

Exclusive Interview: Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja (Retd.) –
The Biomass Man of India

BUREAUCRACY INDIA

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INDIA'S ENERGY SECURITY IMPERATIVE



Why Industry Must Accelerate the Shift
to Non-Fossil Fuels and Energy Efficiency



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DEPENDENCE TO
ENERGY
INDEPENDENCE



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WITH CLEAN,
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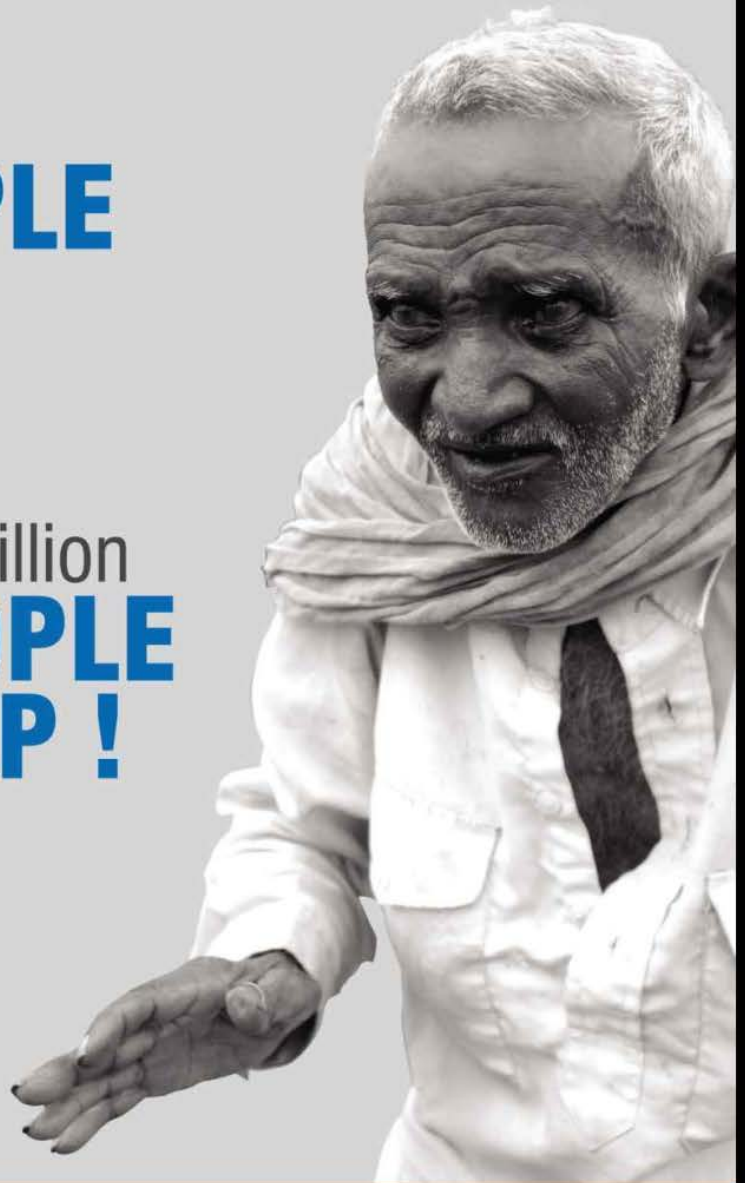
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As India accelerates its journey towards becoming a developed nation, the conversations shaping our future are increasingly centred around energy security, sustainability, global partnerships, effective governance, and human well-being.

In this issue of Bureaucracy India, we bring together voices and perspectives that reflect this evolving national narrative.

Our Cover Story examines India's energy security as our nation seeks to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels while strengthening industrial competitiveness. The transition towards renewable energy and energy efficiency emerges not merely as an environmental choice but as a strategic necessity.

Continuing this theme of sustainable transformation, we are privileged to feature an exclusive interview with Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja (Retd.), widely known as the "Biomass Man of India." His remarkable journey from serving the nation in uniform to pioneering India's biomass revolution offers valuable insights into leadership, innovation, rural empowerment, and the immense potential of the bioenergy sector.

This edition also explores the significance of the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, a landmark development that has the potential to deepen economic cooperation, drive investments, and create new opportunities for growth and innovation.

Closer home, our Delhi State Scan reviews key initiatives and developmental priorities under the leadership of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, while our exclusive events coverage highlight meaningful engagements driving dialogue and collaboration across sectors.

Finally, our Mind & Matter section encourages readers to reflect on the importance of perspective, purpose, and well-being in a rapidly evolving world.

At Bureaucracy India, we remain committed to bringing you stories that inform, inspire, and contribute to the larger conversation around nation-building.

Happy Reading

Suhani Nagpal

Suhani Nagpal
Editor-in-Chief



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IPS Rajeev Krishna appointed Director General of Police, Uttar Pradesh

IPS officer Rajeev Krishna has been appointed as the Director General of Police (DGP) of Uttar Pradesh, one of the country's most significant policing assignments. As head of the state police force, he will oversee law enforcement, crime prevention, intelligence coordination and public safety across Uttar Pradesh.

A seasoned officer with extensive experience in policing and security administration, Krishna has served in several important positions during his career. His appointment comes as Uttar Pradesh continues to focus on strengthening law and order, modernising policing systems and improving public service delivery. The role carries considerable responsibility given the size and complexity of policing India's largest state by population.



IPS G.S. Malik appointed Director General, Civil Defence & Home Guards

IPS officer G.S. Malik has been appointed as Director General of Civil Defence and Home Guards, a position responsible for overseeing volunteer-based security, emergency preparedness and disaster response coordination. The appointment places him at the helm of an organisation that works closely with police and disaster management agencies during emergencies and public safety operations.

With extensive experience in policing and administration, Malik is expected to focus on strengthening operational readiness, training and coordination mechanisms. His appointment comes at a time when disaster resilience and emergency preparedness are receiving increased attention across states, making the role important for enhancing community-based security and response capabilities.



Saibal Chattopadhyay appointed Chairperson, National Statistical Commission

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Professor Saibal Chattopadhyay as Chairperson of the National Statistical Commission (NSC). A distinguished academic and former Director of IIM Calcutta, he brings extensive experience in economics, public policy and data-driven governance.

The appointment assumes significance as India strengthens its statistical systems and data governance frameworks. The NSC plays a critical role in guiding official statistical standards and ensuring credibility, transparency and quality in national data collection and dissemination.

IAS M. Ramachandru appointed Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs

IAS officer M. Ramachandru has been appointed Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs. The posting places him within a ministry responsible for internal security, Centre-State relations, disaster management and border administration.

Given the ministry's wide-ranging responsibilities, the appointment is considered significant in strengthening administrative coordination and governance at the national level.



Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit appointed Chief of Integrated Defence Staff

Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit has been appointed as Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC), a key position within India's higher defence management structure. The role is responsible for facilitating coordination among the Army, Navy and Air Force while supporting joint planning and capability development.

A highly experienced officer, Air Marshal Dixit has held several important operational and command appointments during his career. His appointment comes at a significant time as the armed forces continue to pursue greater integration, modernisation and interoperability. He is expected to contribute to strengthening joint military planning and enhancing coordination across the three services.

IAS Prakash Rajpurohit appointed Joint Secretary, Department of Defence Production

IAS officer Prakash Rajpurohit (2010 batch, Rajasthan cadre) has been appointed Joint Secretary in the Department of Defence Production. The appointment places him within a strategically important department overseeing India's push towards self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

His responsibilities are expected to include policy implementation, industrial coordination and support for initiatives under the Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat programmes. The appointment comes as India continues expanding indigenous defence production capabilities and defence exports.



Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth appointed Chief of Army Staff

Vice Chief takes over as India's next Army Chief amid evolving security challenges.

Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth has been appointed as the next Chief of the Army Staff, succeeding General Upendra Dwivedi upon his retirement. Currently serving as Vice Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Seth brings nearly four decades of operational, command and strategic experience to the role. His appointment comes at a time when India continues to focus on military modernisation, border preparedness and indigenous defence capabilities.

An Armoured Corps officer commissioned in 1986, Lt Gen Seth has held several key appointments across operational and strategic formations. His elevation reflects continuity in military leadership as the armed forces pursue ongoing reforms, technology integration and theatre command initiatives.



IAS Tejasvi Rana appointed Commissioner, Howrah Municipal Corporation

Tejasvi Rana (WB cadre, 2017 batch) was appointed Commissioner of Howrah Municipal Corporation, one of West Bengal's most significant urban local bodies. The role involves oversight of urban infrastructure, sanitation, civic administration and public service delivery in a major metropolitan region adjoining Kolkata. Her appointment came as part of a broader IAS reshuffle undertaken by the West Bengal government.

IAS Saugat Biswas assigned additional charge as Divisional Commissioner (Central), Arunachal Pradesh

Senior IAS officer Saugat Biswas (AGMUT cadre, 2006 batch) was entrusted with the additional responsibility of Divisional Commissioner (Central), Arunachal Pradesh, during a major administrative reshuffle. Already handling important portfolios, the additional charge places him in a key coordination role overseeing administration, development projects and governance across central districts of the state.



IAS Neelam Meena appointed Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal

Senior IAS officer Neelam Meena (1998 batch) was appointed Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal. The position carries considerable significance as the CEO serves as the Election Commission's principal representative in the state and oversees electoral management, voter enrolment, election preparedness and coordination with district administrations. The appointment comes ahead of crucial electoral activities in the state.





Shiv Pal Singh appointed Joint Secretary, Ministry of Cooperation

Shiv Pal Singh, an Indian Forest Service officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre, has been appointed Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Cooperation. The ministry has emerged as a key institution for advancing cooperative reforms and strengthening grassroots economic participation.

The appointment reflects the government's continued focus on modernising cooperative institutions and enhancing their contribution to rural development and economic growth.ment framework.

IAS Amit Kumar appointed Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce

IAS Amit Kumar (2010 batch, Jharkhand cadre) has been appointed Joint Secretary in the Department of Commerce. The department plays a central role in shaping India's trade policies, export promotion initiatives and global commercial engagements. His appointment comes at a time when India is actively pursuing new trade agreements and expanding its export footprint in global markets



IAS Ashish Vachhani receives extension as Additional Secretary, PMO

The tenure of IAS officer Ashish Vachhani (1997 batch, Tamil Nadu cadre), serving as Additional Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, has been extended by two years. The extension underscores the government's confidence in his role within one of the country's most influential administrative institutions.

The PMO remains central to policy coordination and monitoring of flagship initiatives, making senior leadership continuity particularly significant.



Santosh Kumar Jha appointed Chairman & Managing Director, Konkan Railway

Santosh Kumar Jha, a 1992-batch Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) officer, has been appointed Chairman and Managing Director of Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL). Prior to assuming the role, he served as Director (Operations & Commercial) at KRCL and held several key positions in railway operations, infrastructure planning and business development.



IAS Parthiban P receives extension as Director, PMO

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved a one-year extension for IAS officer Parthiban P as Director in the Prime Minister's Office. Having served in the PMO for several years, he continues to play an important role in policy implementation and inter-ministerial coordination. The extension reflects institutional continuity in the Prime Minister's administrative support structure.

Bureaucrats that retired in May 2026

IAS G. Sai Prasad (Andhra Pradesh cadre)

G. Sai Prasad served in several senior administrative positions in Andhra Pradesh and contributed to governance, public administration and policy implementation across key departments during his distinguished career.

IAS Vivek Joshi (Haryana cadre)

Vivek Joshi held important assignments at both the Centre and state level, contributing significantly to administrative reforms, governance initiatives and institutional strengthening during his tenure in public service.

IAS Alka Upadhyaya (Madhya Pradesh cadre)

Alka Upadhyaya served in multiple leadership roles in government and played an important role in policy formulation, infrastructure development and administrative management across various sectors.

IAS V. Sampath (Tamil Nadu cadre)

V. Sampath held several significant administrative responsibilities during his career and contributed to governance, public service delivery and institutional development within the Tamil Nadu administration.

IAS John V. Samuel (Kerala cadre)

John V. Samuel served extensively in the Kerala cadre, handling key administrative assignments and contributing to governance, development initiatives and public administration reforms.

IAS Anil Udhavrao Diggikar (Maharashtra cadre)

Anil Udhavrao Diggikar held various senior positions in Maharashtra and played a role in strengthening administrative processes, urban governance and policy implementation.

IAS Kamal Lochan Mishra (Odisha cadre)

Kamal Lochan Mishra served in important administrative capacities in Odisha and contributed to governance, development planning and effective implementation of public welfare programmes.

IAS Laxmi Narain Mantri (Rajasthan cadre)


Laxmi Narain Mantri served in the Rajasthan administration across diverse sectors and was associated with governance initiatives, developmental programmes and public service delivery.

IAS Dr. Om Prakash Bairwa (Rajasthan cadre)

Dr. Om Prakash Bairwa held several key administrative assignments in Rajasthan and contributed to governance, institutional management and implementation of development policies.

IAS K. Leelavathy (Karnataka cadre)

K. Leelavathy served in multiple administrative roles in Karnataka and played a significant role in strengthening governance systems, public administration and welfare programme implementation.

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. 



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NTPC commissions 245 MW solar project in Rajasthan

India's largest power producer, NTPC Limited, has commissioned a 245 MW solar power project in Rajasthan, further expanding its renewable energy portfolio. The project is expected to contribute significantly to clean energy generation while supporting India's renewable capacity targets. With the addition, NTPC continues to strengthen its position as a key driver of the country's energy transition. The PSU has been aggressively expanding its solar and green energy investments as part of its long-term sustainability strategy.

Coal India records highest-ever May coal production



Coal India Limited reported its highest-ever coal production for the month of May, reinforcing its critical role in ensuring the country's energy security. The PSU registered strong output growth across multiple subsidiaries, helping maintain adequate fuel supplies for thermal power plants during the peak summer demand period. The achievement aligns with the government's focus on reducing import dependence and strengthening domestic coal availability for power generation.

ONGC advances offshore development projects in western coast



Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has accelerated development activities across key offshore fields on India's western coast as part of its production enhancement strategy. The projects are aimed at increasing domestic crude oil and natural gas output while supporting India's energy security objectives. ONGC continues to invest in exploration and production infrastructure to reduce reliance on imported hydrocarbons and improve long-term resource availability.

GAIL expands natural gas infrastructure network

GAIL (India) Limited has announced progress on multiple pipeline expansion projects aimed at strengthening natural gas connectivity across several states. The initiative is expected to improve gas accessibility for industrial users, city gas distribution networks and households. The expansion aligns with the government's objective of increasing the share of natural gas in India's energy mix and promoting cleaner fuel alternatives across sectors.



Bharat Electronics secures major defence orders

Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has secured fresh defence contracts worth over ₹500 crore for the supply of advanced communication and surveillance systems. The orders strengthen BEL's position as a key contributor to India's indigenous defence manufacturing ecosystem. The contracts are expected to support military modernisation efforts while advancing the objectives of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative in the defence sector.



SAIL posts strong growth in steel production

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) reported robust production growth during the first quarter of FY 2026-27, supported by improved operational efficiency across its integrated steel plants. The PSU continues to focus on capacity utilisation, cost optimisation and infrastructure demand-driven growth. Increased steel consumption in construction, railways and manufacturing sectors has contributed to sustained production momentum.



NHPC advances hydroelectric projects in Northeast

NHPC Limited has accelerated construction work on several hydroelectric projects in the Northeast region, aimed at enhancing renewable energy generation and regional infrastructure development. The projects are expected to contribute to clean power generation while creating employment opportunities and improving connectivity in remote areas. The PSU remains a key player in India's hydropower expansion strategy.

BHEL secures fresh power sector contracts

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has won new contracts for supplying equipment and engineering solutions for thermal and renewable energy projects. The orders strengthen the PSU's order book and support ongoing efforts to modernise India's power infrastructure. BHEL continues to play a significant role in domestic manufacturing and energy sector development through indigenous technology and engineering capabilities.



IRCON wins infrastructure projects worth over ₹1,000 crore

IRCON International Limited has secured multiple infrastructure contracts across rail and transport sectors, further strengthening its project portfolio. The new orders include construction and engineering works aimed at improving connectivity and logistics infrastructure. The development reflects continued public investment in transportation networks and supports the government's infrastructure expansion agenda.



by Anjali Bhardwaj



Delhi CM Rekha Gupta

Rekha Gupta became the Chief Minister of Delhi in February 2025 after the Bharatiya Janata Party formed the government in the national capital. A long-time political leader with experience in municipal governance and public administration, Gupta has positioned her administration around infrastructure development, environmental sustainability and service delivery reforms.

Her government has consistently emphasized the vision of a cleaner, greener and more efficient Delhi, supported by large-scale public investment and technology-driven governance.

How Rekha Gupta's Government Is Reshaping the Capital

When Rekha Gupta took office as Delhi's Chief Minister in February 2025, she inherited a city grappling with familiar urban challenges: traffic congestion, pollution, aging infrastructure, water management concerns and growing demands for better public services. More than a year into her tenure, her government has sought to address these issues through a mix of infrastructure projects, governance reforms and environmental initiatives.

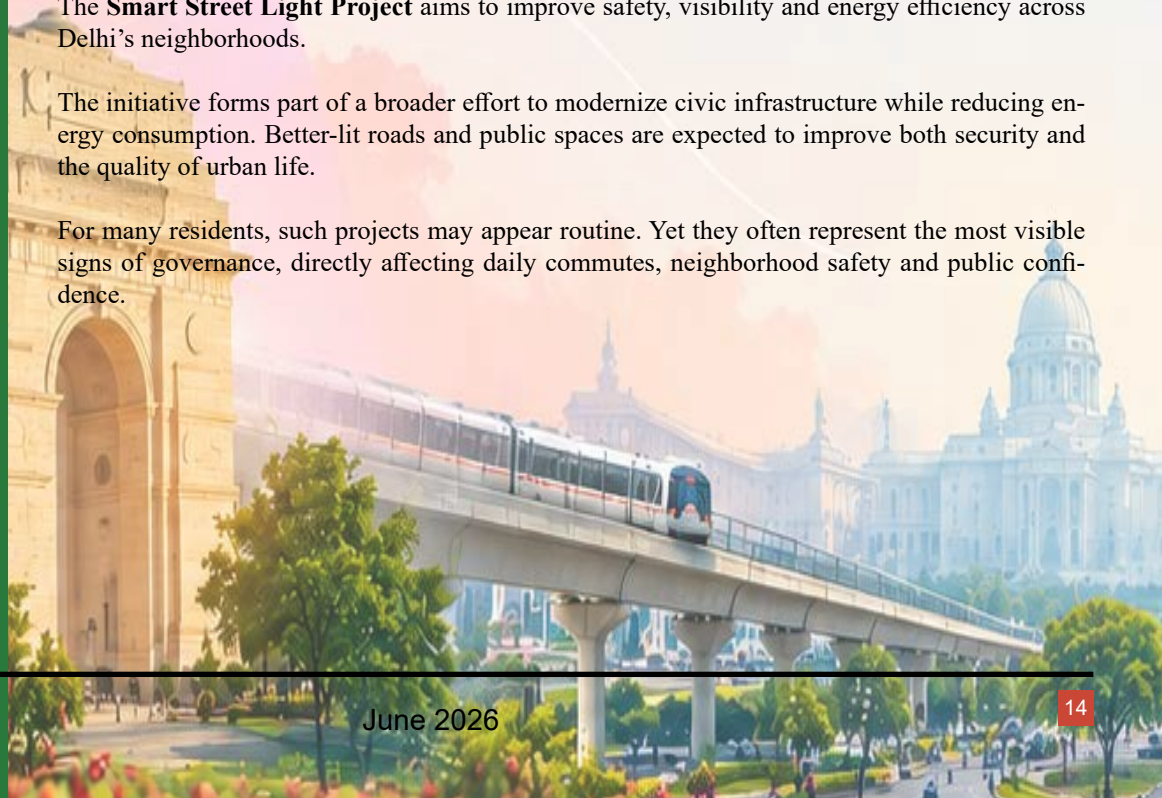
While political headlines often dominate public discourse, a quieter transformation has been unfolding across the capital. From smart street lighting and metro expansion to road modernization and sewer infrastructure, the government's focus has increasingly shifted toward improving everyday urban life.

Lighting Up the City

One of the government's early priorities has been the expansion of smart public infrastructure. The **Smart Street Light Project** aims to improve safety, visibility and energy efficiency across Delhi's neighborhoods.

The initiative forms part of a broader effort to modernize civic infrastructure while reducing energy consumption. Better-lit roads and public spaces are expected to improve both security and the quality of urban life.

For many residents, such projects may appear routine. Yet they often represent the most visible signs of governance, directly affecting daily commutes, neighborhood safety and public confidence.





A Major Push for Public Transport

Public transport remains central to Delhi's long-term development strategy.

The government announced significant funding support for **Delhi Metro expansion**, reinforcing the city's commitment to mass transit. The expansion is expected to strengthen connectivity, reduce dependence on private vehicles and support more sustainable urban growth.

The administration has also promoted public transportation through initiatives such as the "**Metro Monday**" campaign, under which ministers and officials were encouraged to commute by metro as part of a broader fuel conservation effort.

The message is clear: reducing congestion and emissions will require not only infrastructure investment but also behavioral change.

Taking On Pollution

Few issues affect Delhi as visibly as air pollution.

The government intensified **anti-dust measures** across construction sites and major roads, focusing on one of the capital's significant sources of particulate pollution. Monitoring and enforcement efforts were strengthened, with agencies directed to ensure compliance with dust-control norms.

In June, the government also moved ahead with a Road Asset Management System, a technology-driven framework designed to improve road maintenance, traffic flow and environmental management.

The system seeks to bring scientific planning to road infrastruc-

ture through better monitoring, drainage management and dust mitigation. Officials believe the initiative can improve both mobility and environmental outcomes.

Greener Spaces, Healthier Communities

Environmental concerns have remained a recurring theme of the government's agenda.

The development of **Delhi's first Oxygen Park** reflects an attempt to increase access to green spaces while promoting ecological awareness. Such projects are designed to improve urban biodiversity and provide residents with cleaner recreational environments.

Alongside this effort, the administration has adopted a stronger stance against illegal tree cutting and has encouraged citizens to report violations. The campaign highlights the government's broader push to expand and protect Delhi's green cover.

Together, these measures signal a growing recognition that environmental sustainability must be integrated into urban planning rather than treated as a separate policy area.



Munak Canal (After)



Munak Canal (Before)



Fixing Water and Sewer Infrastructure

Water management has emerged as another major focus area.

Chief Minister Gupta personally inspected the **Munak Canal**, one of Delhi's most important water supply channels, underscoring the government's attention to water security and distribution systems.

The administration has also supported projects linked to river rejuvenation, sewage treatment and water infrastructure upgrades.

Most recently, a ₹138 crore sewer infrastructure project was announced for Karawal Nagar. The project is expected to address long-standing sanitation concerns and improve living conditions for residents in several localities.

In Dwarka, development projects worth approximately ₹100 crore were launched with a focus on roads, drainage, sewer systems and civic amenities. These investments are intended to address persistent issues such as waterlogging and deteriorating infrastructure.

From welfare to public health, many of Delhi's challenges ultimately connect back to water management. The government's recent initiatives suggest an effort to tackle these problems through long-term infrastructure solutions.

Digital Governance and Welfare Delivery

The government's emphasis on technology is also visible in welfare administration.

Digital reforms in the ration distribution system have aimed to improve transparency and efficiency while ensuring benefits reach eligible households. The administration recently revised eligibility norms for ration card holders and continued efforts to streamline beneficiary databases.

The objective is not merely digitization but better delivery of public services. For a city as large and complex as Delhi, administrative efficiency can have a direct impact on millions of residents.

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Investing in Youth and Talent

Alongside infrastructure projects, the government has introduced initiatives focused on young people.

The **Honsla Udaan Talent Hunt** seeks to identify and encourage emerging talent across different fields. Such programs are designed to create opportunities for youth participation while promoting skill development and personal growth.

The government has also emphasized education and student welfare through targeted measures, including support for examination candidates and skill-oriented initiatives.

Building Partnerships for the Future

Delhi's development ambitions increasingly require collaboration beyond city boundaries.

In June, Chief Minister Gupta met a delegation from Germany's state of Thuringia to discuss cooperation in areas such as smart urban development, digital governance, environmental technologies and workforce development.

The discussions reflected Delhi's growing interest in learning from international urban management practices

while attracting expertise in sustainable infrastructure and innovation.



The Road Ahead

Delhi's challenges remain immense. Traffic congestion, air quality, infrastructure gaps and population pressures cannot be solved overnight.

Yet the past year has demonstrated a clear policy direction. The Gupta administration has focused heavily on physical infrastructure, environmental management and governance reforms, often combining technology with traditional civic development.

Whether it is smart street lights, metro expansion, sewer projects, oxygen parks, digital welfare systems or scientific road management, the common thread is an attempt to improve the systems that shape everyday life in the capital.

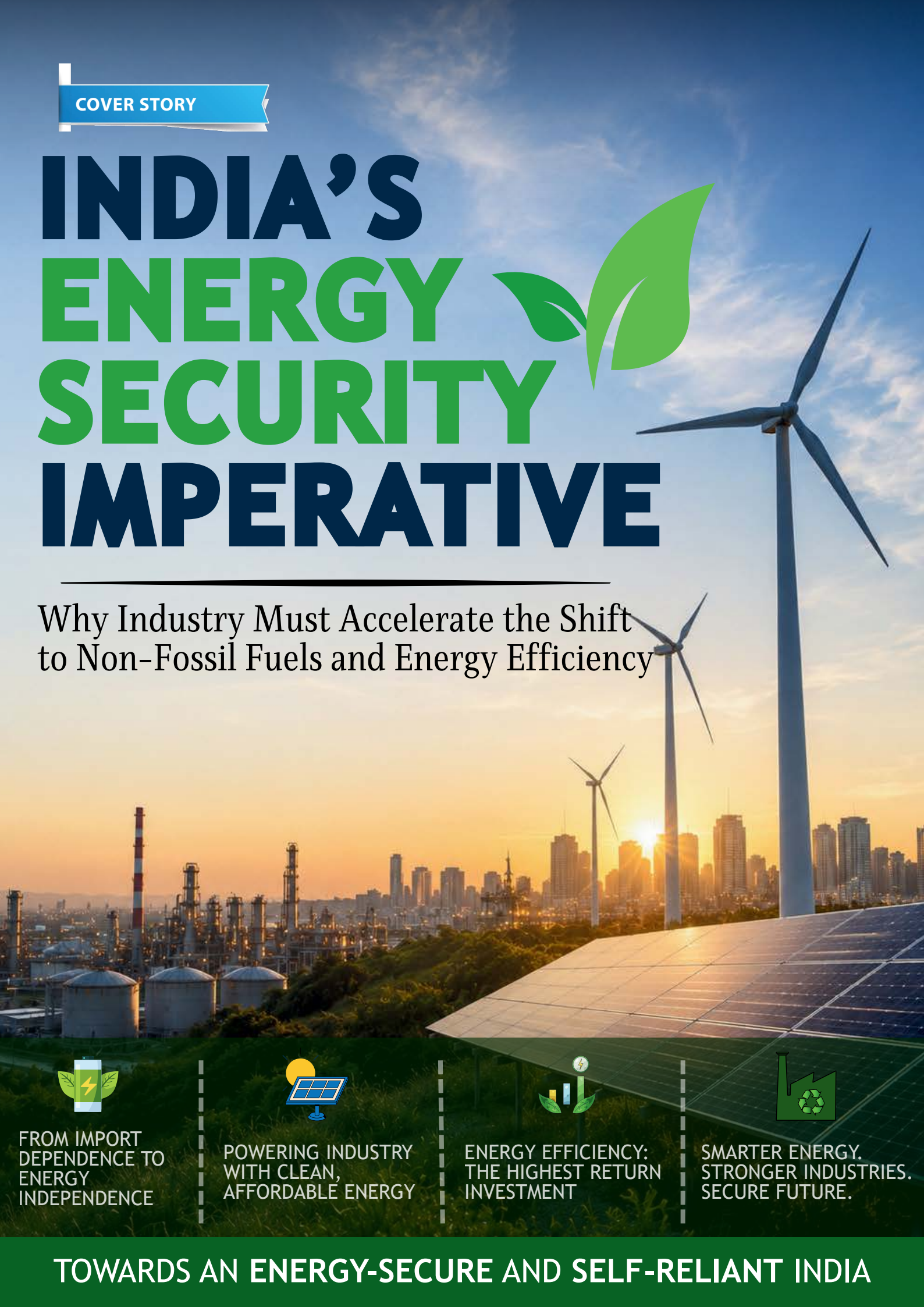
The long-term impact of these initiatives will depend on implementation, maintenance and measurable outcomes. But for now, the government's development agenda is steadily leaving its mark across Delhi's urban landscape.

As the capital continues to evolve, the success of these efforts will ultimately be judged not by announcements alone, but by how effectively they improve the lives of the people who call Delhi home. **BI**

COVER STORY

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Why Industry Must Accelerate the Shift to Non-Fossil Fuels and Energy Efficiency



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SECURE FUTURE.

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India's Energy Security Imperative

Why Industry Must Accelerate the Shift to Non-Fossil Fuels and Energy Efficiency

By Ravi Nandan Sinha

Director – Strategic Investments & Economic Partnerships, MSME Business Forum India



India stands at a pivotal moment in its economic evolution. As the nation advances towards becoming a developed economy and a global manufacturing powerhouse, one challenge cuts across every sector, every enterprise, and every growth ambition, **energy security**.

Recent geopolitical conflicts, supply-chain disruptions, commodity price volatility, and recurring global energy shocks have exposed a fundamental vulnerability faced by energy-importing economies. For India, where industrial

growth, infrastructure development, digital transformation, and urbanization are accelerating simultaneously, ensuring reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy is no longer merely an environmental concern, it is a strategic economic imperative.

The future competitiveness of Indian industry will increasingly depend on its ability to reduce exposure to fossil-fuel volatility and embrace a diversified, resilient, and efficient energy ecosystem.

The Energy Challenge Before India

India is currently the world's third-largest energy consumer and among the largest importers of crude oil and natural gas. Despite significant progress in domestic energy generation, the country's dependence on imported fuels continues to expose businesses and industries to external shocks.

Every spike in global oil and gas prices triggers a chain reaction across the economy:

- **Rising manufacturing costs**
- **Increased logistics and transportation expenses**
- **Higher inflationary pressures**
- **Reduced export competitiveness**
- **Pressure on foreign exchange reserves**
- **Increased financial stress across industries**

The energy crises witnessed across various parts of the world over the past few years have reinforced an important lesson: **nations and industries dependent on imported energy remain vulnerable to events beyond their control.**

For a country aspiring to become a global manufacturing hub under initiatives such as Make in India and Viksit Bharat 2047, energy resilience must become a cornerstone of industrial strategy.

Energy Security Is National Security

Traditionally, discussions around renewable energy were framed primarily through climate commitments and sustainability goals. Today, the conversation has evolved.

Energy security has become intrinsically linked to:

- **Economic stability**
- **Industrial growth**
- **Strategic autonomy**
- **Employment generation**
- **National competitiveness**

A resilient energy system protects industries from external disruptions while ensuring predictable and affordable power for long-term investments.

This is precisely why India's transition toward non-fossil fuel energy sources must be viewed not only as a climate agenda but as a national economic transformation agenda.

India's Non-Fossil Fuel Opportunity Anchored in Resilience

India possesses one of the world's most promising clean energy ecosystems.

The country has already made remarkable progress, with non-fossil fuel sources accounting for a significant share of installed power generation capacity. Rapid expansion in solar, wind, hydro, nuclear, biomass, and emerging green hydrogen technologies demonstrates that India is moving decisively toward a diversified energy future.

This transition offers multiple strategic advantages:

Reduced Import Dependence

Every unit of renewable energy generated domestically reduces exposure to volatile international energy markets.

Long-Term Cost Stability

Unlike fossil fuels, renewable energy is not dependent on global commodity prices, creating greater predictability for businesses.

Enhanced Industrial Competitiveness

Stable and affordable energy directly improves manufacturing economics and export competitiveness.

Increased Investment Attraction

Global investors increasingly favour economies and enterprises aligned with sustainability, decarbonization, and ESG principles.

Employment and Innovation

Renewable energy development creates opportunities across manufacturing, technology, engineering, project development, operations, and maintenance.

The Often-Overlooked Solution: Energy Efficiency

While renewable energy rightly receives considerable attention, India's greatest untapped energy resource may well be energy efficiency.

The most affordable megawatt is the one that never needs to be generated.

India's industries can unlock significant savings through:

- **Smart energy management systems**
- **Industrial automation**
- **High-efficiency equipment and motors**
- **Waste heat recovery**
- **Process optimization**
- **Digital monitoring and analytics**
- **Efficient building and cooling technologies**

Energy efficiency offers a rare win-win proposition, reducing operational costs while simultaneously lowering emissions and strengthening competitiveness.

In many cases, efficiency investments deliver returns faster than major capacity expansion projects. For Indian industry, energy efficiency should be viewed not as a compliance requirement but as a productivity and profitability strategy.

The Emerging Role of Energy Orchestration

As industries adopt renewable energy, battery storage, distributed generation, electric mobility, and digital systems, energy management itself is becoming increasingly complex.

The next phase of industrial competitiveness will require organizations to move beyond isolated energy initiatives and embrace integrated energy orchestration platforms capable of:

- **Managing multiple energy sources**
- **Optimizing consumption patterns**
- **Reducing peak demand costs**
- **Enhancing reliability and resilience**
- **Supporting decarbonization goals**
- **Providing real-time energy intelligence**

The future industrial enterprise will not simply consume energy, it will actively manage, optimize, and monetize its energy ecosystem.

Why This Matters for Every Sector

The energy transition is no longer limited to power producers or energy intensive industries.



Its implications extend across:

- **Manufacturing**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Logistics**
- **Agriculture**
- **Data centres**
- **Commercial real estate**
- **Healthcare**
- **Hospitality**
- **Technology services**
- **Transportation**

Every sector that depends on energy is now part of the transition. Those who adapt early will gain cost advantages, resilience, and access to emerging global markets increasingly shaped by sustainability requirements.

Those who delay may face rising operational costs, regulatory pressures, and competitive disadvantages.

A Defining Opportunity for India

India's ambition to become a multi-trillion-dollar economy cannot be built upon an energy framework vulnerable to recurring external shocks.

The path forward is clear:

- Accelerate non-fossil fuel deployment
- Expand energy storage infrastructure
- Promote green hydrogen adoption
- Strengthen grid modernization
- Drive industrial energy efficiency
- Encourage digital energy management
- Facilitate access to green finance

The convergence of these initiatives can create a more secure, competitive, and self-reliant industrial ecosystem.

Conclusion: From Energy Consumer to Energy Leader

The global energy landscape is undergoing one of the most profound transformations in modern history. Countries that successfully reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels while improving energy productivity will emerge as the economic leaders of the coming decades.


India has the policy vision, technological capability, entrepreneurial strength, and renewable energy potential to lead this transition.

For Indian industry, the shift toward non-fossil fuels and energy efficiency is no longer simply about sustainability. It is about resilience, competitiveness, profitability, and long-term national strength.

Renewable energy provides independence. Energy efficiency drives competitiveness. Together, they form the foundation of India's energy-secure and industrially resilient future.

As India moves towards Viksit Bharat 2047, the question is no longer whether the energy transition will happen. The real question is how quickly industry can position itself to lead it.

Author's Perspective

"India's next phase of industrial growth will not be determined solely by capital, labour, or technology. It will increasingly be defined by how effectively we secure, manage, and optimize energy. The transition to non fossil fuels and energy-efficient operations is not merely an environmental choice, it is an economic and strategic necessity." 

The views expressed are personal and intended to contribute to the policy and industry discourse on energy security, industrial competitiveness, and India's transition toward a non-fossil fuel economy. The author has developed this article using publicly available information and analysis from Government of India publications, leading policy think tanks, and energy sector research institutions.



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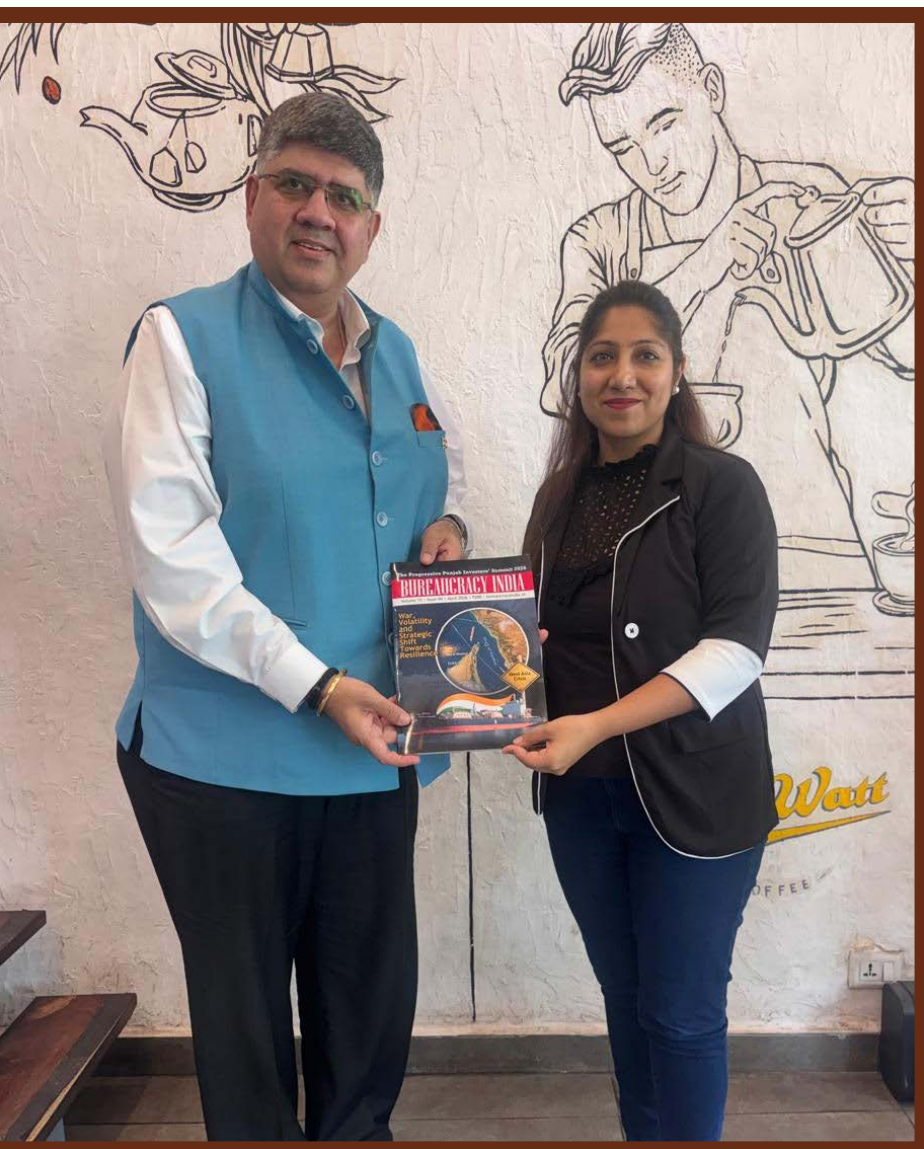
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From the Battlefield to the Bio-economy

Building India's Biomass Revolution

by Suhani Nagpal, Editor - Bureaucracy India



At a time when India is searching for sustainable solutions to energy security, climate change and rural prosperity, Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja (Retd.) stands out as one of the country's most influential voices in the biomass revolution. A former Indian Army officer who transitioned from the battlefield to the boardroom, he has spent more than a decade building organized biomass supply chains through Punjab Renewable Energy Systems Private Limited (PRESPL). Today, he is widely regarded as the “Biomass Man of India,” advising policymakers, industry leaders and global institutions on the future of bioenergy and circular economy solutions.

In an exclusive Interview with our Editor-in-Chief, Suhani Nagpal, Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja (Retd.) shares his journey from the Indian Army to leading India's biomass revolution and his vision for the future of bioenergy. Here are the excerpts:

Suhani Nagpal: You had a distinguished career in the Indian Army before entering the renewable energy sector. What inspired you to make this transition?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: After nearly fifteen years in the Indian Army, I wanted to work on a challenge with long-term national impact. During my research, I realized that India's bioenergy sector was constrained not by technology but by the absence of organized biomass supply chains. Agricultural residues were available in abundance, yet projects struggled due to inconsistent feedstock availability. This insight led to the creation of PRESPL in 2011 with the objective of building a reliable biomass ecosystem.

Suhani Nagpal: What are the key leadership lessons from your Army career that continue to guide you today?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: The Army instills discipline, resilience, mission focus and the ability to perform under pressure. These principles remain central to my approach as an entrepreneur. Building a biomass value chain across multiple states requires strategic planning, teamwork and adaptability—qualities that are deeply rooted in military leadership.

Suhani Nagpal: Was there a defining moment that convinced you biomass could become a game changer for India?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: India generates enormous quantities of agricultural residue every year, much of which is either wasted or burnt in fields. I realized that if this residue could be converted into fuel, it would simultaneously address farmer income, energy security, climate change and rural employment. That realization became the foundation of PRESPL.

Suhani Nagpal: You are often referred to as the “Biomass Man of India.” What does this recognition mean to you?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: It is both an honour and a responsibility. The recognition reflects the collective efforts of farmers, industry partners, policymakers and the entire bioenergy ecosystem. It reinforces my commitment to advancing sustainable biomass solutions that create economic and environmental value.

Suhani Nagpal: When you founded PRESPL in 2011, biomass was still a niche sector. What were the biggest challenges?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: The primary challenge was establishing a reliable and scalable supply chain. Biomass markets were fragmented,



awareness was limited and institutional support was still evolving. We focused on solving issues related to aggregation, transportation, storage, pricing and farmer engagement because supply-chain reliability is the backbone of any successful bioenergy project.

Suhani Nagpal: How has the perception of agricultural residue evolved over the past decade?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: A decade ago, agricultural residue was largely viewed as waste. Today, it is increasingly recognized as a valuable resource for bioenergy, biofuels and industrial decarbonization. The conversation has shifted from waste management to resource optimization and sustainable energy generation.

Suhani Nagpal: What has been the core philosophy behind PRESPL's growth?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: Our philosophy has always been to build an ecosystem rather than simply supply biomass. We create value for farmers, industries and the environment by organizing supply chains, improving logistics and ensuring dependable feedstock availability for clean-energy applications.



Suhani Nagpal: How does PRESPL create value for farmers?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: Farmers gain an additional source of income from agricultural residue that would otherwise have little economic value. Beyond direct sales, biomass collection, aggregation and transportation activities create employment opportunities and strengthen rural economies.

Suhani Nagpal: Looking back, what have been the defining milestones in your journey?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: Founding PRESPL in 2011 was the first major milestone. Demonstrating that agricultural residue could be transformed into a commercially viable energy resource was another. Contributing to policy discussions, expanding biomass-based solutions and promoting innovations such as eco-cremation have further strengthened the sector’s role in India’s energy transition.

Suhani Nagpal: What role do innovation and technology play in your business model?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: Technology is critical for scaling biomass operations. From digital traceability and logistics planning to storage management and monitoring systems, innovation improves efficiency and reliability. PRESPL’s integrated farm-to-fuel-to-steam model enables seamless movement of biomass from farms to industrial consumers.

Suhani Nagpal: You work closely with several ministries and policy-making bodies. What does your advisory role involve?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: My role is to represent the opportunities and challenges of the biomass sector before government bodies, industry stakeholders and international institutions. The objective is to help shape policies that encourage sustainable biomass utilization and accelerate India’s clean-energy transition.

Suhani Nagpal: Beyond your work in the bioenergy sector, you serve as Joint President of MSME Business Forum India. How has this role expanded your perspective on India’s entrepreneurial ecosystem, and what opportunities do you believe lie ahead for MSMEs in shaping the country’s economic future?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: MSME Business Forum of India (MBFI) is a vibrant ecosystem platform where multiple companies and businesses are together working for the India First development.

MSME sector is the backbone of the economy and sustainability has to be adopted across all sectors and industries.

My participation as Joint President MBFI is thanks to Mr Ravi Nandan Sinha Ji, President MBFI and his excellent leadership along with his team wherein I am able to contribute towards our collective work for furtherance of clean - green energy, technologies and mutual benefit for business in an equitable environment.

I am actually enjoying working with the team and I am sanguine of MSMEs contributions towards #ViksitBharat.

Suhani Nagpal: How receptive has the Government of India been towards biomass and bioenergy?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: Government support has increased significantly in recent years. Initiatives such as the National Bioenergy Programme, SATAT, SAMARTH and biomass co-firing policies have created strong momentum. However, there is still scope to improve implementation and policy alignment.

Suhani Nagpal: What policy interventions are required to unlock the sector’s full potential?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: India would benefit from a more integrated bioenergy policy framework, improved access to long-term financing, stronger regulatory support and a dedicated focus on biomass supply-chain development. State-specific policies can also play an important role.

Suhani Nagpal: How would you assess the current state of India's biomass sector?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: The sector is at an inflection point. Demand is growing rapidly due to industrial decarbonization, Bio-CNG, ethanol blending and renewable energy targets. While the opportunity is immense, supply-chain development and project financing remain critical areas of focus.

Suhani Nagpal: How can biomass contribute to India's Net Zero ambitions?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: Biomass offers a unique opportunity to reduce dependence on fossil fuels while creating a circular economy around agricultural residues. It supports carbon reduction, cleaner energy generation, rural development and sustainable economic growth.

Suhani Nagpal: Why have you championed eco-cremation initiatives?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: Eco-cremation uses biomass briquettes instead of traditional firewood, reducing deforestation and lowering emissions while remaining culturally acceptable. It is a practical example of how sustainable solutions can deliver environmental benefits without compromising tradition.

Suhani Nagpal: What opportunities do you see for India's biomass sector by 2030?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: I see tremendous opportunities in second-generation biofuels, Bio-CNG, biomass-based thermal energy, sustainable aviation fuel and industrial decarbonization. India has the resources, market demand and entrepreneurial talent to emerge as a global leader.

Suhani Nagpal: Can biomass become a mainstream renewable energy source alongside solar, wind and green hydrogen?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: Absolutely. Biomass is unique because it simultaneously addresses waste management, energy generation, rural livelihoods and carbon reduction. It should be viewed as a strategic pillar of India's renewable energy mix.

Suhani Nagpal: What is your roadmap for positioning India as a global biomass leader?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: India must focus on biomass security, robust supply chains, digital traceability and integrated biomass hubs that connect farmers, industries and bioenergy projects. Accelerating Bio-CNG, 2G ethanol, biochar and carbon-market initiatives can unlock significant value.

Suhani Nagpal: What message would you like to share with young entrepreneurs?

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja: Choose a mission larger than yourself. Sustainable businesses are built by solving real-world problems. When purpose is combined with perseverance, integrity and innovation, meaningful impact and long-term success naturally follow. Awareness was limited and institutional support was still evolving. We focused on solving issues related to aggregation, transportation, storage, pricing and farmer engagement because supply-chain reliability is the backbone of any successful bioenergy project.

Lt. Col. Monish Ahuja's journey is a compelling example of how disciplined leadership and entrepreneurial vision can converge to solve some of India's most pressing challenges. From organizing fragmented biomass markets to shaping policy conversations on clean energy, his work demonstrates that agricultural residue is not merely waste—it is a strategic national resource. As India accelerates toward its renewable energy and Net Zero goals, voices like his will play a crucial role in ensuring that the transition is not only greener, but also more inclusive and farmer-centric **BI**



EFTA India TEPA Building a New Bridge Between India and Europe

By Praseon Dewan

CEO - Divish Aurum Private Limited,
Chairman - Indo Icelandic Business Association (IIBA)

The implementation of the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) nations marks one of the most significant milestones in India's economic diplomacy in recent years. Comprising Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the EFTA countries represent some of the world's most innovative, technologically advanced and economically resilient nations. The implementation of TEPA on 1 October 2025 has opened a new chapter of cooperation based on trade, investment, innovation, sustainability and people to people engagement. The agreement, signed on 10 March 2024 after nearly sixteen years of negotiations, is India's first comprehensive trade agreement with a bloc of developed European economies. Beyond tariff reductions and market access, TEPA is unique because it includes an unprecedented commitment from the EFTA nations to facilitate USD 100 billion in investments into India over the next fifteen years, with the potential to generate one million direct jobs.

A Partnership Beyond Trade

TEPA is far more than a conventional free trade agreement. It establishes a framework for long term economic cooperation across sectors including advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, life sciences, financial services, technology, education, healthcare, sustainability and innovation.

For India, the agreement offers greater access to highly devel-

oped European markets while attracting capital, technology and expertise. Indian companies in sectors such as information technology, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, textiles, chemicals, gems and jewellery, food processing and professional services are expected to benefit significantly from enhanced market opportunities.

For the EFTA countries, India represents one of the world's fastest growing major economies, a rapidly expanding consumer market and a strategic hub for manufacturing and services. The agreement provides greater certainty for investors and strengthens supply chain integration between Europe and South Asia.

The Distinct Strengths of Each EFTA Nation

Each EFTA member brings unique strengths to this partnership.





Iceland

Iceland offers world leading expertise in geothermal energy, fisheries, climate resilience, sustainable tourism and Arctic research. For India, particularly regions such as Ladakh and the Himalayan states, Icelandic experience in renewable energy and sustainable development presents remarkable opportunities.

Norway

Norway contributes leadership in maritime industries, offshore energy, green shipping, aquaculture, sustainability and sovereign wealth investment. The country's expertise aligns strongly with India's ambitions in blue economy initiatives and green transition projects.

Switzerland

As India's largest trading partner within EFTA, Switzerland contributes strengths in financial services, precision engineering, pharmaceuticals, medical technology, advanced manufacturing, research and innovation.

Liechtenstein

Though small in size, Liechtenstein is globally recognised for advanced manufacturing, industrial technologies, high value engineering and specialised financial services. Its innovative SME ecosystem offers valuable collaboration opportunities for Indian enterprises.

Momentum Since TEPA Entered Into Force

Since the agreement became operational, both India and the EFTA countries have actively pursued implementation initiatives. Investment facilitation mechanisms have been established, business delegations have intensified and discussions have accelerated across sectors ranging from clean energy and fintech to healthcare, education and advanced manufacturing. A dedicated framework is also being developed to monitor and facilitate the landmark investment commitments envisaged under TEPA. Business communities across the EFTA region have shown growing interest in India's economic story, while Indian enterprises increasingly view EFTA nations as gateways to innovation, technology partnerships and European market access.

The IIBA Delegation: Turning Agreement into Action

Recognising the historic opportunities created by TEPA, the Indo Icelandic Business Association (IIBA) organised and led a distinguished 32-member business delegation from India to the EFTA region.

The delegation represented a broad spectrum of sectors including technology, healthcare, education, infrastructure, sustainability, fintech, tourism, legal services, gems and jewellery, manufacturing and entrepreneurship. The mission was designed not merely to discuss the agreement, but to translate its vision into practical partnerships, investments

and collaborations.

A major highlight of the visit was the India Iceland Business Conclave held in Reykjavík. The conclave was chaired by Her Excellency - The Honorable President of Iceland, Halldóra Árnadóttir, whose participation reflected the importance attached to strengthening India Iceland economic relations. The event was hosted by the Embassy of India in Iceland under the leadership of His Excellency Ambassador R. Ravindra in cooperation with the Icelandic India Trade Council and the Indo Icelandic Business Association. The Embassy of Iceland in India under the leadership of His Excellency Ambassador Benedikt Hoskuldsson extended great support.

The conclave brought together policymakers, industry leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs from both countries and demonstrated the growing enthusiasm for deeper economic engagement under the TEPA framework.

Discussions focused on renewable energy, fintech, tourism, education, healthcare, sustainability and investment opportunities besides other sectors.

The delegation also benefited from valuable engagements with senior Icelandic government officials, business organisations and innovation leaders, reinforcing the strategic importance of India Iceland cooperation in the years ahead.

Strengthening Cooperation

The delegation's engagement in Norway was highly significant.

The Embassy of India in Norway, under the distinguished leadership of Her Excellency Ambassador Gloria Gangte, hosted a highly successful business networking and cooperation event in Oslo. The gathering brought together Indian and Norwegian business leaders, entrepreneurs, investors and policymakers to explore practical avenues for cooperation under TEPA.

The event highlighted Norway's strengths in maritime industries, renewable energy, sustainability and innovation while showcasing India's growing attractiveness as an investment and business destination. The enthusiastic participation from both sides demonstrated the strong momentum generated by the agreement and the desire to convert opportunities into tangible outcomes.

Looking Ahead

The India EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement represents a model for modern economic cooperation. It is founded not only on trade liberalisation but also on trust, innovation, investment, sustainability and shared prosperity.

As global economies navigate uncertainty, partnerships such as TEPA provide a stable and forward-looking framework for growth. The agreement offers India access to some of Europe's most advanced economies while providing EFTA nations with opportunities in one of the most dynamic markets.

The journey has only begun. Governments, businesses, educational institutions and civil society organisations now



have the opportunity to transform the promise of TEPA into lasting partnerships.

The success of the 32-member IIBA delegation demonstrated that when vision is combined with action, remarkable possibilities emerge. The foundations have been laid. The relationships are strengthening. The opportunities are immense.

TEPA is not merely a trade agreement, it is a bridge connecting innovation, enterprise and friendship between India and the EFTA nations. Together, we are building a future of shared growth, sustainable development and enduring international cooperation. **BI**



India–Central Europe Trade Corridor

Poland as the Gateway to Emerging European Markets

by BI Bureau

Economic diplomacy delivers its greatest impact when dialogue translates into partnerships, investments, and sustainable growth.

As India continues to expand its global economic footprint, strategic partnerships with key international markets are becoming increasingly important in driving trade, investment, innovation, and industrial collaboration. Among the emerging opportunities attracting attention from policymakers and industry leaders alike is the growing economic engagement between India and Poland, a relationship that is steadily evolving into a significant pillar of India's outreach to Central and Eastern Europe.

In this context, **the India–Poland Conference: India–Central Europe Trade Corridor – Poland as the Gateway to Emerging European Markets**, organized by the **MSME Business Forum India (MBFI)**, on 8th May, 2026 at IIT, New Delhi, brought together an influential gathering of diplomats, economists, policymakers, legal experts, exporters, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs to explore new avenues of bilateral cooperation.

The conference marked a significant step towards enhancing awareness of trade opportunities, strengthening business-to-business engagement, and creating practical pathways for Indian enterprises seeking greater access to European markets.

Poland's Strategic Relevance in the European Landscape

Over the past three decades, Poland has emerged as one of Europe's most resilient and fastest-growing economies. Its strategic location, modern infrastructure, manufacturing capabilities, skilled workforce, and strong integration with

the European Union have positioned it as an important economic gateway to the wider European market.

For Indian businesses, Poland offers access not only to a robust domestic economy but also to a broader European ecosystem comprising more than 450 million consumers. The country's growing prominence in manufacturing, logistics, technology, renewable energy, food processing, engineering, and infrastructure development presents substantial opportunities for Indian enterprises seeking international expansion.

At a time when global supply chains are undergoing significant realignment, Poland's role as a logistics and industrial hub has become increasingly relevant for businesses looking to diversify markets and strengthen their global presence.

Initiating a Strategic Dialogue

The conference served as an important platform to bridge the gap between policy frameworks and practical business opportunities. Discussions focused on market access, trade facilitation, investment prospects, regulatory considerations, logistics connectivity, and institutional partnerships that can support deeper economic engagement between India and Poland.

A key objective was to equip Indian enterprises, particularly MSMEs with greater awareness of opportunities available in Poland and the wider European region, while also facilitating dialogue among stakeholders who play a critical role in enabling cross-border trade and investment.

The strong participation from industry and institutional stakeholders reflected the growing interest among Indian businesses in exploring new global markets and integrating into international value chains.

Participation

The conference witnessed the participation of a distinguished cross-section of stakeholders from diplomatic, academic, policy, legal, trade, and industry circles. Notable attendees included

1. **Mr. Marek Kijewski, Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Poland in New Delhi;**
2. **Prof. Marcin Piątkowski, Professor of Economics at Kozminski University and former Lead Economist at the World Bank;**
3. **Ms. Dorota Cagiel, Partner in India and Advisor to Leaders & Executive Boards across India and Europe;**
4. **Lt. Col. (Retd.) Monish Ahuja, Joint President, MSME Business Forum India;**
5. **Ms. Laxmi Saheb Kaur Gill, State Spokesperson, BJP Haryana (NRI Cell)**
6. **Mr. Somesh Arora, Additional Advocate General, Punjab;**
7. **Representatives from India's Export Promotion Councils among others;**

Their presence underscored the growing importance of India–Poland economic engagement and reflected a shared commitment towards strengthening bilateral trade, investment, institutional collaboration, and people-to-people ties between India and Europe.

Beyond Bilateral Trade

One of the central themes emerging from the conference was the need to view India–Poland relations through a broader strategic lens. Poland's geographic and economic position offers Indian enterprises a natural gateway to Central and Eastern Europe, creating opportunities that extend beyond conventional trade.

Participants highlighted the potential for collaboration across a range of sectors, including manufacturing, engineering, logistics, renewable energy, technology, agribusiness, healthcare, and infrastructure. Discussions also explored avenues for promoting joint ventures, innovation partnerships, technology transfer, skill development initiatives, and investment facilitation mechanisms.

Such engagements align closely with India's broader economic objectives of increasing exports, strengthening industrial competitiveness, and encouraging the global expansion of Indian enterprises.



Empowering MSMEs for Global Markets

India's MSME sector remains a critical engine of economic growth, employment generation, manufacturing output, and exports. However, expanding international market access remains one of the most significant opportunities for the sector's future growth.

Industry observers noted that awareness-driven initiatives and international business platforms are essential for helping MSMEs understand foreign markets, navigate regulatory frameworks, identify potential partners, and capitalize on emerging trade opportunities.

The conference demonstrated how collaborative engagement among governments, industry associations, chambers of commerce, legal experts, financial institutions, and business leaders can create a more enabling environment for MSMEs to participate in global commerce.

Strengthening the India–Europe Growth Story

The success of the initiative was made possible through the support and participation of stakeholders including the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in New Delhi, the Poland–

India Chamber of Cooperation, industry associations, trade experts, business leaders, and institutional partners committed to strengthening bilateral cooperation.

As India and Europe continue to deepen their economic engagement, partnerships with strategically positioned economies such as Poland are likely to play an increasingly important role in shaping future trade and investment flows.

The India–Poland Conference highlighted the growing convergence of interests between the two countries and demonstrated the value of sustained dialogue, institutional cooperation, and industry-led engagement in unlocking new opportunities.

More importantly, it reinforced a broader vision: building a robust India–Central Europe Trade Corridor that can facilitate commerce, innovation, investment, and long-term economic cooperation for years to come.

As global economic dynamics continue to evolve, initiatives of this nature serve as important catalysts in transforming diplomatic goodwill into tangible economic outcomes, strengthening not only bilateral relations but also India's larger engagement with the European region. **BI**

Connecting India with Emerging Europe: Building Partnerships, Expanding Markets, and Creating New Opportunities for Growth.—Bureaucracy India Editorial





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ICONIC TRAVEL & TOURISM SUMMIT



Tourism 4.0 Takes Centre Stage at WION ICONIC Travel & Tourism Summit 2026

by BI Bureau

As global travel continues its transformation in the wake of changing consumer expectations, technological disruption, and sustainability imperatives, industry leaders gathered in New Delhi to explore what lies ahead for one of the world's most dynamic sectors.

The **WION ICONIC Travel & Tourism Summit 2026**, organised by **Red Hat Communications** in association with **Zee Network**, brought together policymakers, diplomats, aviation leaders, hospitality professionals, tourism experts, and technology innovators for a day of dialogue centred on the future of travel and tourism. Held at ITC Maurya, New Delhi, the summit revolved around the theme, “**Tourism 4.0: Coding the Resilience of the New Tomorrow.**”

More than a conference, the summit served as a reflection of an industry at an inflection point. As tourism rebounds globally and travellers increasingly seek seamless, technology-enabled experiences, the discussions focused on how innovation, collaboration, and resilience can shape the next chapter of growth.

Building a Future-Ready Tourism Ecosystem

The conversations throughout the summit underscored the growing interconnectedness of tourism, aviation, hospitality, technology, and public policy. Speakers highlighted how artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure, workforce development, and sustainability are rapidly becoming essential pillars of tourism competitiveness.

Addressing the gathering, Jyoti Mayal, Chairperson of the Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) and CEO of Red Hat Communications, emphasised the need for collective action across the tourism value chain. She highlighted the importance of creating stronger partnerships between industry stakeholders while investing in innovation and skill development to prepare the sector for future challenges and opportunities.

Her remarks reflected a broader sentiment shared throughout the summit: that India's tourism ambitions cannot be achieved through isolated efforts but require coordinated engagement between government, industry, educational institutions, and technology providers.

Industry Voices on Growth and Transformation

The summit featured a distinguished lineup of leaders representing some of the most influential organisations in travel and hospitality.

Executives from hotel groups, airlines, travel technology firms, tourism marketing organisations, and destination management companies explored the evolving dynamics of global travel. Discussions touched upon changing traveller behaviour, emerging source markets, digitalisation of customer experiences, aviation connectivity, and the growing role of sustainability in business decision-making.

Among the prominent voices were leaders from Radisson Hotel Group, InterGlobe Hotels, Air India, Amadeus, Accor, VFS Global, MakeMyTrip, Le Méridien New Delhi, and Tourism Corporation of Gujarat, among others. Their collective insights highlighted how businesses are adapting to an increasingly competitive and digitally driven tourism landscape.

A recurring theme across sessions was the need for innovation to go hand in hand with resilience. Industry experts noted that while technology can improve efficiency and customer engagement, long-term success will depend on how effectively destinations and businesses respond to evolving traveller expectations and global uncertainties.

Strengthening Global Tourism Partnerships

The summit also reinforced the importance of international cooperation in driving tourism growth.

Senior diplomatic representatives from Egypt, Sri Lanka, and Greece participated in the discussions, reflecting the growing significance of cross-border collaboration in tourism promotion and cultural exchange. Their presence highlighted the shared interest among nations in strengthening inbound and outbound tourism flows while creating new opportunities for partnership and investment.

As countries compete to attract international travellers, such collaborations are becoming increasingly important in expanding market access, improving connectivity, and enhancing destination visibility.

Spotlight on Skills and Human Capital

One of the central discussions throughout the event focused on the role of skills in shaping the future of tourism.

While technology continues to transform the sector, speakers stressed that human capital remains its most

creators who explored the realities of solo female travel in today's digital age.

The discussion examined how social media has influenced travel decisions, destination discovery, and perceptions of safety, while also addressing the opportunities and challenges faced by women travellers. The session reflected the growing influence of digital creators in shaping tourism narratives and inspiring new travel experiences.

The summit also featured a fireside conversation with Ashwani Lohani, Director of the Prime Minister's Museum and Library, offering attendees perspectives on leadership, tourism development, and India's evolving cultural landscape.

Looking Ahead

As the tourism sector enters a new era defined by technology, sustainability, and changing consumer expectations, the WION ICONIC Travel & Tourism



valuable asset. From hospitality professionals and tour operators to aviation personnel and destination managers, the industry's growth ultimately depends on a workforce equipped with the skills needed to meet evolving market demands.

The emphasis on skilling aligns closely with India's broader ambitions to strengthen its position as a global tourism powerhouse while creating meaningful employment opportunities across the sector.

New Perspectives on Travel

Adding a contemporary dimension to the summit was an engaging session featuring women travel content

Summit 2026 highlighted both the opportunities and responsibilities that lie ahead.

The discussions made it clear that the future of tourism will not be driven by innovation alone. It will depend equally on collaboration, workforce readiness, destination resilience, and the ability to create meaningful experiences for travellers.

With strong participation from industry leaders, policymakers, and international representatives, the summit concluded with a shared recognition that India's tourism story is entering an exciting new phase. The challenge now is to translate ideas into action and ensure that the sector remains agile, inclusive, and globally competitive in the years ahead. **BI**

Mind n Matter: The Human Side of Governance

(The Psychology behind Bureaucracy and Decision-making)

by Lt Col (Dr) Ratnesh Sinha, Retd
Editorial Patron, BI

Behind every policy, every file, and every decision lies a human mind. This series (comprising of 12 articles) explores the invisible psychological forces, bias, emotion, stress, and awareness that shape governance outcomes. Through a unique blend of psychology and administration, Mind n Matter decodes how better minds can build better systems.

Article1: “Behind Every File - The Psychology of Decision Making in Bureaucracy”

Introduction: The Illusion of the File

In the corridors of governance, decisions appear to move through files neatly documented, sequentially processed, and systematically approved. To the outside observer, administration seems procedural, almost mechanical. A file comes in, a note is made, approvals are granted, and outcomes are delivered.

But this is an illusion.

Behind every file lies a mind. And behind every decision, a complex psychological process unfolds often invisible, yet deeply influential. A bureaucratic decision is not merely a function of rules and regulations. It is shaped by perception, experience, emotion, bias, pressure, and, most importantly, the state of mind of the decision-maker at that moment.

This is where governance transitions from matter to mind. And unless we begin to understand this invisible dimension, we will continue to analyse systems while ignoring the very force that drives them.

The Anatomy of a Decision: More Than Logic

In theory, bureaucratic decisions are expected to be rational, objective, and rule-based. However, modern neuroscience and behavioural psychology suggest otherwise.

Every decision, whether approving a welfare scheme, enforcing a regulation, or handling a grievance passes through three layers:

1. Cognitive Layer (Logic & Rules):

The formal framework—policies, guidelines, precedents.

2. Emotional Layer (Feelings & Pressures):

Stress, urgency, fear of consequences, empathy, public perception.

3. Subconscious Layer (Biases & Conditioning):

Past experiences, beliefs, cultural conditioning, risk appetite.

While the cognitive layer is visible in file notings, the emotional and subconscious layers remain undocumented, yet they often carry more weight. An officer may justify a decision through rules, but the direction of that decision is frequently influenced by internal states that never appear on paper.

The Myth of Pure Objectivity

We often assume that bureaucracy operates on objectivity. But is pure objectivity truly possible?

Consider this:

- Two equally competent officers may interpret the same rule differently.
- The same officer may take different decisions on different days under varying levels of stress.
- A high-pressure environment can lead to risk-averse decisions, even when bold action is required.

This is not inefficiency. This is human nature.

Cognitive science identifies over 180 decision-making biases. In governance, some of the most common include:

- **Confirmation Bias:** Seeking information that supports pre-existing beliefs.
- **Status Quo Bias:** Preferring existing systems over change.
- **Loss Aversion:** Avoiding decisions that may lead to perceived loss, even if potential gains are higher.
- **Authority Bias:** Over-reliance on senior opinions without independent evaluation.

These biases do not indicate weakness. They are natural shortcuts the brain uses to simplify complex decision environments. But in governance, where decisions impact millions, these shortcuts can shape outcomes in profound ways.

Decision Fatigue: The Silent Drain

An average administrator handles hundreds of decisions daily ranging from routine approvals to critical judgments. Each decision, however small, consumes mental energy. As the day progresses, the quality of decision-making tends to decline, a phenomenon known as decision fatigue.

Research shows that:

- Decision-makers become more risk-averse as fatigue increases.
- They tend to delay or avoid complex decisions.
- They rely more on defaults rather than critical evaluation.

In bureaucratic settings, this may translate into:

- Files being deferred rather than resolved
- Safe decisions being preferred over innovative ones
- Increased dependency on precedents instead of fresh thinking

Ironically, the system demands consistency, but the human mind operates on fluctuating energy levels.

The Role of Fear and Accountability

One of the most powerful, yet under-discussed, forces in

bureaucratic decision-making is fear.

Not fear in the conventional sense, but a layered construct:

- Fear of audit
- Fear of vigilance
- Fear of political repercussions
- Fear of public backlash
- Fear of career stagnation

This fear subtly shapes decision behaviour.

It creates a mindset where:

- “Safe” decisions are preferred over “right” decisions
- Innovation is often suppressed
- Responsibility is diffused across layers

Over time, this leads to a culture of defensive administration, where the aim shifts from achieving outcomes to avoiding errors. From a psychological perspective, this is a classic case of loss aversion dominating decision frameworks.

The Emotional Undercurrent

While bureaucracy is often perceived as unemotional, the reality is quite the opposite.

Every decision carries an emotional undertone:

- A welfare case may trigger empathy
- A disciplinary action may involve internal conflict
- A crisis situation may induce urgency and stress

Emotions are not the enemy of decision-making. In fact, neuroscience suggests that without emotions, decisions become impossible.

The challenge lies in:

- Recognising emotions without being controlled by them
- Balancing empathy with objectivity
- Maintaining clarity under emotional pressure

An emotionally unaware decision-maker is not more objective, only less conscious.

Experience vs Fresh Perspective

Experience is invaluable in administration. It builds intuition, pattern recognition, and confidence.

However, experience also creates conditioning.

An experienced officer may:

- Quickly identify patterns
- Anticipate outcomes
- Make faster decisions

But may also:

- Resist new approaches
- Over-rely on past solutions
- Filter new ideas through old frameworks

This creates a paradox: The very experience that strengthens decision-making can also limit innovation.

Balancing experience with openness becomes critical.

The System-Mind Disconnect

Governance systems are designed for structure, predictability, and uniformity.

Human minds, however, operate on:

- Variability
- Emotions
- Perceptions
- Energy cycles

This creates an inherent mismatch. The system expects consistency. The mind operates dynamically. Unless governance frameworks begin to acknowledge this human variability, inefficiencies will continue to be attributed to systems rather than the minds operating within them.

Towards Conscious Decision-Making

If decisions are influenced by invisible psychological forces, the solution is not to eliminate them, but to become aware of them. This is where conscious decision-making comes into play.

A conscious administrator:

- Recognises personal biases before they influence outcomes
- Is aware of emotional states during decision moments
- Understands the impact of fatigue and manages energy accordingly
- Balances rules with context
- Distinguishes between fear-driven and value-driven decisions

This is not a skill taught in training manuals. It is a discipline developed through awareness.

The Mind n Matter Perspective

At its core, governance is not just about systems, policies, and processes.

It is about human minds operating within structured environments.

‘Mind n Matter’ represents this intersection:

- **Matter:** The visible system—rules, files, structures

- **Mind:** The invisible driver—thoughts, emotions, biases

When the mind is unaware, the system becomes rigid.

When the mind is conscious, the system becomes effective.

The future of governance lies not just in reforming systems, but in refining the minds that operate them.

Conclusion: The Real Reform

We often speak of administrative reforms in terms of digitisation, policy restructuring, and process optimisation.

While these are essential, they address only one side of the equation, the matter. The real transformation lies in addressing the mind.

Because:

- A well-designed system can still fail under an unaware mind
- An average system can perform exceptionally under a conscious mind

The next frontier of governance is not just smarter systems, but more aware decision-makers.

Behind every file, there will always be a mind.

The question is not whether the mind influences the decision. The question is - Is the mind aware of its own influence?

“Governance does not fail in files.

It fails—or succeeds—in the minds behind them.” **BI**



With over thirty five years of distinguished service in the Indian Army, international advisory roles, and senior corporate and academic leadership, Lt Col (Dr) Ratnesh Sinha (Retd), brings unmatched expertise in operations and governance. He is also a Behavioural Psychologist, whose research focuses on developing stronger minds through the study and application of Human Quotients. He blends governance experience with psychology to decode leadership, decision-making, and human behaviour through his Mind n Matter framework .

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