driven logistics landscape.

At the centre of this transformation is a clear promise: speed with reliability, delivered at a national scale.

Reimagining Speed in Public Logistics

The newly launched services: **24 Speed Post, 48 Speed Post, and 24 Speed Post Parcel**, introduce time-bound delivery commitments that align India Post with global logistics benchmarks.

The 24 Speed Post service guarantees next-day (D+1) delivery for urgent documents and consignments, while 48 Speed Post ensures delivery within two working days (D+2), supported by dedicated processing windows and priority air transmission. Complementing these is 24 Speed Post Parcel, a service tailored for fast and reliable parcel delivery, catering to the growing demands of e-commerce and small businesses.

Together, these offerings signal a strategic pivot: from a volume-driven postal system to a service-oriented logistics network built on precision and accountability.

Leadership and Vision

The launch was led by **Union Minister of Communications and the Minister of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Jyotiraditya Scindia**, alongside **Dr. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani**, Minister of State for Communications, and senior leadership from the Department of Posts, including Secretary **Vandita Kaul** and Director General **Jitendra Gupta**.

Addressing the gathering, Scindia outlined a forward-looking vision for India Post, one that moves beyond its traditional identity into a modern, technology-enabled logistics platform. He emphasized that *“India Post’s unmatched physical reach, with its deep penetration into rural India, must now be complemented by speed, efficiency, and digital integration.”*

Framing the initiative within India’s broader economic trajectory, he highlighted that efficient logistics will be a critical enabler for entrepreneurship, e-commerce growth, and inclusive development. The goal, he suggested, is not merely to modernize India Post, but to make it a central pillar in India’s journey towards a developed economy.

Phased Rollout with National Ambition

The services have been launched across six major metropolitan cities - Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad, forming the first layer of a phased national rollout.

According to the roadmap shared at the event, 24 Speed Post and 48 Speed Post are set to expand across all Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities by December 31, 2026. The 24 Speed Post Parcel service will follow with a gradual expansion into additional cities, with a particular focus on strengthening parcel logistics in emerging urban and semi-urban markets.

This phased approach reflects both operational pragmatism and strategic intent: to build a robust, scalable system without compromising on service quality.

Competing with Agility

India’s logistics sector has witnessed rapid evolution, driven by e-commerce growth and rising consumer expectations. Private courier companies have long dominated the express delivery segment, but India Post’s latest move signals a clear intent to reclaim relevance in this space.

What distinguishes India Post is its unparalleled reach spanning urban centres and the most remote corners of the country. By integrating speed into this network, it creates a hybrid advantage: scale with service assurance.

For businesses, especially MSMEs and startups, this could translate into more accessible and cost-effective logistics solutions. For consumers, it brings the promise of faster deliveries backed by a trusted public institution.

Beyond Services: A Structural Shift

The introduction of these premium offerings is not an isolated development. It reflects a broader transformation within India Post driven by process optimization, improved sorting infrastructure, enhanced air connectivity, and digitized tracking systems.

In essence, the organisation is transitioning from a legacy service provider into a competitive logistics player, capable of operating at the pace demanded by a digital economy.

A Defining Moment

As the event concluded, the message was unmistakable. India Post is not merely adapting it is evolving.

With 24 Speed Post, 48 Speed Post, and 24 Speed Post Parcel, the institution takes a confident step into the future where trust meets speed, and legacy meets innovation.

A century-old network, now learning to deliver at the speed of a new India. **BI**



The Futility of the US-Israel-Iran War

Lessons in Human and Global Cost



by Arun Arora
Consulting Editor,
Bureaucracy India

On February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel launched Operation Epic Fury, a massive campaign of airstrikes across Iran that killed Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and dozens of senior officials in the opening hours. What began as targeted strikes on nuclear sites, missile facilities, and leadership has spiralled into a 25-day war of attrition. Iran has retaliated with missiles and drones against Israel, U.S. bases, and Gulf States, while partially choking the Strait of Hormuz. As of late March 2026, the conflict rages on amid conflicting claims of peace talks. This war exemplifies the tragic futility of military “misadventures” in the Middle East: high-minded goals of security and regime change collide with devastating, unpredictable realities.



The roots of this conflict lie in decades of mistrust and escalation. Iran's nuclear program, ballistic missile development, and support for proxy militias like Hezbollah and the Houthis have long alarmed Israel and the U.S. Negotiations in early 2026 appeared promising, with Oman mediating indirect talks, yet they collapsed. Israel viewed Iran's advances as an existential threat; the U.S., under President Donald Trump, framed the strikes as pre-emptive self-defense to "eliminate imminent threats" and prevent nuclear breakout. Trump explicitly called on Iranians to overthrow their regime, blending security rhetoric with regime-change ambitions. Israeli officials emphasized dismantling Iran's missile program and removing "existential threats." Critics argue the timing—during active diplomacy—reveals opportunism more than necessity, echoing past interventions justified by perceived threats that proved overstated or mutable.

Yet the war's futility is already evident. Initial "decapitation" strikes failed to collapse the regime; Iran quickly installed Mojtaba Khamenei as Supreme Leader. Iranian retaliation has damaged U.S. assets and Israeli cities, while proxy forces in Lebanon and Yemen continue harassing operations. Over 3,000 Israeli strikes and hundreds of U.S. sorties have degraded Iranian capabilities but not eliminated them. The conflict has expanded to Lebanon, displacing millions and reigniting ground fighting. Trump has floated ceasefires and a 15-point plan, yet Iranian officials deny meaningful talks and vow continued resistance. History shows such wars rarely deliver clean victories: regime change in Iraq and Libya bred chaos, not stability. Here, too, the human and strategic costs mount without a clear endpoint. Iran's resilience, fuelled by nationalism, suggests prolonged guerrilla-style resistance rather than swift surrender.

The United Nations' response underscores its chronic impotence in great-power conflicts. Secretary-General António Guterres swiftly condemned the escalation, warning of "grave consequences for civilians and regional stability" and urging an immediate ceasefire. UN experts decried the aggression, noting risks of war crimes on both sides, particularly strikes on energy infrastructure and civilian sites. The Security Council passed Resolution 2817 condemning Iranian attacks on neighbours, but it stopped short of equally robust censure for the initial U.S.-Israeli strikes. Veto dynamics and geopolitical alignments render the UN a forum for rhetoric, not enforcement. Calls for de-escalation and negotiations ring hollow when permanent members prioritize alliances over collective security. This war, like others before it, exposes the UN's structural limits: it can document suffering but cannot halt determined superpowers.

The human toll is heart-breaking and indiscriminate. Iranian health authorities report over 1,500 killed and 18,000 injured, including hundreds of civilians and at least 217 children. A single U.S. strike on a school in Minab killed around 170, many of them girls—the deadliest single incident involving U.S. forces against children in decades. In Lebanon, over 1,000 are dead amid Israeli operations tied to the wider conflict. Israel has suffered 18 civilian deaths and thousands injured from Iranian barrages. U.S. forces have lost 13 personnel. Millions are displaced; hospitals and residential areas lie in ruins. These are not abstract statistics but shattered families, orphaned children, and communities scarred for generations. Wars marketed as precision operations inevitably devour the innocent when infrastructure and urban centres become battlegrounds.

Globally, the war is hemorrhaging resources at an alarming rate. The partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz—through which 20% of global oil and significant LNG flows—has sent Brent crude surging over 40% to around \$106 per barrel, with LNG prices up nearly 60%. Shipping disruptions, attacks on tankers, and Iranian strikes on Gulf infrastructure have slashed output and spiked insurance and freight costs. Desalination plants, critical for Gulf drinking water, have been hit, threatening humanitarian crises. Broader ripple effects include fertilizer shortages, aviation slowdowns, volatile stock markets, and inflation fears that could shave 0.3% off global GDP growth. Asia's energy importers—China, India, Japan, South Korea—face the sharpest pain, while Europe braces for higher heating and transport costs. Infrastructure losses in Iran alone run into tens of thousands of damaged structures; rebuilding will consume billions that could have funded schools or hospitals anywhere. This is not mere economic friction—it is a squandering of the world's finite resources on destruction.

In the end, this war reveals the enduring folly of believing force can neatly resolve entrenched geopolitical grievances. The stated aims—nuclear denial, missile elimination, regime transformation—have come at the price of thousands of lives, billions in lost resources, and heightened global instability. Diplomacy, however imperfect, remains the only sustainable path. As the UN pleads for talks and markets tremble, the world watches a familiar tragedy unfold: leaders chase short-term security through war, only to bequeath long-term chaos to the innocent and the economy alike. History will judge not just the actors, but the international community that failed, once again, to prevent it. **BI**

Mediation: India's Return to Its Original Justice System

by **Somesh Arora**

Serves as Additional Advocate
General. (Punjab)



His Lordship the **Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, Surya Kant**, recently articulated a compelling vision for the future of dispute resolution in India when he observed that

“India needs about 2.5 lakh trained mediators, while currently only around 13,000 are available, to deal with over 1.68 crore mediation-friendly cases pending in courts.”

This observation highlights both the magnitude of India's judicial backlog and the transformative potential of mediation in strengthening access to timely justice.

India was traditionally a mediation-friendly civilisation where disputes were resolved through the Panchayat system rooted in dialogue, community participation, and consensus. Village elders often settled family, land, and commercial disputes through practical wisdom rather than formal legal procedures. The colonial legal framework gradually shifted this culture toward adversarial litigation and court-centric adjudication. Courts became temples of justice but also, over time, warehouses of delay. The contemporary revival of mediation is therefore not a new experiment but a return to India's deeply rooted dispute resolution traditions.

The present push for mediation must be understood in the context of a judiciary struggling with overwhelming pendency. With more than four crore cases awaiting adjudication, exclusive reliance on traditional litigation is increasingly impractical. Mediation, initially introduced through court-annexed centres and statutory encouragement such as Section 89 of the Code of Civil Procedure, must now evolve from a procedural alternative into an essential policy instrument.

The modern vision of justice increasingly reflects the concept of a “multi-door courthouse,” where courts function as dispute resolution hubs offering mediation and negotiation before adversarial litigation begins. Mediation is therefore not merely an alternative to litigation but a reimagining of the entry point to justice itself. This policy shift is reflected in the Mediation Act, 2023, which seeks to institutionalise mediation and grant legal enforceability to mediated settlements.

Consider a familiar situation within government departments. A contractor claims delayed payments for a bridge project while the department alleges substandard work. The dispute moves through arbitration petitions and counterclaims as years pass, files grow thicker, and legal costs quietly rise. Now imagine the same dispute entering mediation at an early stage. Both parties sit across a table rather than across courtrooms. The contractor acknowledges certain delays, the department admits procedural bottlenecks, and a revised payment schedule emerges. No celebrated judgment is delivered, yet the bridge is completed and the dispute ends before it acquires a life of its own.

Yet mediation is not free from institutional hesitation, particularly within government systems. Courts may encourage settlement, but litigants often interpret compromise as weakness. Bureaucratic decision-makers face an additional concern: settling a dispute may later invite audit scrutiny or allegations of impropriety. Endless litigation, on the other hand, appears administratively safer. Litigation therefore becomes a shield of caution rather than a pursuit of justice.

Another illustration reveals this administrative paradox. A public sector undertaking may privately recognise that a supplier's claim is partly justified. Yet officers hesitate to settle through mediation because a negotiated settlement might later attract scrutiny from vigilance authorities. Litigation thus becomes the safer institutional instinct. A decade later the dispute may still be pending, even though the officers who initiated it have long retired.

The real transformation lies in recognising that mediation is not foreign to India. The Panchayat system and community dispute resolution mechanisms were essentially mediation in informal form. The state is now attempting to rebuild a structured version of this instinct through institutional

mediation centres and statutory frameworks. In that sense, mediation is less a reform and more a return to administrative common sense.

If this vision succeeds, the impact could be quietly revolutionary. Courts would devote more time to constitutional questions rather than routine contractual disputes. Government departments could resolve commercial disagreements without carrying them across decades. Lawyers would not disappear; their role would evolve from courtroom combat to skilled negotiation. Mediation would not replace courts but complement them, reminding the justice system that sometimes the most effective way to resolve a dispute is the oldest one—bringing parties together to talk.

The need of the hour is to build greater public trust, policy support, and professional recognition for mediators. Strengthening India's mediation ecosystem will require the development of **green mediators** for environmental disputes and specialised mediators in sectors such as healthcare and medical negligence, and intellectual property, along with sustained emphasis on professional training and process-oriented skill development.

The success of mediation in India will ultimately depend not merely on legislation but on a cultural shift in how disputes are approached. Courts, governments, lawyers, and litigants must begin to see mediation not as a compromise born of weakness but as a pragmatic path to timely justice. Building public trust, policy support, and professional recognition for mediators is therefore essential. As India expands its mediation ecosystem with trained and specialised mediators across sectors, the country may discover that the most effective reform of its justice system lies not in creating something entirely new, but in rediscovering the wisdom it once practiced instinctively resolving disputes through dialogue, consensus, and common sense. **BI**



War, Volatility and Strategic Shift Towards Resilience



SAUDI ARABIA

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Gulf of Oman Shipping Lanes

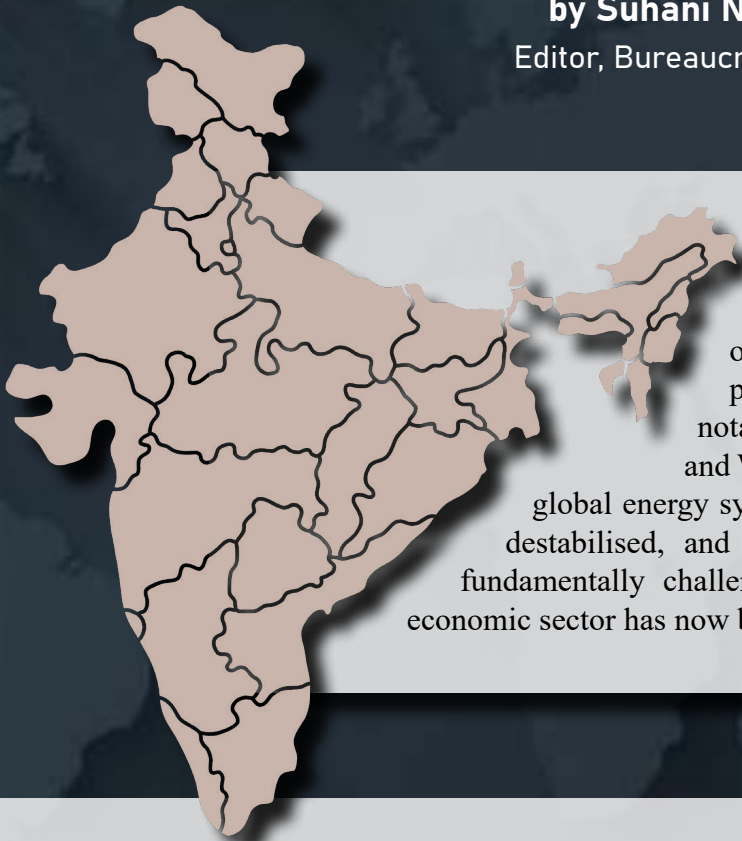


Energy at the Crossroads

War, Volatility, and India's Strategic Shift Towards Resilience

by **Suhani Nagpal**

Editor, Bureaucracy India



In the evolving theatre of global geopolitics, energy has once again taken centre stage—not merely as a commodity, but as an instrument of influence, leverage, and national security. The prolonged aftershocks of international conflicts, most notably the ongoing war-driven disruptions in Europe and West Asia, have triggered a profound recalibration of global energy systems. Supply chains have been unsettled, markets destabilised, and longstanding assumptions about energy security fundamentally challenged. What was once viewed as a technical or economic sector has now become a central pillar of national security.

For India, the implications have been immediate and far-reaching. As a nation navigating rapid economic growth alongside developmental commitments, the challenge is not merely about securing energy, it is about securing it reliably, affordably, and sustainably in an unpredictable world order.

This is not just a story of crisis, it is a story of transition, strategy, and opportunity.



War and the Weaponisation of Energy

The ripple effects of global conflicts have revealed an uncomfortable truth: energy today is deeply entangled with geopolitics. Supply disruptions, sanctions, and price shocks have reshaped global energy flows, forcing nations to rethink dependencies built over decades.

For import-dependent economies like India, the stakes are particularly high. India, which imports over 85% of its crude oil requirements, has had to navigate this volatility with a combination of agility and pragmatism. Government responses have consistently emphasised the need to shield consumers from global price shocks while maintaining macroeconomic stability. This balancing act has required not just policy interventions, but also strategic diplomacy—expanding sourcing options, renegotiating contracts, and leveraging global partnerships.

Yet, India's response has not been one of retreat, but recalibration—expanding sourcing networks, leveraging diplomatic ties, and insulating consumers where possible.

India's Energy Reality: Growth, Demand, and Dependency

India's developmental trajectory is intrinsically linked to its energy consumption. As urbanisation accelerates, industries expand, and digital infrastructure deepens, the demand for reliable and affordable energy continues to surge.

Estimates suggest that India's energy demand could **double by 2040**, driven by rising incomes, population growth, and increased industrial activity. This trajectory places enormous pressure on existing infrastructure and resource availability.

At present, India's energy mix remains heavily skewed toward fossil fuels, with coal continuing to dominate electricity generation. While this reliance has ensured stability and affordability, it also exposes the economy to environmental and external vulnerabilities. The challenge, therefore, is twofold:

- **Reducing import dependence while ensuring energy security**
- **Transitioning toward cleaner sources without compromising growth**

This delicate balancing act defines India's energy discourse today.

India's Energy Vision: Policy Anchored in Resilience

At the core of India's response lies a clear recognition: energy security is foundational to economic sovereignty. As articulated in official government communication,

“India's energy security is a critical component of its economic growth and sustainability goals”

This policy clarity has translated into a multi-layered strategy—balancing immediate needs with long-term transformation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly emphasised that India's energy journey is not just about consumption, but about leadership. At India Energy Week 2025, he underscored:

“India is driving not only its growth but also the growth of the world, with the energy sector playing a significant role.”

In another key assertion, he highlighted a structural shift in approach:

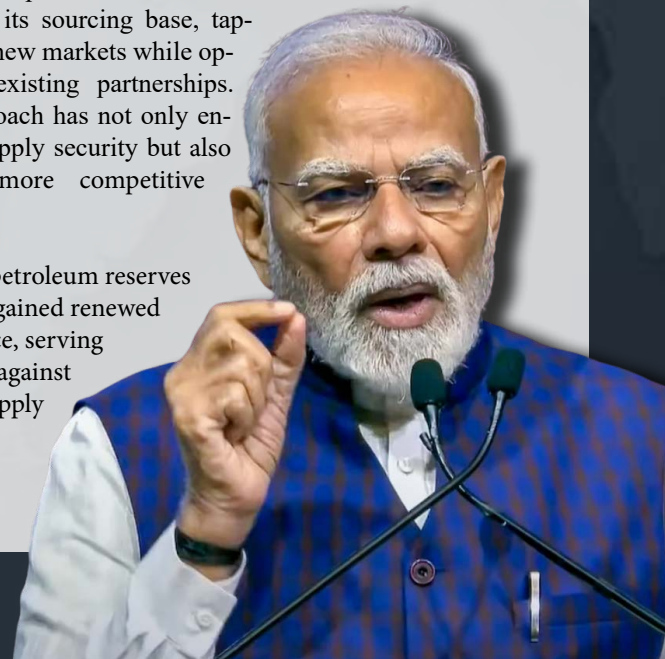
“To strengthen India's energy sector, the Government is empowering the public.”

This shift from centralised systems to distributed participation defines India's evolving energy architecture.

1. Diversification of Energy Sources

One of the most significant responses to global disruptions has been the diversification of energy imports. India has expanded its sourcing base, tapping into new markets while optimising existing partnerships. This approach has not only enhanced supply security but also enabled more competitive pricing.

Strategic petroleum reserves have also gained renewed importance, serving as buffers against sudden supply shocks.



2. Accelerated Renewable Energy Expansion

Perhaps the most transformative aspect of India's energy strategy is its aggressive push toward renewable energy.



India has achieved over **217 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity**, with renewables accounting for more than half of installed power capacity. Solar energy, in particular, has witnessed exponential growth, supported by large-scale projects, policy incentives, and declining costs.

Flagship initiatives such as:

- **National Solar Mission**
 - **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana**
 - **PM-KUSUM Scheme**
- have not only increased capacity but also decentralised energy access, particularly in rural areas.

The scale and speed of this transition position India as a global leader in clean energy adoption.

3. The Green Hydrogen Push

Recognising the limitations of conventional renewables, India has placed significant emphasis on emerging technologies, most notably green hydrogen.

The **National Green Hydrogen Mission** aims to position India as a global hub for hydrogen production, utilisation, and export. This initiative is expected to play a critical role in decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors such as steel, cement, and heavy transport.

More importantly, it reflects a forward-looking approach, investing today in technologies that will define tomorrow's energy systems.

4. Balancing Transition with Stability

While the focus on renewables is clear, India has adopted a pragmatic approach by continuing to utilise coal and other conventional sources to ensure grid stability.

Coal remains a critical

component of India's energy mix, providing baseload power and supporting industrial activity. Rather than abrupt phase-outs, the strategy emphasises efficiency improvements, cleaner technologies, and gradual transition.

India's energy transition is uniquely complex:

- It must support rapid industrialisation
- It must remain affordable for a vast population
- It must align with climate commitments

This has led to what can best be described as a **calibrated transition model**, where clean energy expands without destabilising existing systems.

Strategic Buffers: Petroleum Reserves and Supply Diversification

One of the most critical lessons from recent global disruptions has been the importance of preparedness.

India has significantly strengthened its strategic petroleum reserves, transforming its ability to withstand supply shocks. As highlighted in official remarks:

Strategic reserves exceeding 50 lakh tonnes mark “a significant shift in national security.”

Simultaneously, India has diversified crude sourcing, reducing overdependence on any single region. This approach reflects a pragmatic understanding of global volatility.

The Overlooked Crisis: LPG Vulnerability and Household Impact

While much of the energy discourse focuses on macroeconomics and infrastructure, one of the most immediate and human dimensions of the crisis lies in **Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)**.

India is the **world's second-largest LPG consumer**, with a large portion of its requirement met through imports.

Over the past decade, schemes like **Ujjwala Yojana** have successfully expanded LPG access to millions of households, transforming cooking practices and improving health outcomes.

However, this success has also created a new vulnerability.



1. Import Dependence and Price Volatility

Global disruptions directly affect LPG prices in India. During periods of geopolitical tension, supply constraints and price spikes translate into higher subsidy burdens or increased costs for consumers.

2. Affordability Pressures

Despite subsidy support, rising refill costs have led to reduced consumption among economically weaker households in certain regions raising concerns about a potential reversal to traditional fuels.

3. Supply Chain Sensitivity

Unlike electricity, LPG is a **physical supply chain product** dependent on shipping, storage, and distribution networks. Any disruption, whether geopolitical or logistical, has immediate ground-level consequences.

4. Policy Dilemma

The government faces a complex balancing act:

- Protecting consumers through subsidies
- Managing fiscal burden
- Maintaining supply stability

The LPG issue, therefore, is not just about fuel, it is about **energy equity and social stability**.

Persistent Challenges: The Structural Fault Lines

Despite notable progress, India's energy transition is not without its challenges. Structural inefficiencies, financial constraints, and institutional bottlenecks continue to hinder optimal outcomes.

1. Transmission and Infrastructure Gaps

The rapid expansion of renewable capacity has not always been matched by corresponding investments in transmission infrastructure. Grid congestion, curtailment issues, and delays in project execution remain significant concerns.

Without robust grid modernisation, the full potential of renewable energy cannot be realised.

2. Financial Stress in the Power Sector

Distribution companies (DISCOMs) continue to face finan-

cial stress, impacting their ability to invest in infrastructure and maintain service quality. Issues related to tariff structures, subsidy burdens, and operational inefficiencies persist.

Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring long-term sustainability.

3. Policy and Regulatory Uncertainty

While India's policy intent is clear, inconsistencies in implementation at the state level often create uncertainty for investors. Delays in approvals, renegotiation of contracts, and changing regulatory frameworks can affect confidence and slow down progress.

4. Fossil Fuel Dependence

Despite growth in renewables, fossil fuels still account for a substantial share of energy consumption. This dependence not only impacts emissions but also exposes the economy to global price volatility.

The Way Forward: From Expansion to Optimisation

India's energy journey is entering a new phase; one that requires not just expansion, but optimisation and integration.

1. Strengthening Energy Independence

Reducing import dependence must remain a strategic priority. This includes enhancing domestic production, expanding storage capacity, and securing long term supply agreements.

Energy independence, in this context, is not about isolation, but about resilience.



2. Investing in Grid Modernisation and Storage

As renewable penetration increases, the need for advanced grid systems and energy storage solutions becomes critical. Battery storage, pumped hydro, and smart grid technologies will play a pivotal role in ensuring reliability.

3. Reforming Subsidy Mechanisms

Rationalising subsidies and adopting targeted delivery mechanisms can improve efficiency while ensuring that support reaches those who need it most.

4. Strengthening Household Energy Security

The LPG ecosystem must be reinforced through:

- Better subsidy targeting
- Stable pricing mechanisms
- Exploration of electric and solar cooking alternatives

5. Scaling Green Hydrogen

The hydrogen mission must move rapidly from policy to execution, positioning India as a global leader.

6. Encouraging Private Sector Participation

The scale of India's energy transition requires significant private investment. Consistent regulatory frameworks and faster approvals are critical to sustaining investment momentum.

7. Strengthening Centre-State Coordination

Energy governance in India is inherently federal. Aligning state policies with national objectives will be crucial for achieving targets and ensuring uniform progress.

Editorial Perspective: A Defining Decade

The current energy crisis, shaped by war and global uncertainty, has accelerated a transition that was already underway.

For India, this moment represents a defining decade; one that will determine not only its energy future, but also its economic and geopolitical trajectory.

What stands out is the clarity of intent. India is not merely reacting to global disruptions; it is proactively reshaping its energy architecture. The emphasis on renewables, the push for green hydrogen, and the focus on diversification all point toward a strategic vision that balances ambition with realism.

Yet, ambition alone is not enough. Execution will be the true test.

The next phase of India's energy journey must prioritise efficiency, integration, and institutional strength. It must bridge the gap between policy and implementation, between targets and outcomes.

Energy, in today's world, is no longer just about power generation, rather it is about power projection. It influences diplomacy, trade, and national security.

India's ability to navigate this complex landscape will define its standing in the global order.

Conclusion: From Crisis to Strategic Leadership

The global energy crisis, intensified by war and geopolitical tensions, has forced nations to rethink their priorities.

For India, this moment represents more than a challenge, it is an opportunity to redefine its energy narrative.

The challenge lies in managing immediate pressures, price volatility, supply disruptions, and rising demand. The opportunity lies in building a resilient, sustainable, and self-reliant energy ecosystem.

A narrative that balances:

- Growth with sustainability
- Access with affordability
- Ambition with realism

If navigated effectively, India's model could emerge as a blueprint for the developing world.

Because in the final analysis, energy is no longer just a sector.

In the final analysis, energy security is no longer a sectoral issue, it is a national imperative.

And in responding to this imperative, India is not just securing its future, it is shaping it. **BI**

EXCLUSIVE

Invest Punjab

Powering the Next Wave of Industrial Growth

“This historic summit will offer a healthy platform to transform the destiny of the state by giving a major push to industrial development.”

said Mr. Bhagwant Mann, Chief Minister of Punjab, setting the tone for Punjab’s renewed push towards becoming a preferred investment destination.

by **Suhani Nagpal**
Editor, Bureaucracy India





In an era where states are competing to position themselves as investment destinations, Punjab is steadily reclaiming its legacy as one of India's most vibrant economic engines. Through a strategic blend of policy reforms, infrastructure development, and investor centric governance, Invest Punjab is emerging as a model for facilitating business with speed, transparency, and vision.

At the heart of this transformation is a leadership that understands both the aspirations of industry and the strengths of the state.

“Punjab is not just open for business—it is ready for the future,” affirms Mr. Bhagwant Mann, Chief Minister of Punjab. *“Our government is committed to creating an ecosystem where industries can thrive with ease, supported by robust infrastructure, skilled manpower, and progressive policies.”*

Under his leadership, Punjab has taken significant strides in simplifying procedures, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and ensuring faster clearances through digital platforms. The emphasis has been on transforming governance into a facilitator rather than a regulator.

Strengthening the Investment Ecosystem

There are events that announce change, and then there are events that quietly begin it. The Progressive Punjab Investors Summit 2026 felt like the latter. It did not just present numbers or policies. It told a story of a state ready to rewrite its economic identity.

Held from **13th to 15th March, 2026** at **Plaksha University in Mohali**, the summit brought together policymakers, global investors, entrepreneurs, and institutional leaders on one platform. The venue itself reflected the shift Punjab is aiming for. Plaksha University, built around science, technology, and innovation, set the tone for conversations that looked far beyond traditional industries.

Punjab has long been known as the breadbasket of India. However, this summit made it clear that the state is now aiming to become something more. The focus is moving toward artificial intelligence, global capability centers, advanced manufacturing, and sustainable industry models.

The scale of participation made that intent visible. Delegations from the United Kingdom, Japan, and South Korea engaged in discussions that went beyond investment pitches. These were conversations about long-term collaboration, technology exchange, and building ecosystems that last.

At the heart of the summit was a clear message. Punjab is open for business, but more importantly, it is ready for transformation.

Driving this momentum forward is Mr. Sanjeev Arora, Minister of Industries and Commerce of Punjab, who highlights the importance of collaboration between government and industry. *“Punjab offers a unique blend of entrepreneurial spirit and strategic location. Our focus is on building strong partnerships with investors and ensuring long-term value creation.”*

From textiles and manufacturing to IT and agro-processing, Punjab is diversifying its industrial base while retaining its core strengths.

Administrative Excellence at the Core

Behind the scenes, a robust administrative framework ensures that policies translate into real outcomes. K. A. P. Sinha emphasizes efficiency and accountability as key pillars. He brings a governance approach focused on faster decision making, efficient delivery, and administrative accountability, ensuring that policy intent translates into on-ground outcomes.

Supporting this framework, IAS Gurkirat Kirpal Singh is part of a system that is increasingly leveraging digitisation and data-driven processes to enhance responsiveness and investor facilitation.

Ease of Doing Business: From Policy to Practice

One of the strongest pillars of the summit was the unveiling of the Industrial and Business Development Policy 2026. This policy does not follow the traditional approach of fixed incentives. Instead, it offers flexibility, which is something investors have been asking for.

Companies can now choose from a basket of up to 20 incentives based on their specific needs. A data center may prioritize power subsidies, while a pharmaceutical company may look for research support. This simple shift changes how businesses evaluate Punjab as a destination.

Punjab's single-window clearance system under Invest Punjab has become a cornerstone of its investor outreach. By integrating multiple departments onto one platform, the state has significantly reduced approval timelines and enhanced transparency.

Industries are not just welcomed, they are guided through every stage, from approvals to operations. This hands-on approach has earned the trust of both domestic and international investors.

Investments, Ideas, and Industries of the Future

If policy builds confidence, investments prove it. The summit concluded with commitments worth over ₹12,000 crore, spread across sectors that define the future of the economy.

What stands out is not just the scale, but the direction of these investments.



Tata Steel announced a ₹3,200 crore project focused on recycled steel production in Ludhiana. This is not only industrial expansion but also a step toward sustainable manufacturing. Vervio India committed ₹3,000 crore to set up compressed biogas plants using paddy straw, turning an environmental challenge into an economic opportunity.

Plaksha University itself announced an additional ₹5,000

crore investment into research and entrepreneurship. This reflects a deeper idea that the future economy will be driven by knowledge, not just capital.

Other players such as the Nahar Group, Tynor, JSW Group, and international firms added to this momentum. Together, these commitments show a diversified growth model that balances traditional strengths with emerging sectors.

Infrastructure and Sectoral Growth

With dedicated industrial parks, improved logistics connectivity, and a strong focus on MSMEs, Punjab is building a balanced and inclusive growth model. The state's strategic location, with access to northern markets and proximity to international borders, further enhances its appeal.



The hospitality and tourism sector was discussed as a major growth opportunity, especially with Punjab's cultural richness. Education and skill development were highlighted as essential for building a future-ready workforce. Sectors such as renewable energy, food processing, and textiles are witnessing renewed interest, supported by targeted incentives and policy support.

As Chief Minister, Mr. Bhagwant Mann aptly puts it, ***“We are building a Punjab that is progressive, prosperous, and globally competitive.”***

These conversations gave depth to the summit. They showed that growth is not coming from one sector, but from a network of interconnected industries.

From Agriculture to Artificial Intelligence

One of the most interesting shifts visible at the summit was the transition from agriculture-led identity to technology-driven growth.

Mohali is being positioned as a major IT and innovation hub. The state is actively promoting Global Capability Centers by offering employment subsidies and infrastructure support. The goal is clear. Punjab wants to compete with cities like Bengaluru and Hyderabad in the technology space.

Artificial intelligence was not treated as a distant concept. It was discussed as a present reality. Industries are already using AI for predictive maintenance and quality control. The government is also exploring its use in governance and service delivery.

This blend of policy, technology, and intent creates a strong foundation for long-term transformation.

The real strength of the summit lies in its potential impact.

The projects announced have the capacity to generate over 47,000 jobs. This directly addresses one of Punjab's biggest concerns, which is youth migration. By creating opportunities within the state, the government aims to retain talent and build local economies. Infrastructure also plays a key role in this vision. With six airports, strong road connectivity, and proximity to freight corridors, Punjab is positioning itself as a logistics-friendly state.

At a broader level, the summit reflects a shift in mindset. It shows a move toward competitive federalism, where states are actively competing to attract global investment and build specialized economies.

Capturing Conversations That Matter

While policies and investments define the scale of the summit, the real essence lies in the people and interactions behind it.

Bureaucracy India was present on the ground to capture these moments. Representing the publication, Editor Ms. Suhani Nagpal engaged closely with the environment of the summit, attending sessions, observing discussions, and connecting with key stakeholders.



One of the most defining moments of this presence was the interaction with the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Punjab, Bhagwant Mann and other members of his cabinet.

This interaction reflected the openness of the leadership and their willingness to engage with platforms that document governance and policy. It was not just a meeting. It was a moment that connected media, policy, and public discourse.

Through these engagements, Bureaucracy India was able to go beyond reporting and bring a more grounded perspective to its audience.

Conclusion

Invest Punjab is more than an initiative, it is a statement of intent. With strong leadership, efficient governance, and a clear vision, Punjab is positioning itself as a preferred destination for investment in India.

For investors seeking opportunity backed by commitment, Punjab offers not just promise, but performance. **BI**



EXCLUSIVE

Petals Before Colours A Prelude to Dialogue, Diplomacy and Celebration

*Global Diplomats, Senior Policymakers &
Industry Titans Gather for an Exclusive Pre-Holi Spring Soirée
at The Imperial, New Delhi*

New Delhi | 28th February 2026

In an evening that blended diplomacy with culture and policy with partnership, The Imperial, New Delhi became the epicentre of high-level engagement as eminent diplomats, senior bureaucrats, and industry leaders convened for an exclusive Pre-Holi Floral Soirée.

Organised by **MSME Business Forum India** in association with **Bureaucracy India**, the gathering was curated under the evocative theme:

“In the spirit of collaboration before colors, tonight we celebrate connections.”

Before the vibrance of Holi fills the air, the evening placed dialogue before festivity and partnerships before celebration, creating a rare and refined platform where governance, global diplomacy, and enterprise converged with purpose.

Set by the serene poolside lawns, the venue resonated with a softer rhythm. Under warm lights and delicate floral installations, the evening welcomed an esteemed gathering of diplomats, senior policymakers, bureaucrats, and industry leaders. The atmosphere reflected understated luxury, where the stillness of water, the gentle glow of candlelight, and the elegance of spring inspired décor created a setting that encouraged meaningful engagement.





Distinguished Presence Across Diplomacy, Government & Industry

The soirée witnessed the gracious presence of:

- Mr. Bui Trung Thuong, Trade Head – Embassy of Vietnam, along with his spouse and delegation
- Adv. Somesh Arora, Additional Advocate General, Punjab
- Ms. Jyoti Mayal, Chairperson, Tourism & Hospitality Sector Skill Council
- DCP Meena, Delhi Police
- Mr. Ramandeep Singh, Deputy Director of Industries, Punjab
- Lt. Col. (Retd.) Monish Ahuja, Chairman, CBEI & Joint Director, MSME Business Forum India
- Mr. Sashi Shekhar, Secretary (R), MNRE
- Mr. Alok Ghai, Executive Committee Chairperson & Strategic Advisor, Renewable Energy Sector
- IAS Vijay Bishnoi, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Corporate Communication

along with other eminent dignitaries representing diverse sectors of governance, sustainability, security, tourism, renewable energy and industry.

An Immersive Experience of Culture, Elegance & Meaningful Engagement

Conceptualised and curated by **Knitdreams**, the iconic venue was transformed into a refined spring sanctuary. Soft candlelight, exquisite floral artistry, and the tranquil backdrop of flowing water created an atmosphere of understated luxury. Subtle installations framed the space and a soulful live musical performance added emotional resonance to the evening. As familiar melodies filled the air, conversations unfolded effortlessly, reinforcing the idea that the most memorable gatherings are often those that allow space for authentic connection.

At the heart of the soirée was the evocative theme of Phoo-

lon Ki Holi — a graceful tribute to tradition where petals replaced colours. Rather than exuberance, the celebration embraced refinement. Guests greeted one another with flowers, symbolising positivity, respect, and renewal. The gesture reflected a mindful approach to festivity, where elegance enhanced cultural expression, creating an experience that felt both rooted and contemporary.



A soulful live musical performance added emotional depth to the evening, while a symbolic Floral Holi Ceremony — where petals replaced colours — offered a graceful tribute to tradition, earning widespread appreciation from guests.

The meticulously curated culinary experience further elevated the gathering, reflecting sophistication and thoughtful hospitality.

A Platform for Strategic Convergence

Addressing the distinguished audience, Lt. Col. (Retd.) Monish Ahuja, Chairman, CBEI & Joint Director, MSME Business Forum India, underscored the strategic intent behind the gathering:

“When we bridge the industry gap, we create ecosystems where we grow together and prosper together.”



He emphasised the importance of sustained dialogue between policymakers, diplomats and emerging enterprises, noting that such platforms accelerate collaboration, strengthen economic ecosystems, and support India’s sustainable growth trajectory.

More than a celebration, the soirée served as a platform for meaningful exchange across sectors. Conversations moved seamlessly between policy, enterprise, sustainability, and collaboration, highlighting the growing importance of curated forums that enable leadership communities to engage beyond formal environments.

MSME Business Forum India and Bureaucracy India played a central role in shaping this dynamic. Their presence was not limited to hosting. It extended into facilitating genuine connections. Throughout the evening, there were moments of exchange with senior officials, policymakers, and leaders, where ideas were shared and relationships strengthened.

The sentiment of the evening was echoed in the words of the guests.



Advocate Somesh Arora, Additional Advocate General, Punjab, acknowledged,

“An impeccably organised Holi celebration, marked by elegance, fine hospitality, and thoughtful execution. Kudos to the organisers for delivering such a seamless and elevated experience.”



IAS Vijay Bishnoi, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Corporate Communication, shared,

“Thank you for inviting me to the Pre-Holi celebration at The Imperial. It was a wonderful and well-organized evening, bringing together diverse people for meaningful conversations. I truly enjoyed the warm hospitality and the opportunity to interact with such a diverse and thoughtful group. I also appreciate the efforts of Bureaucracy India magazine in creating platforms that encourage dialogue and collaboration between the like-minded people. Wishing the team continued success in its valuable work.”



Mr. Ramandeep Singh, Deputy Director of Industries, Punjab, added,

“The floral concept symbolised positivity and renewal. Such platforms encourage collaborative thinking and reinforce the importance of collective growth.”





Jyoti Mayal, Chairperson of the Tourism and Hospitality Sector Skill Council, appreciated the warmth and beauty of the setup, calling it a memorable experience,

“Thanks for a wonderful evening.. enjoyed ourselves .. beautiful set up .. God Bless.”

Such reflections captured what the evening quietly achieved.



Preeti Sinha, Government Advisory Professional with the Ministry of Animal Husbandry and Dairy, said,

“Grateful to be part of the Phoolon Ki Holi celebration hosted by Bureaucracy India and MSME business forum India —a wonderful platform to celebrate culture while connecting with inspiring leaders and changemakers. The celebration was a perfect blend of tradition, positivity, and inspiring company. Truly a memorable evening.”as a wonderful platform that blended culture with connection.”



Mr. Alok Ghai, Executive Committee Chairperson & Strategic Advisor, Renewable Energy Sector, suggested,

“A wonderful pre Holi event was organised by Bureaucracy India and MSME Business Forum India. It was an incredible pre Holi filled with vibrant hues and heartfelt connections. Thank you for creating memories to cherish. The event was all about meaningful connect.”

As the evening concluded, what remained was not merely the memory of a celebration, but the sense of having participated in an experience defined by intention. The Pre-Holi Floral Soirée demonstrated that elegance need not be extravagant, and that meaningful engagement often emerges in spaces designed with care.

By choosing flowers over colours, conversation over spectacle, and connection over ceremony, the evening offered a re-

fined perspective on celebration — one that honoured tradition while embracing contemporary sensibilities.

In doing so, it reaffirmed the role of thoughtfully curated platforms in strengthening dialogue across diplomacy, governance, and enterprise, setting the tone for a year guided not only by festivity, but by cooperation, connection, and collective progress **BI**

Iran War Impact on India's MICE and Tourism Industry

by Gajesh Girdhar

Chairman Governing Council & Founder Member, NIMA



The ongoing conflict involving Iran has created a serious impact on global tourism, especially the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) sector. This war is not limited to one region—it is influencing global travel patterns, business confidence, and event planning across the world.

For India, the impact is both direct and indirect. Being well connected to global markets, India is affected by changes in international travel, rising costs, and shifting event preferences. At the same time, it is also in a position to benefit as companies look for stable and reliable destinations.

One of the most immediate effects is on air travel. The Middle East acts as a key aviation hub connecting Europe, Asia, and Africa. With airspace restrictions and route changes, travel to and from India has become longer, more expensive, and less predictable. This creates challenges for international delegates attending events in India and for Indian corporates traveling abroad.

Tourist confidence has also been affected. Travelers are avoiding not only conflict zones but also nearby regions due to safety concerns. This has an impact on inbound MICE tourism to India, as global participants become more cautious. At the same time, Indian companies are also rethinking outbound travel plans.

The financial impact is clearly visible. Higher airfares, increased logistics costs, and overall uncertainty are making MICE events more expensive to organize. This can lead to smaller events, reduced participation, or delays in decision-making.

However, there is also a strong opportunity for India. Cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru offer world-class infrastructure for conferences and exhibitions.

As global planners move events away from conflict-affected regions, India can position itself as a safe, cost-effective alternative.

At the same time, domestic MICE within India is expected to grow. Companies are likely to increase meetings, incentives, and conferences within the country instead of traveling abroad. This will boost demand for local hotels, venues, and event services, strengthening the domestic MICE ecosystem.

Another important shift is in how events are being planned. Organizations are becoming more cautious, preferring regional meetings and adopting hybrid formats where part of the audience joins online. While this ensures continuity, it also changes the traditional experience of large international events.

In conclusion, the Iran war is influencing India's MICE and tourism industry through travel disruptions, rising costs, and changing business behavior. At the same time, it presents an opportunity for India to grow as a global MICE destination, especially by strengthening its domestic market and positioning itself as a stable choice in uncertain times. **BI**



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Viet Nam–India Electronics and IT Business Forum 2026

by Anjali Bhardwaj

On a spring evening in New Delhi, diplomacy met enterprise with quiet precision. The Embassy of Viet Nam hosted the Viet Nam–India Electronics and IT Business Forum 2026, bringing together over 100 business leaders, policymakers, and industry stakeholders from both nations for a focused dialogue on the future of technology-led collaboration.

Held as part of the commemorative engagements marking a decade of the Viet Nam–India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the forum reflected a relationship that has steadily moved beyond intent into tangible economic alignment. Electronics manufacturing, digital transformation, and emerging technologies—sectors shaping the next decade of global growth—formed the core of the discussions.

Opening the session, Trade Counselor Bui Trung Thuong set the tone with a succinct welcome, followed by special remarks from H.E. Nguyen Thanh Hai, Ambassador of Viet Nam to India. In his keynote, the Ambassador framed the partnership within a larger narrative of shared ambition. Viet Nam’s goal of becoming a high-income nation by 2045 and India’s vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 were presented not as parallel aspirations, but as converging pathways powered by innovation, digital ecosystems, and global integration.

What distinguished the forum was its balance between policy vision and industry realism. Presentations from the Viet Nam Electronic Industries Association (VEIA) and the Viet Nam Software and IT Services Association (VINASA) offered a comprehensive look at Viet Nam’s evolving manufacturing base and its accelerating digital economy. On the Indian side, voices from MeitY Startup Hub, the Indian Electrical and Electronics Manufacturers’ Association (IEEMA), and the NASSCOM

Centre of Excellence for IoT & AI mapped India’s expanding innovation landscape and its readiness for deeper cross-border collaboration.

Rather than remaining a ceremonial exchange, the forum moved swiftly into practical engagement. A curated session of business presentations saw Vietnamese enterprises introduce their capabilities and partnership interests, followed by structured B2B interactions. Conversations ranged across electronics manufacturing, artificial intelligence, fintech, and ICT solutions—areas where both countries hold complementary strengths.

Equally significant was the presence of over 20 industry bodies, including leading chambers of commerce from both nations. Their participation signaled that the dialogue was not confined to governments, but extended to the institutions that actively shape trade flows, investment decisions, and industrial policy ecosystems.

The forum concluded not with declarations, but with conversations—over networking sessions that quietly carried forward the day’s intent. It was in these exchanges that the real work began: identifying partners, testing ideas, and laying the groundwork for collaborations that could move from boardrooms to production lines.

In essence, the Viet Nam–India Electronics and IT Business Forum 2026 did more than spotlight opportunities. It reaffirmed a maturing partnership—one that is increasingly defined by shared technological ambition, economic pragmatism, and a clear understanding that the future of growth lies in building together. **BI**



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A Mother's Quiet Worry Turns to Hope: Aarav's Journey with Autism

by Arun Arora



In the lively lanes of Delhi, amid the chatter of morning chai stalls and the rush of school buses, young Aarav lived a world of his own. At two, he rarely met his mother's eyes when she called his name. He arranged his toy cars in endless, perfect lines but crumbled into tears if anyone moved them. His parents, like so many families, first brushed it off. "Bachche to aise hi hote hain," relatives reassured. "He'll talk when he's ready."

Yet as months slipped by and Aarav remained silent, didn't join park games, or respond to simple questions, his mother Priya's worry deepened. She recalled neighbours' tales of children who "outgrew" such quirks, but instinct told her otherwise.

On International Autism Awareness Day, April 2, 2026, with the world reminding us that every life holds value, Priya's story mirrors a growing reality across India. Diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are rising—not from a sudden surge, but thanks to greater awareness and better tools. Studies like the INCLIN (International Clinical Epidemiology Network) report estimate about 1 in 68 to 100 children aged 2-9 on the spectrum, roughly 1.12% of young ones, affecting millions nationwide. Boys are diagnosed three times more often than girls, and while cities like Delhi see more cases through improved screening, rural areas lag, leaving many hidden.

Priya's breakthrough came with a paediatrician's suggestion: screen using M-CHAT, a simple checklist for toddlers. Questions like "Does your child point to share interest?" or "Does he respond to his name?" flagged concerns. A referral to a child development centre led to a diagnosis at two-and-a-half.

Shock hit first, then denial. "When my son was diagnosed at 2, I thought it was just a phase—relatives said he'd outgrow it," shares Priya Sharma, a Delhi mother. "By age 4, he still wasn't speaking; looking back, we missed some important opportunities." In India, family pressures and stigma often fuel a "wait-and-see" mindset during the brain's most changeable early years, delaying therapies for language, social skills, and independence.

Experts emphasise timely action. Dr Praveen Mehta, Director of the Child Development Centre at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, stresses family involvement: parents are encouraged to support therapies at home for positive outcomes, as children spend most of their time with them.

Genetics play a big role—up to 90% of risk—with environment secondary. Dr Veronica Arora, Consultant Clinical Geneticist, Institute of Medical

Genetics & Genomics at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, advocates prenatal strategies: genetic testing of affected children identifies causes, enabling carrier screening, NIPT (Non-invasive prenatal testing), and IVF with PGT (Pre-implantation genetic) testing to prevent recurrence in siblings. Full genome sequencing reveals variations, empowering families to plan healthier pregnancies through toxin avoidance and immune support pre-conception.

For Aarav, early intervention transformed everything: speech therapy unlocked words, occupational therapy eased sensory overloads causing meltdowns, and behavioural support taught sharing and eye contact. His physiotherapist, certified in sensory integration (formerly at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital), Faridabad based Dr Shalini Arora, blended physiotherapy with parent counselling to build daily independence.

Dr. Ashima Mehta, Associate Consultant, Child Development, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, shares, "The earlier we diagnose and start early interventions, the greater is the brain's capacity to adapt and learn as we are utilizing the window of neuroplasticity in early childhood."

Similar hope shines in other stories. "After six months of therapy, my daughter went from meltdowns to making friends," says Rahul Patel from Mumbai. "Parent counselling helped me stop blaming myself and commit fully."

India's RPWD Act 2016 (The Rights of Persons with Disabilities) mandates inclusive education. In mainstream schools, trained teachers offer quiet zones and visual aids, while peer programs build empathy—explaining traits and modelling inclusive play. **"Inclusion enriches all students, but we face untrained staff and rigid curricula,"** notes Ms Nishi Rai, Special Educator at Delhi's renowned convent school **"Without IEPs and peer sensitisation, meltdowns disrupt classes—yet with support, our autistic kids thrive alongside peers."**

Today, Aarav attends a Delhi preschool with support. He still loves patterns and shies from loud noises, but he's connecting, learning, and smiling more. His parents no longer wait—they act.

As April 2 approaches, let's embrace this truth: autism is a difference, not a shadow to hide. Trust instincts, screen early, seek multidisciplinary help, and join support groups to shatter stigma. Denial dims light; awareness ignites potential. Every child like Aarav deserves to be seen, supported, and celebrated. In our vibrant India, every life truly has value. **BI**



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The War Within: Reflections in a World on Edge

by Vibha Gurtu
Director, Spiritual Tara



In a time when the world seems increasingly divided where nations prepare for conflict and identities harden the instinct is to look outward for causes. Politics, borders, ideologies. Yet, across centuries and civilizations, spiritual traditions have pointed toward a deeper truth:

The outer war is a reflection of the inner war.

Before any battle is fought on land, it is first fought in the human mind.

In the Bhagavad Gita, the setting is a battlefield, Kurukshetra. But the real conflict is not between armies; it is within Arjuna. Torn by doubt, fear, and attachment, he stands unable to act. Krishna's guidance is not merely strategic, it is psychological and spiritual. He reminds Arjuna that clarity, detachment, and self-mastery must precede action. The battlefield becomes a metaphor for the human condition.

Buddhist teachings echo the same insight. In the Dhammapada, it is said that conquering oneself is greater than conquering a thousand men in battle. The Buddha's encounter with Mara—the embodiment of fear, desire, and illusion—is not an external war, but an inner one. The message is simple yet profound: the root of suffering, and therefore conflict, lies within the mind.

The Bible brings this even closer to daily life. "What causes fights and quarrels among you?" it asks. "Do they not come from your desires that battle within you?" Here, conflict is traced back to unchecked desires, impulses, and inner unrest. The emphasis shifts from changing the world to transforming the heart.

Similarly, in Islamic thought, the Quran and prophetic teachings distinguish between the outer struggle and the greater, inner one—Jihad al-Nafs, the struggle against the self. It is the effort to overcome ego, anger, and greed. The real victory is not over an opponent, but over one's own lower tendencies. In Sikhism, the Guru Granth Sahib identifies five inner enemies—lust, anger, greed, attachment, and ego. These are seen as the true sources of human suffering and conflict. To conquer them is to bring harmony not only within oneself, but into the world.

Jewish wisdom offers a similar lens. The Torah speaks of the struggle between opposing impulses within every human being—the Yetzer Hara and Yetzer Tov. Before the first act of violence in human history, Cain is warned: "Sin is crouching at your door... but you must rule over it." The message is clear—the battle begins within. The Talmud reinforces this by asking, "Who is mighty? One who conquers his inclination."

Across traditions, across geographies, the message converges:

Humanity's greatest conflict is not external, but internal.

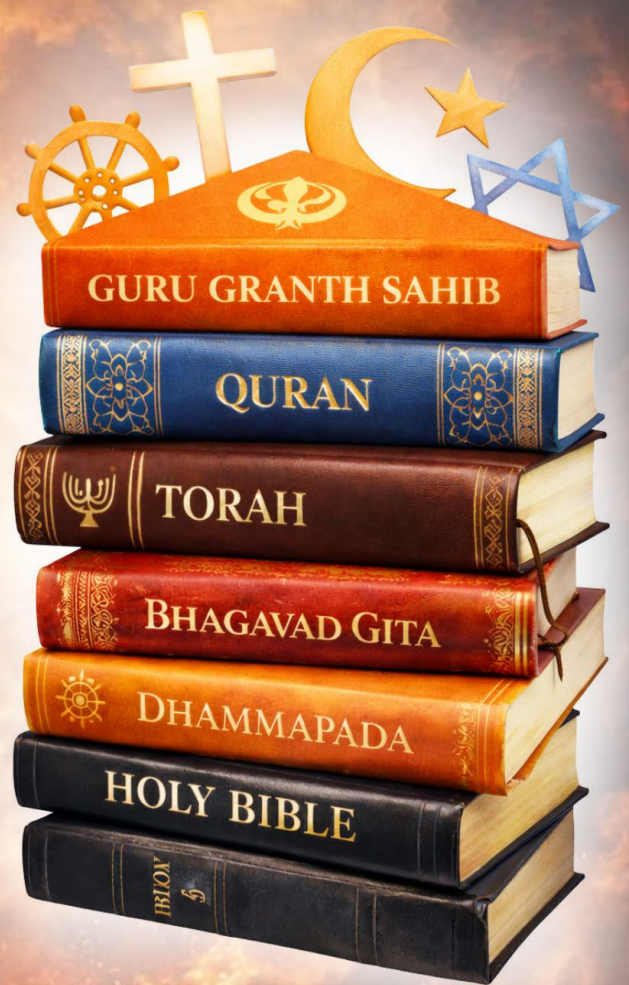
And perhaps this is where India's deeper civilizational wisdom becomes relevant today. Rooted in ideas like Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—the world as one family—India's stance often reflects restraint, balance, and a search for harmony rather than dominance. It is a reminder that strength is not only expressed through force, but through awareness.

If we seek peace in the world, we must begin closer to home. In our reactions.

In our judgments. In our unchecked desires.

Because the same anger that lives quietly within us, when scaled, becomes division. And the same awareness that brings peace within us, when shared, becomes harmony.

The outer war will end only when the inner war is understood. **BI**



Vibha is an author, a practitioner and facilitator of Shamanism and an intuitive healer. Trained in reiki, pranic healing, hypnotherapy, tarot card reading and others, she founded Aumtara, a spiritual hub, in New Delhi. Vibha is a spiritual guide, talk therapist and an image consultant. She uses her learning and experience to create inner and outer balance. Vibha assists people to break repetitive patterns to achieve life goals through clarity. She provides holistic healing to bring a shift internally in thoughts and externally with behaviour and appearance. She has conducted numerous workshops on image makeover, relationships and empowerment at individual and corporate levels.

To learn more, visit www.vibhagurtu.com



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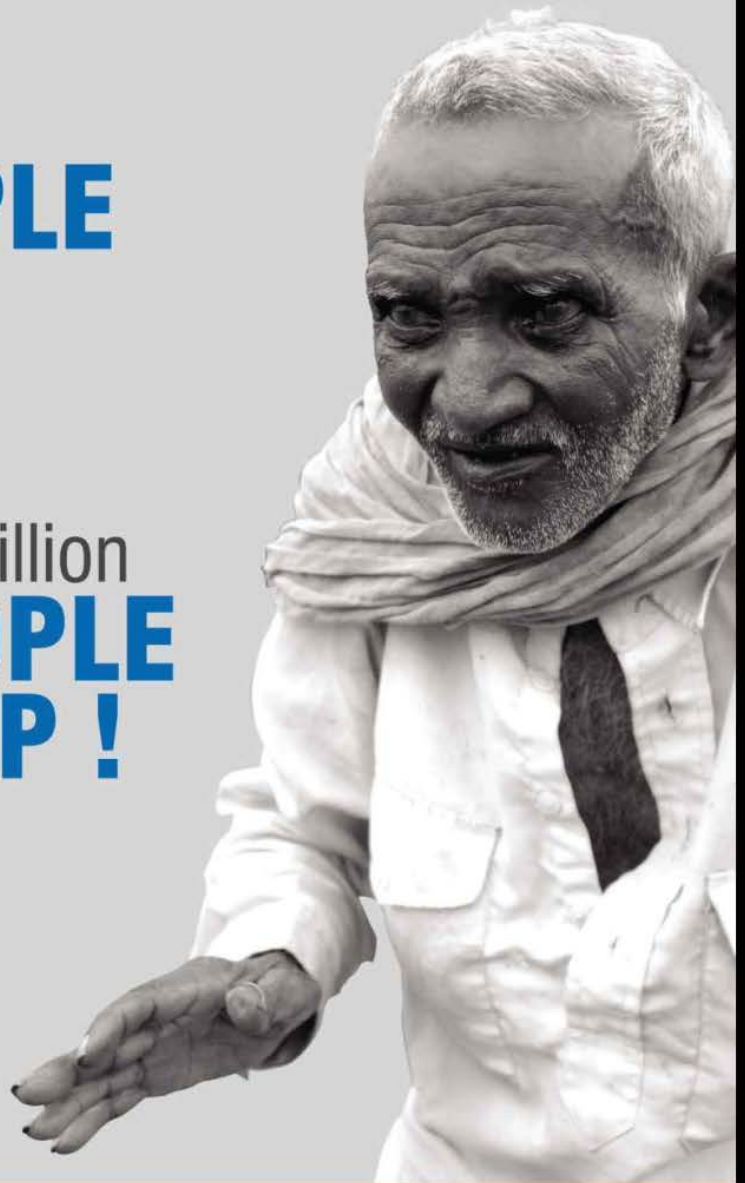
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