

INDIA

PERSPECTIVES

Volume 37 | Issue 01 | 2026

Celebrating Traditions

Through performance and art

India Stack

Why it's a world leader

Now and Next

India & the Global South





A living symbol of the nation's commitment to conservation, the tiger stands as both guardian and grace of India's untamed landscape. Its presence breathes power into the forests, acting as a reminder that India's true majesty lies in its harmony between life, wilderness, and the legacy of preservation.

FOREWORD

Dear Readers,

As *India Perspectives* embarks on an exciting new chapter, we renew our commitment to serving as India's window to the world, bringing global audiences closer to the stories of our nation. These are stories of progress, culture, diplomacy, and innovation that reflect the evolving spirit and aspirations of a confident, forward-looking India.

In this refreshed edition, we begin by commemorating the Indian Women's Cricket Team's World Cup win. The team captain, Harmanpreet Kaur's remarkable journey in cricket is truly commendable. From her humble beginnings to lifting the trophy, her determination has brought great laurels to our country.

Complementing this, our section on India-South cooperation highlights how India is championing the aspirations of the Global South, advancing inclusive development, and strengthening multilateral partnerships in a rapidly transforming world.

Culture and thought take centre stage in this issue as celebrated authors Amish Tripathi and Dr. Vayu Naidu explore the global resonance of the *Ramayana*, reflecting on how its timeless values continue to inspire harmony worldwide, especially as UNESCO has inscribed Deepavali on the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Complementing this theme, our special feature revisits the *Ramayana's* universal resonance, reminding readers of India's civilisational message of dharma and compassion.

Alongside, a curated section on short stories has also been crafted for a delightful and light-hearted read. We hope these narratives encourage aspiring storytellers to refine their craft and pursue their fictional journeys.



Randhir Jaiswal

Randhir Jaiswal
Official Spokesperson and
Additional Secretary
External Publicity & Public
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Ministry of External Affairs,
Government of India.

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Cover 2021

Hampi, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site, served as the capital of the powerful Vijayanagara empire



Cover Description

Through the flicker of light, Hindu god Hanuman's valour shines in Andhra Pradesh's Tholu Bommalata, a form of shadow puppet theatre



Back Cover

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the 70th birth anniversary of the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck (right), along with Jetsun Pema, Queen of Bhutan (left)

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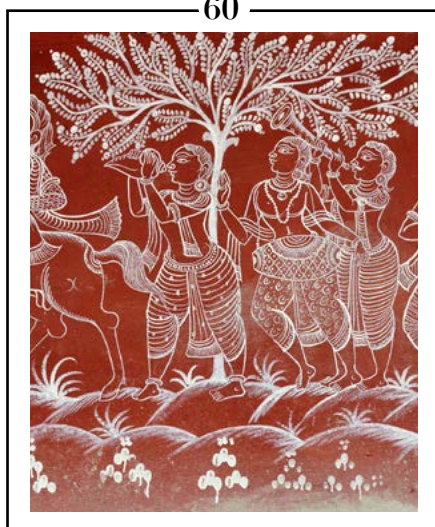
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INDIA LEAD

Powering Global Climate Action

The country's proactive climate leadership, from domestic reforms to global partnerships, positions it as a pivotal voice of the Global South, advancing sustainability and collaborative solutions amid evolving international climate challenges.

By Manjeev Singh Puri

**India's solar capacity surged to 129 GW in 2025,
up from 3 GW in 2014.**

At the Dubai edition of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COP) held in 2023, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the country's interest in hosting the COP meeting in 2028, thereby strongly signalling India's leadership on climate change.

Challenges

At present, international climate change negotiations face significant challenges. The United States, which has historically expressed reservations within the UNFCCC framework, has formally withdrawn from the Paris Agreement of 2015, and its policy direction has shifted toward promoting domestic energy exploration. At the same time, some European countries, while generally advocating for ambitious climate action, have moderated their targets. Nevertheless, climate change remains a pressing reality, and countries of

the Global South, which are most vulnerable to its impacts, require collaborative and sustained international efforts.

Brazil hosted the UNFCCC COP 30 in November 2025 in Belém, a city located in the Amazon rainforest, where its leadership was of critical importance. In view of the challenges facing more ambitious negotiated outcomes, Brazil focussed on implementation and adopted a diplomatic approach to its presidency, appointing veteran diplomat André do Lago, who previously served as Brazil's Ambassador to India.

The need of the hour is to bring the world together for collaborative action on climate change at the UNFCCC and beyond. This would also be in line with the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), recognising the global threat of climate change with a legal obligation for countries to mitigate this huge challenge.



**The need of the hour is to bring the world
together for collaborative action on climate change
at the UNFCCC and beyond.**



Adoption of biofuels will have multiple benefits for the people, reduce pollution through prevention of straw, replacing fossil fuels with environment-friendly fuels in vehicles as well as strengthen green jobs."

Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister of India

India's Climate Profile

India is one of the most populous countries of the world, accounting for around 17 per cent of the global population. It is also the fifth-largest economy in the world and is on track to become the third-largest economy by 2030. Yet, its contribution to cumulative carbon dioxide emissions since the Industrial Revolution amounts to only 3.4 per cent of the global total, and with per-capita emissions of 2 tonne, it remains less than half the global average of 4.7 tonne.

India's per-capita carbon footprint is also the lowest among G20 countries, with the International Finance Corporation (IFC)

recognising India as the only G20 nation aligned with the 2 °C upper limit for global warming. Moreover, India appears to have taken steps to decouple economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the emission intensity of its GDP, positioning itself as a potential model for the world at large, and for the Global South in particular.

The Panchamrit Plan

India's five-point climate action plan, Panchamrit, includes the key commitment of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2070. The goal is to reach 500 GW of non-fossil fuel generation by 2030, ensuring that 50 per



Minister of State for External Affairs, Kirti Vardhan Singh, co-chaired the LeadIT Summit with Minister for Environment and Climate of Sweden, Romina Pourmokhtari.



cent of India's power requirements would come from renewable energy by 2030, reducing the total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonne till 2030, and carbon intensity of the economy by 45 per cent by 2030, over 2005 levels.

Between 2017 and 2023, India added around 100 GW of installed electric capacity, of which around 80 per cent is attributed to non-fossil fuel-based resources. And the key target of 33 per cent reduction of emissions intensity of GDP by 2030, from the 2005 level, was met in 2019, 11 years ahead of time.

Moreover, India has undertaken to create an additional carbon sink of between 2.5 and 3 billion tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent through additional forest cover by 2030.

India's Leadership

Over the years, India has acted decisively both domestically and internationally, fostering global partnerships on climate change, including the International Solar Alliance (ISA), the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, the Leadership Group for Industry

GLOBAL INITIATIVES

Two other initiatives by India are of global importance.

The first is LiFE – Lifestyle for Environment, a mass movement launched at Glasgow by Prime Minister Modi to encourage the adoption of sustainable lifestyles to address the challenges of environmental degradation and climate change.

The second push by India is on the development of alternatives to carbon-intensive fossil fuels. A major effort in this regard is the National Green Hydrogen Mission, which seeks, by 2030, the development of green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 million metric tonne per annum with an associated renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW. This could result in an annual abatement of nearly 50 million metric tonne of greenhouse gas emissions.

Transition (LeadIT), and the Global Biofuel Alliance.

Through its ambitious policies, robust renewable energy growth trajectory, and effective fulfilment of international commitments, India has consistently demonstrated climate leadership on the global stage. With climate change widely recognised as one of the defining challenges of our times, India has assumed a pivotal role, not only through its concrete actions but also as a leading voice of the Global South advocating sustainability. At Belém, India reaffirmed its commitment to equity, climate justice and multilateralism. And underlined the need for reliable, affordable and equitable access to climate technologies. It emphasised that intellectual property and market barriers must not hinder technology transfer to developing nations.



Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri has been an Indian diplomat who has served as Ambassador to the European Union and to Nepal. He was also India's Ambassador to Belgium and Luxembourg.

EMPOWERING The Global South



India has always championed the Global South, advocating development, sovereignty, and multilateral reforms, while shaping a more equitable world future

By Asoke Mukerji

India became independent of the British colonial rule on August 15, 1947. Articulating its decision to opt out of the armed confrontation of the Cold War, Ms. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, the leader of India's delegation to the United Nations, said in a speech to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on September 19, 1947, "We cannot eat an ideology. We cannot brandish an ideology and feel that we are clothed and housed. Food, clothing, shelter, education, medical services; these are the things we need."

Early Days

India's support for the self-determination of other colonial countries produced significant results. In December 1963, these countries, known today as the "Global South," forced amendments to the UN Charter through a recorded two-thirds majority vote in the UNGA to obtain greater representation in the UN bodies responsible for peace, security, and development.

As a result, UN Security Council (UNSC) elected seats were expanded to 10, while UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) seats

were expanded from 18 to the current 54. However, greater representation did not automatically translate into the Global South's ability to influence multilateral decisions. The decisions of the UNSC continue to be taken based on the veto power of its five permanent members (P5), i.e., China, France, Russia, the UK, and USA. On the other hand, decisions of the ECOSOC and UNGA are taken democratically, by consensus or majority vote, with each country having one vote.

Emerging Alliance

The consolidation of the Global South was achieved incrementally between 1964, when the G-77 (Group of 77 developing countries) platform was created, and 2015. The G-77 Charter of Algiers of 1967 identified priorities for accelerated socio-economic development through international cooperation. India became the first chair of the G-77 in 1970.

In 1986, the UNGA adopted its historic Declaration on the Right to Development by a recorded vote. In 1987, the UN's



Proactive diplomacy has ensured the Global South's core interests in upholding their sovereignty while participating in the post-Cold War legal frameworks of a new world order.

India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, hosting the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Foreign Ministers' retreat in New Delhi



Much of India's development agenda is mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals."

Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister of India

Brundtland Commission converged the demands for accelerated socio-economic development and environmental protection into the concept of "sustainable development."

Proactive diplomacy has ensured the Global South's core interests in upholding their sovereignty while participating in the post-Cold War legal frameworks of a new world order. This includes the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) and the principle of "special and differential treatment" in international trade, which allows the use of higher tariffs through the World Trade Organisation Agreement (1994) signed at Marrakesh.

The path-breaking Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development (2015), with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), contains the negotiated priorities of the Global South within a holistic framework incorporating socio-economic, environmental and political objectives. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi





Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives at the 21st ASEAN-India Summit in Vientiane

asserted that “much of India’s development agenda is mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals.”

Overcoming Challenges

Agenda 2030 marked the first time since the signing of the UN Charter in 1945 that the interlinkage between peace, security, and development was accepted unanimously. The Global South expected the SDGs to be implemented through supportive multilateral financial flows and non-restrictive transfers of technologies for sustainable development. However, this did not unfold as expected. Developments in international relations since 2015 have instead underscored the weakening of the idea of “great power responsibility,” which originally justified the P5’s veto power in 1945.

The consequence of this is the spread of violent conflicts affecting two billion people living in the Global South, mostly in Asia and Africa. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a major socio-economic setback as well.

The Future

India’s G20 Presidency in 2023 provided a ray of hope. The three virtual Voice of the Global South Summits chaired by Prime Minister Modi in January and November 2023, and in August 2024, contained a blueprint for action by the Global South. This was anchored in the call for “reformed multilateralism,” seeking to restore the focus on the right to development, which is acknowledged to be “an inalienable human right.”

“Reformed multilateralism” urgently requires a new platform for dialogue and diplomacy. Such a platform exists in Article 109 of the UN Charter, and it is time for India and the Global South to prioritise the implementation of the article.



Ambassador Asoke Mukerji was India’s Permanent Representative to the UN in New York. He is a Distinguished Fellow at Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi.

DIALOGUE. PARTNERSHIP. PROGRESS

From strategic dialogues to cultural exchange, India's diplomatic engagements reflect its role as a bridge-builder



INDIA AND THE UK STRENGTHEN TIES IN TRADE, TECHNOLOGY, AND CLIMATE ACTION

Prime Minister of The UK, Sir Keir Starmer's first official visit to India marked a major step in strengthening the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Accompanied by a 125-member business delegation and nine Vice-Chancellors from leading UK universities, his visit followed Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's July trip to the UK, where the historic India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was signed.

Talks between the two leaders focussed on expanding cooperation in trade, defense, technology, education, and climate innovation. Both sides reviewed the progress of the

FTA, now under ratification, and discussed boosting investments, particularly in Artificial Intelligence, fintech, digital technologies, and green energy. Key outcomes included the announcement of joint investments in a Climate Tech Startup Fund, the launch of an India-UK Joint Centre for AI, and approvals for more UK university campuses in India.

Defense collaboration under the India-UK Defense Industrial Roadmap was also advanced, alongside discussions on maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Prime Minister Starmer reaffirmed the UK's support for India's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat.

PM Modi with
PM Starmer at
Raj Bhawan in
Mumbai during the
latter's India visit



INDIA-BHUTAN ANNOUNCES LANDMARK RAILWAY INITIATIVES

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri outlined a landmark initiative to establish the first-ever railway connectivity between India and Bhutan.

The meeting discussed two cross-border railway links — Kokrajhar–Gelephu and Banarhat–Samtse — aimed at boosting trade, tourism, and people-to-people movement. With a total investment of about ₹4,033 crore (*US\$ 44.6 million* approx.) and a combined length of 89 km, the projects will be fully funded by India — the Railways financing the Indian segments, and the Ministry of External Affairs covering the Bhutanese portions under India’s ₹10,000 crore (*US\$ 1.1 billion* approx.) commitment to Bhutan’s 13th Five-Year Plan (2024–29).

Strategically, Gelephu is being developed as a Mindfulness City and an economic hub under Bhutan’s King, while Samtse is emerging as an industrial town. Both projects will feature modern, fully electrified tracks compatible with Vande Bharat trains with climate-resilient, eco-sensitive design.

Prime Minister of Bhutan Dasho Tshering Tobgay was received by the Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita on the former’s arrival at Gaya International Airport, Bihar.

INDIA-MAURITIUS RELATIONS ENTER A NEW PHASE OF GROWTH AND SHARED PROSPERITY

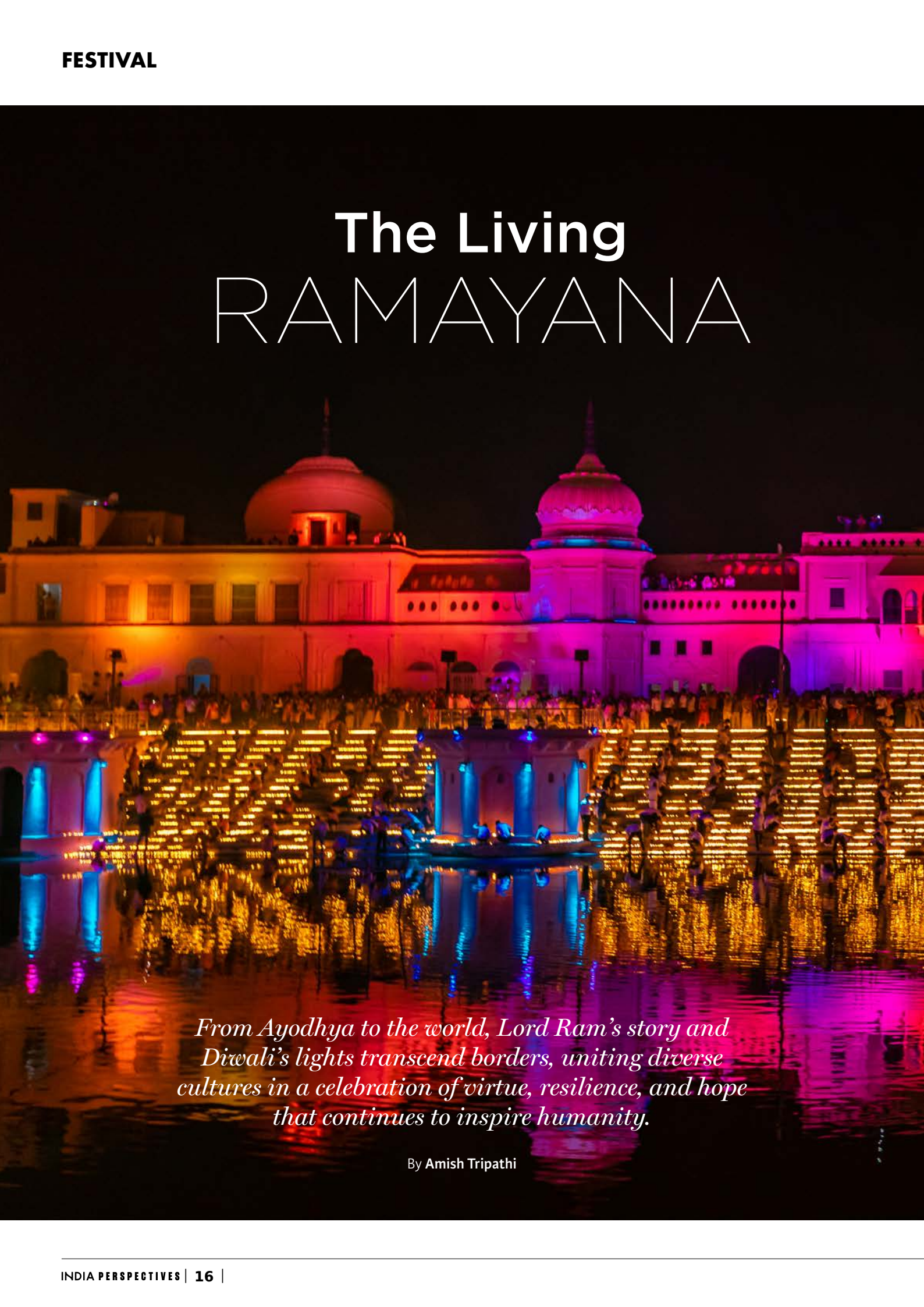
The State Visit of Mauritius Prime Minister Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam to India marks his first bilateral foreign visit since assuming office in November 2024, symbolising the enduring cultural and strategic bond between the two nations. The visit, spanning eight days from September 9 to 16, included engagements in Mumbai, Varanasi, Ayodhya, Tirupati, and New Delhi, highlighting India’s outreach beyond the capital and deepening regional diplomacy.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius, in Varanasi.

In Varanasi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Ramgoolam held detailed discussions covering bilateral cooperation, maritime security, trade, education, health, and science. A major outcome was the announcement of a Special Economic Package for Mauritius, encompassing projects worth nearly ₹5,436.5 crore (*US\$ 655 million*). These include the development of Port Louis, maritime surveillance of the Chagos Marine Protected Area, establishment of hospitals, an Ayush Centre of Excellence, a veterinary school, and a 17.5 MW floating solar power plant. India will also extend budgetary support of ₹207.5 crore (*US\$ 25 million*) this fiscal year.

The Living RAMAYANA



From Ayodhya to the world, Lord Ram's story and Diwali's lights transcend borders, uniting diverse cultures in a celebration of virtue, resilience, and hope that continues to inspire humanity.

By Amish Tripathi

Diwali's ancient traditions shine globally as **UNESCO** acknowledges the festival as a powerful expression of living intangible cultural heritage.



The *Ramayana* has long shaped cultural traditions across the Indian subcontinent, symbolising ideals such as integrity, resilience, and community. The narrative continues to inspire art, literature, and performance, reflecting the subcontinent's evolving blend of tradition and modernity. Diwali, marking

Lord Ram's return to the kingdom of Ayodhya, has grown into a festival that transcends borders, celebrated widely as a time of light, hope, and togetherness. Beyond its origins, it serves as a cultural bridge, connecting communities across continents and highlighting the shared values of joy, renewal, and harmony.

RESONANCE THROUGH DIVERSITY

While the celebration of Diwali largely commemorates Lord Ram's return to Ayodhya, in many parts of the country, it is intricately entwined with other deities and stories as well. Consider the following examples:

GODDESS LAKSHMI'S EMERGENCE (LAKSHMI PUJA)

Many parts of India honour Goddess Lakshmi, who has emerged from the cosmic ocean during the churning of the ocean (*Samudra Manthan*). Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, is worshipped on Diwali night, symbolising the arrival of fortune and well-being in homes.



LORD KRISHNA'S VICTORY OVER NARAKASURA (NARAKA CHATURDASHI)

In western and southern India, Diwali also commemorates Lord Krishna's destruction of the demon Narakasura, liberating 16,000 captive women and ending tyranny and evil. The day before the main Diwali night, often called Chhoti Diwali or Naraka Chaturdashi, celebrates this victory.

PANDAVAS' RETURN FROM EXILE

Some communities also remember the five Pandavas returning to their kingdom after their 12-year exile, as described in the *Mahabharata*. Their return was welcomed with lamps and celebrations, mirroring the joy seen during Lord Ram's homecoming.

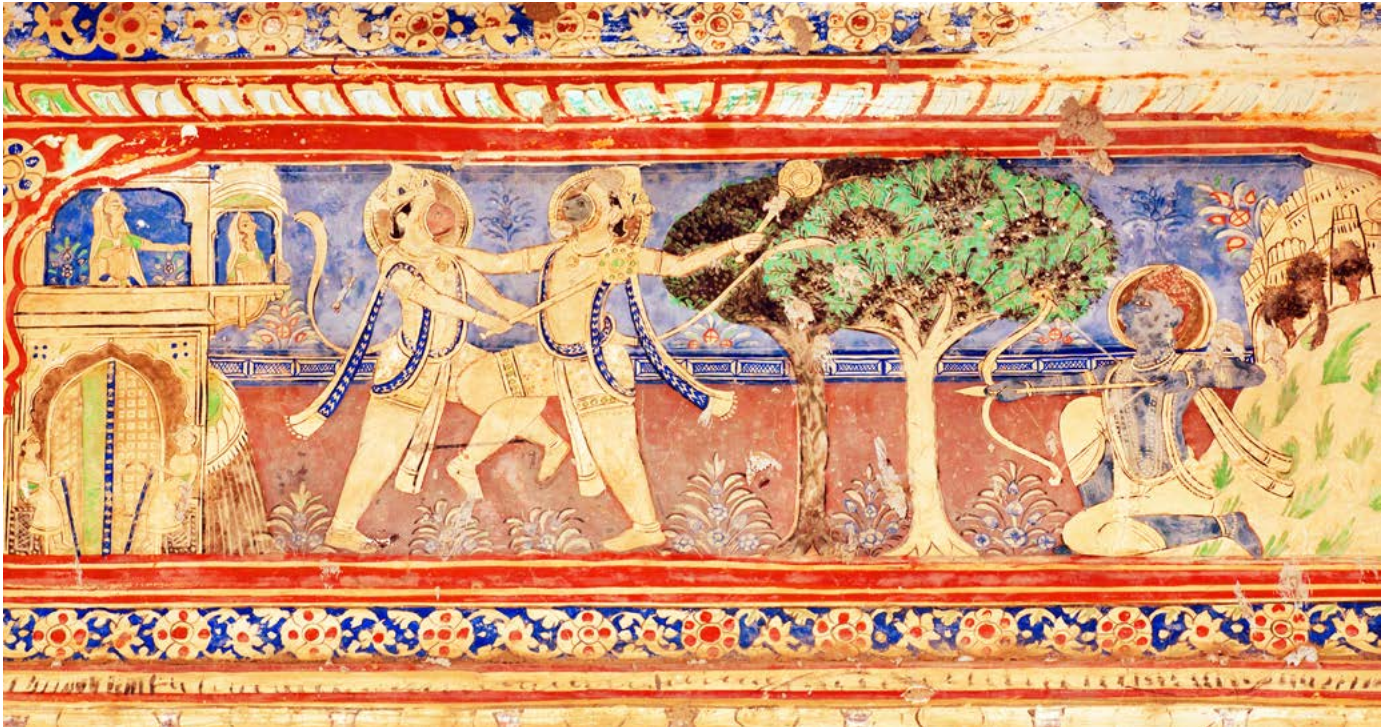


The Living Legacy

Unlike many other ancient civilisations whose legends remain fossilised in museums and academic texts, India's epics, especially the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, are alive within daily rituals, festivals, and the moral consciousness of its people. Cultures from antiquity, like that of the Greco-Romans or Egyptians (which are still held in high esteem in India), have seen their gods and goddesses recede into memory, while India's deities remain vibrant living presences. The genius of Indian tradition lies in its capacity to modernise and localise ancient stories: from the Sanskrit *Valmiki Ramayana* to the vernacular retellings across the subcontinent, each age and region has recreated Lord Ram in a new light. There are hundreds of versions, each reshaping the storyline to suit the contemporary context while preserving its ethical core.

From India to the World

What is truly remarkable is how the *Ramayana* and values exemplified by Lord Ram have travelled beyond India's borders. Southeast Asia, for



Through celebration, storytelling, and shared festivities, Diwali fosters a spirit of common humanity, making the light of Lord Ram's example shine brighter than ever before.

instance, boasts its own spectacular versions, such as the *Ramakien* in Thailand and *Hikayat Seri Rama* in Malaysia, demonstrating the universal allure and adaptability of Lord Ram's story. In recent decades, Diwali itself has become a global phenomenon, celebrated not just by the Indian diaspora but also embraced by nations, from the US to Fiji, and from South Africa to the Caribbean islands. This process is not merely one of export, but of dialogue: communities worldwide see in Diwali's lights a metaphor for hope and unity that transcends all barriers of nationality, faith, and language.



KALI PUJA

In West Bengal and parts of eastern India, Diwali coincides with Kali Puja. Goddess Kali, fierce and compassionate, is worshipped for the destruction of evil and the triumph of good. The underlying message mirrors that of Diwali, while the rituals and iconography are distinct.

BALI PRATIPADA

In some regions (notably Maharashtra and parts of South India), Diwali marks the return of the Asura-king Bali (Mahabali). According to legend, the benevolent Bali is allowed to return once a year from the netherworld, and people celebrate his reign of justice and prosperity.



THE STORY OF DHANTERAS AND LORD DHANVANTARI

The first day of Diwali, known as Dhanteras, marks the appearance of Lord Dhanvantari, the physician of the gods, who emerged from the ocean with the gift of Ayurveda. This day is associated with health and medicine, and the tradition of buying new utensils to bring prosperity.



The genius of Indian tradition lies in its capacity to modernise and localise ancient stories: from the Sanskrit *Valmiki Ramayana* to the vernacular retellings across the subcontinent, each age and region has recreated Lord Ram in a new light.



Today, Diwali and the legacy of Lord Ram have become bridges across cultures. International diplomatic missions, multicultural societies, and world cities all host public celebrations, lighting up the night in affirmation of pluralistic values. For global audiences, the *Ramayana* offers more than legend; it provides blueprints for ethical leadership, compassion, and hope. Through celebration, storytelling, and shared festivities, Diwali fosters a spirit of common humanity, making

the light of Lord Ram's example shine brighter than ever before.

The story of Lord Ram represents far more than antiquity; it is a wellspring of values, dialogue, and togetherness. Diwali, rooted in this tradition, emerges as a global festival: a celebration that transcends time and place. In embracing these shared narratives, the world participates not only in Indian tradition but in the universal quest for goodness, harmony, and hope.

BANDI CHHOR DIVAS

Sikhs celebrate Bandi Chhor Divas during Diwali, marking Guru Hargobind Ji's release from imprisonment.



LORD MAHAVIR'S ATTAINMENT OF NIRVANA

For Jains, Diwali is the day Lord Mahavira attained Nirvana (spiritual liberation). Jain communities across India illuminate their homes and temples to honour this enlightenment, emphasising inner purity and truth.



Amish Tripathi is a bestselling author, award-winning broadcaster, film producer, and co-founder of a video-gaming company.

KATHAL, CLOVES & KHICHDI

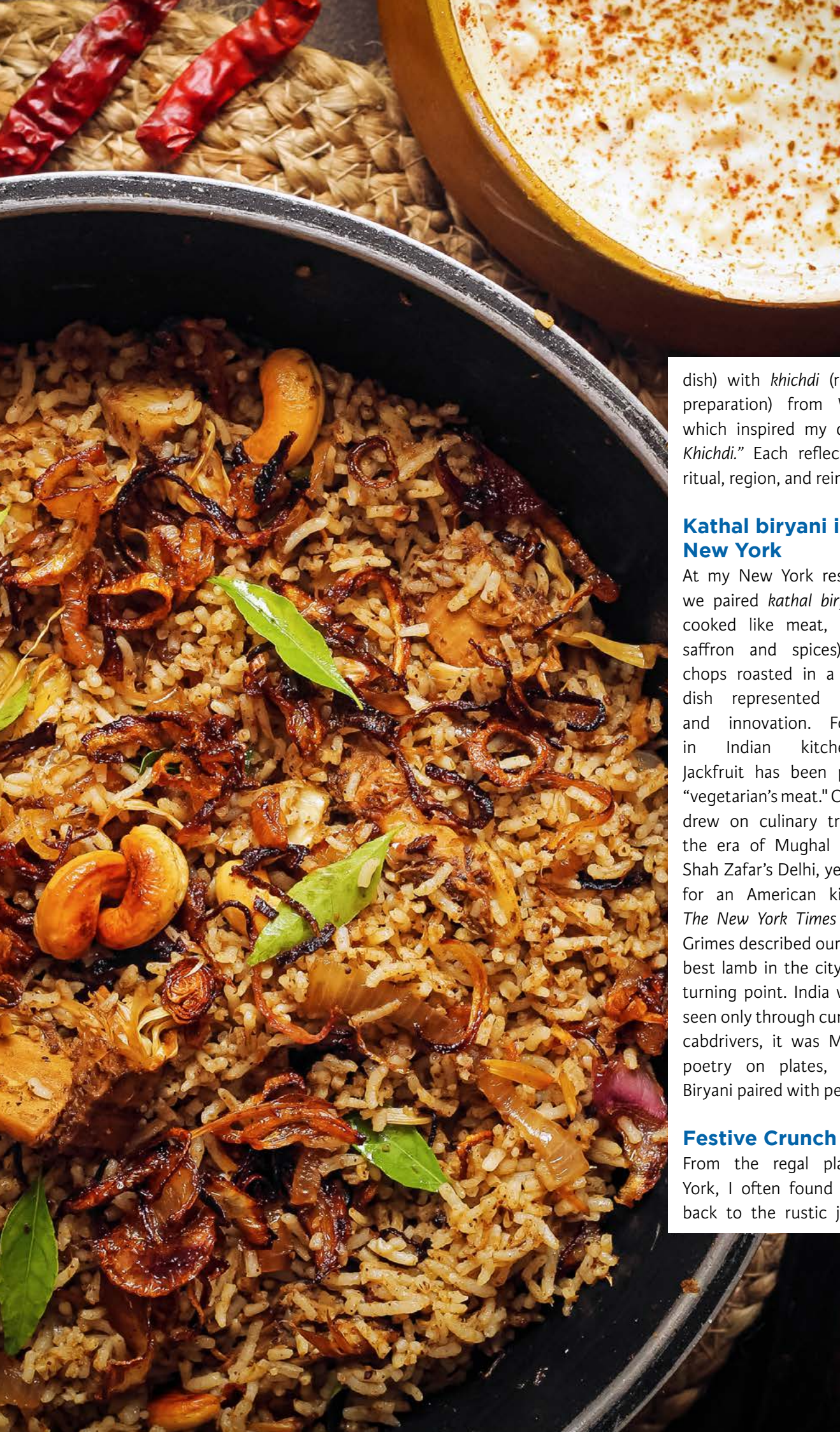
A Rare Taste Of Diwali

The festival of lights' true radiance shines in the kitchen, where humble, regional dishes like jackfruit biryani, lentil fritters, clove pastries, jaggery pancakes, and khichdi carry tradition, ritual, and reinvention across continents.

By **Suvir Saran**

The festival of Diwali is celebrated for its lights and fireworks, yet its truest radiance often emanates from the kitchen. While *gulab jamun*, *barfi*, and *laddoos* dominate popular imagination, especially in northern India, the dishes that truly stand out are humble, their recipes preserved within family kitchens.

During festivities, the five dishes which exemplify this enduring culinary tradition: *kathal* (jackfruit) *biryani* with *tandoor-grilled lamb chops*; *kalmi vadas* (lentil dish) from Rajasthan; *laung-lata* (a dessert) from Lucknow; *gud ke pue* (jaggery dessert) from Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh; and *labra* (vegetable



dish) with *khichdi* (rice and lentil preparation) from West Bengal, which inspired my dish “*Birbal ki Khichdi*.” Each reflects a story of ritual, region, and reinvention.

Kathal biryani in New York

At my New York restaurant *Devi*, we paired *kathal biryani* (jackfruit cooked like meat, fragrant with saffron and spices), with lamb chops roasted in a tandoor. The dish represented both history and innovation. For centuries, in Indian kitchens, unripe Jackfruit has been prized as the “vegetarian’s meat.” Our lamb chops drew on culinary traditions from the era of Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah Zafar’s Delhi, yet were refined for an American kitchen. When *The New York Times* critic William Grimes described our chops as “the best lamb in the city,” it marked a turning point. India was no longer seen only through curry houses and cabdrivers, it was Michelin star’s, poetry on plates, and Jackfruit Biryani paired with pear chutney.

Festive Crunch

From the regal plates of New York, I often found myself drawn back to the rustic joy of snacks.

Kalmi vadas, (Rajasthani lentil fritters), are one of those Diwali treats that capture the essence of community and celebration. Crisp, spiced, and deeply satisfying, they are wholesome, plant-forward, and unpretentious. Across India, lentils have long been more than a staple; they are a canvas for regional ingenuity. Every time I made them, whether in a cooking class, at a restaurant event, or at home, they transformed the table.

In an era when “plant-based” is marketed as a western innovation, I reminded my students and diners that India has celebrated lentils for millennia. *Kalmi vadas* prove that global cooking shines not by imitation, but by embracing authenticity.

Rustic Comfort

In Muzaffarnagar, western Uttar Pradesh, the heart of India's *gur*

RARE FLAVOURS

Indian home cooking is never just butter *chicken* and *dal makhani*. It embraces vegetables like *karela* (bitter gourd) and *zimikand* (yam) and dishes like *thoran* (stir-fried vegetable with coconut), *payasam* (sweet pudding) and *poriyal* (asafoetida sautéed vegetables) - recipes from Assam to Himachal and Kerala to Kashmir. I've continued that conversation in America, showing how Indian food can belong everywhere.



(jaggery) belt, *gud ke pue* are a cherished Diwali tradition. These jaggery pancakes, fried in ghee, were the sweet soul of festivals in agrarian homes. Jaggery has long been central to Indian culinary history, prized not only for its sweetness but for its grounding, earthy flavour and versatility.

Years later, I reimagined the dish in New York, sometimes adding apples, turning them into fritters that dazzled American diners. Rustic sweets, I discovered, can comfort more than dazzle, and that is their power. They belong as much in an American kitchen as in an Indian one, teaching us that authenticity is not always ornate. It is sometimes as simple as wheat, jaggery, and ghee.





The Aroma of Cloves

Laung-lata, a delicate pastry filled with *khoya* (milk solids) and perfumed with *laung* (cloves), teeters on the brink of extinction. It's too labour-intensive for modern kitchens, too subtle for mass production. Yet its essence endures. Indian spices have long been the mainstay of the country's culinary history, used both as essential ingredients and as garnishes to layer flavour, aroma, and colour. At Tapestry, my restaurant in New York, I translated this fragrance into *custards*, *panna cottas*, *crème brûlées*, and *flans*. A clove pudding might not resemble *laung-lata* in form, but in spirit, it evoked the Nawabi indulgence of Lucknow.

Florence Fabricant, writing in *The New York Times* about Tapestry, recognised how these echoes worked. To her and to our diners the clove was not merely a spice, but a vessel of memory, bridging New York and Lucknow with a single breath. This is how traditions endure: not always through replication, but through translation.



From Ritual to Reinvention

In Bengal, Diwali coincides with Kali Puja, when the ritual food is *khichdi* with *labra*, a spiced vegetable medley. Traditionally, vegetables have often been cooked as one-pot meals for temple offerings and rituals, combining simplicity with devotion. This food is meant for offering first, then sharing; celebrating nourishment over display. That sacred simplicity inspired "*Birbal ki Khichdi*," a dish that became one of my signatures. My version layered technique upon technique: toasting lentils and rice, blooming and grinding spices, topping with tomato chutney, a gremolata of ginger, coriander, green chili, lime zest, and finally a crown of crispy fried onions.

When *Time Out New York* listed *Birbal ki Khichdi* among the city's best dishes of the year, it felt vindicating. This is what food can do: restore, connect, complete. At my family's table in New York, *kathal biryani* still sits beside lamb chops, pear chutney, and sweets carrying the breath of cloves. That, to me, is Diwali: food that restores, connects, and builds for the future.



Suvir Saran is a Michelin-starred chef, author, and educator renowned for bringing India's regional flavours to global kitchens. His New York restaurant, Dévi, earned him international acclaim, blending tradition with innovation.



Tales Etched In The DUST OF TIME

In Maharashtra, Diwali is not just a festival of lights; it's a festival of heritage. Every year, children roll up their sleeves to create miniature mud forts, or *qilas*, bringing centuries of history to life. These tiny fortresses are more than playful constructions; they are bridges to the past, letting young minds experience the legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Hands in the Earth

Though miniature forts are easily available today in markets, earlier, preparations would begin two to three weeks in advance. Bricks, mud, stones, and gunny sacks were gathered, and tiny fortresses were built in the corner of the house.

Heritage in Play

While an old custom, it's still enthusiastically practised in some pockets of the region. The Pune Municipal Corporation, for instance, has been organising an Annual Fort Competition and Exhibition since 1992.

Children in Maharashtra build **mud qilas** because the activity fuses religious symbolism, seasonal material culture, intergenerational learning, etc.

Community Spirit

What makes this tradition truly special is the sense of community it fosters. Neighbours and family members contribute clay and stones, while children collaborate, share ideas, and compete in friendly ways.

Art collectives and heritage advocates are championing the revival of Maharashtra's fort tradition by envisioning community courtyards as spaces where residents can collaboratively recreate mud forts. Educational and cultural institutions are likewise being urged to introduce "mud art" workshops during Diwali, nurturing both creativity and cultural continuity.

A Legacy Of Leadership IN MAKING

In the vast corridors of a global consumer-goods enterprise, where leadership is forged through discipline, foresight, and an unwavering customer focus, Shailesh G. Jejurikar's journey is defined by consistency, curiosity, and a grounded sense of purpose.

Born and raised in Mumbai, Shailesh G. Jejurikar's early years were shaped by the cultural vibrancy and ambition of one of India's fast-moving metros. On January 1, 2026, he will become CEO of Procter & Gamble, making history as the first Indian to lead the 187-year-old global consumer goods giant. A graduate of IIM Bangalore, he started working with Procter & Gamble (P&G) in 1989, armed with a sharp analytical mind and a quiet determination. His beginnings were, by his own account, "humble and hands-on." As an assistant manager, he spent long days in consumer research, product testing, and on-ground market visits—experiences that honed his instinct for understanding what people really want.

Over 35 years, Jejurikar has held leadership roles across North America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa—a trajectory that not only shaped his business worldview but also his appreciation for cultural nuance. His most defining chapter came as Chief Operating Officer, where he helped streamline operations, strengthen sustainability commitments, and drive innovation-led growth across P&G's sprawling portfolio.

But behind the titles and the spreadsheets lies a leader known



Shailesh G. Jejurikar, COO, Procter & Gamble

Over 35 years, Jejurikar has held leadership roles across North America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa

for an unusually human approach to management. Colleagues often describe him as approachable, deeply empathetic, and refreshingly candid—qualities not always associated with top-tier corporate leadership.

Jejurikar's achievements have been celebrated throughout the organisation: successfully scaling household brands across geographies, championing digital transformation before it became corporate gospel, and pushing for environmentally responsible product design. Under

his leadership, P&G's sustainability programmes—particularly its ambitions around carbon neutrality and waste reduction—have gained sharper focus and measurable outcomes.

As he prepares to take charge as P&G's next CEO, Jejurikar's journey from a young assistant brand manager in India to the top office of an over US\$ 400 billion company global consumer goods giant, reads like a masterclass in modern leadership.

Ramayana In Light And MOVEMENT



Across Southeast Asia, the Ramayana is a vibrant cultural force, celebrated through the oral tradition of storytelling first, and subsequently dance, puppetry, temple art, and music. It is a transmission of timeless values of courage, compassion, and ethical consciousness.

By Dr. Vayu Naidu

UNESCO notes that Ramayana-based dance dramas like Indonesia's Wayang Wong and Thailand's Khon preserve shared Asian heritage, blending performance, ritual, and epic storytelling.

The *Ramayana* is a living legend drawn from resources within India and has sailed overseas to Southeast Asian countries, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, finding new meanings with craftsmen, sculptors, puppeteers, dancers, and musicians. Across The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), it is a connected thought that links cultures through the shared legacy of the *Ramayana*.

Epic Reach

In Thailand, the epic is known as *Ramakien* and is performed in the form of Khon dance or shadow puppetry. The inner walls of the Grand Palace in Bangkok depicts the entire *Ramayana* in 178 panels stretching over a mile. In

Indonesia, the *Ramayana* is known as *Kakawin* and is performed by dancers on full-moon nights, with the backdrop of the massive Prambanan Temple. Thanks to Anita Bose's (author of the book *Ramayana: Footprints in South-East Asian Culture and Heritage*) extensive research into the performative expressions of the *Ramayana*, we now know how it spreads through trade and the exchange of craft communities that travelled to Bali and Sumatra to build temples and perform the compelling epic. The regal name of the king in Thailand is Rama.

The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, has explored how the *Ramayana* evolves across cultures and media, including





The *Ramayana* remains a text not just to be read, but to be experienced. It is performed, sung, sculpted, and danced.



HIGHLIGHTS

In Thailand, the *Ramakien* dominates the royal stages, with elaborate dance-drama, gilded costumes, and meticulous choreography

Cambodia's *Reamker*, carved into movement, gesture, and colour brings to life in classical court performances, preserving the epic's narrative

contemporary productions from China. From scholarship to comics and manga-inspired animation, characters like Hanuman continue to engage new, cross-generational audiences while preserving the epic's core values.

In Malaysia, the epic is known as *Hikayat Seri Rama*, performed through traditional theatre and shadow puppetry, where the moral and ethical dilemmas of the characters are enacted with elegance and ritual precision. In Thailand, the *Ramakien* dominates the royal stages, with elaborate dance-drama, gilded costumes, and meticulous choreography that translate philosophical ideals into movement, gesture, and colour. Cambodia's *Reamker*, carved into movement, gesture, and colour. In Myanmar, the story is performed as *Yama Zatdaw*, combining puppetry, song, and dance to create a multisensory experience that engages the community in reflection on duty, virtue, and courage. Vietnam celebrates the *Ramakien* through water puppetry and dance-drama, while even in Indonesia, the *Ramayana* comes alive in *Wayang*



Kulit shadow puppet theatre, where the intricacy of craft meets profound moral contemplation.

Connected Thoughts

What unites these diverse enactments is their living, breathing quality. The *Ramayana* remains a text not just to be read, but to be experienced. It is performed, sung, sculpted, and danced, inviting audiences to engage with the lessons of ethical choice, courage, empathy, and interconnectedness. While each region adapts the epic to its local sensibilities, yet the illumination of

truth, the reconciliation of opposites, and the recognition of our shared humanity, remains still.

The aesthetic forms are as important as the text itself. Thai classical dance communicates through gesture, rhythm, and subtle facial expressions, while Indonesian puppeteers manipulate intricate shadows to convey moral nuance and humour. In Cambodia, temple carvings not only depict heroic feats but capture the interactions of humans, gods, and animals, emphasising the interdependence of life. In Myanmar and Vietnam, music and puppetry integrate storytelling with participatory ritual, creating experiences that are simultaneously communal, reflective, and joyous. These performances are not museum pieces; they are living acts of devotion,

HIGHLIGHTS

In Malaysia, the epic is known as *Hikayat Seri Rama*, performed through traditional theatre and shadow puppetry

In Myanmar, the story is performed as *Yama Zatdaw*, combining puppetry, song, and dance to create a multisensory experience

Vietnam celebrates the *Ramakien* through water puppetry and dance-drama

pedagogy, and artistry, rooted in centuries of practice and continually renewed by each generation.

Meaningful Exchange

Underlying all these expressions is a profound philosophy. The *Ramayana* invites us to see the ethical and ecological dimensions of life: humans, animals, and the environment exist in a web of relationships where action, choice, and consequence are inseparable. The epic's migration to Southeast Asia exemplifies how cultural exchange can preserve this understanding while making it meaningful in new contexts. In every dance, shadow, and melody, the story guides audiences to reflect on courage in adversity, generosity of spirit, and the responsibility to sustain balance in life.





Across ASEAN, the *Ramayana* continues to be a conduit for education, inspiration, and community cohesion. It demonstrates how an epic can be simultaneously local and universal, rooted and fluid, historical and contemporary. Through performance, art, and ritual, the story of Lord Rama, and of human and cosmic interconnectedness, remains vividly alive, reminding us that the light of awareness, compassion, and ethical discernment is a principle that transcends borders.



Dr. Vayu Naidu a Royal Literary Fund Fellow teaching at RADA, is the first global scholar of *Ramayana*'s oral tradition and founder of an Arts Council-funded intercultural storytelling company.



Threads

Indian textile traditions, historically central to global trade, are now actively shaping contemporary fashion. Designers are embedding handwoven, embroidered, and naturally dyed fabrics into international silhouettes.

Without

For centuries, Indian textiles have circulated through global trade routes, influencing material culture across Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Fine muslins from Dhaka were exported to royal courts and European fashion houses; Banarasi brocades shaped ceremonial dress across regions; khadi evolved from a handspun fabric to an economic symbol of self-reliance.

Borders

By Namita Kumar



In recent years, this historical influence has entered a new phase. The international fashion industry no longer positions Indian textiles as decorative or exotic artefacts. Instead, they are being integrated into global design processes; treated as materials of relevance rather than markers of difference. The current conversation between Indian and global fashion is built on collaboration, sustainability, and shared innovation. Embroidery, dyeing, and weaving techniques from Indian clusters are now applied within international silhouettes and product lines, dissolving the visual boundaries that once separated “Indian craft” from “Western design.” What was once ornamental has become structural, embedded in the very language of contemporary fashion production and aesthetics.



FASHION

At the recently concluded Lakmē Fashion Week x FDCI, held at The Grand, New Delhi, this merging of craft and contemporary consciousness took visible form. The opening presentation, featuring designer Anavila, and the labels Akaaro by Gaurav Jai Gupta, and The Edit by The Kunj, set the tone for the season. It wasn't a nostalgic homage to heritage but a sophisticated conversation about how Indian craftsmanship can live, breathe, and evolve in today's fashion vocabulary.

"Handmade in India, crafted for the world," declared the event's guiding mantra, seamlessly blending handwoven linen, ikats, khadi silks, metallic threads, and even French lace into an aesthetic that was at once local and global.

Amrit Raj, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, said,

India has
744
handicraft clusters
employing nearly
212,000
artisans and
offering over
35,000
products,
according to the
IBEF report of
October, 2025.

"Through collaborations like this opening show, we aim to bring the work of our artisans and designer partnerships to the forefront of modern fashion conversations."

That "conversation" was beautifully articulated through the work of Anavila Mishra, whose collection 'Sarmast' explored the mystic stillness of the Deccan through handwoven linen and appliquéd satin. Her use of delicate French lace whispered a cross-cultural dialogue. "It's a collection that captures stillness, emotion, and the quiet beauty of craft. It's a gentle beginning, an invitation to pause and feel the poetry in simplicity," she shared.

If Anavila's language was meditative, Gaurav Jai Gupta's Akaaro spoke in architectural tones. He presented a symphony of handwoven silk, khadi silk,





FDCI Chairman Sunil Sethi highlighted the larger vision: “This collaboration beautifully represents our shared philosophy to preserve, promote, and contemporise Indian crafts. It highlights the artistry of our artisans, reaffirms our belief that India’s creative legacy continues to inspire global conversations in fashion.”



cotton, and metallic threads, pushing the narrative of Indian handloom into the future. “It continues our ongoing inquiry into how handwoven textiles can embody modernity and emotion in equal measure,” said Gupta.

That legacy is being rediscovered not just by master designers but also by young innovators. Young design students, for instance, reimagined humble Indian fabrics like jute and khadi into futuristic materials. By refining the coarse “golden thread of Bengal,” they transformed jute from a utilitarian fibre into a soft, high-value textile. Even more radically, they turned khadi into sneakers; a witty nod to global streetwear culture.

These are not gimmicks but gestures of reinvention. They signify a deeper movement in Indian fashion, where the emphasis is shifting from mere heritage storytelling to material innovation and global relevance.





Designer Samant Chauhan, known for his Bhagalpur silk creations, echoed this balance between opulence and restraint in his collection First Breath. With Swarovski-crusted silks and sharply tailored silhouettes, Chauhan showcased how Indian embroidery and luxury can coexist with the precision of contemporary couture.

Meanwhile, Sanjukta Dutta drew from Assamese looms, reinterpreting the Mekhela Chador into sleek, global-ready drapes and separates. "For me, the textiles of Assam and the Northeast have always been an inspiration, and I've tried to promote them in a contemporary form for Indian as well as international buyers," she said.

Mohammed Anas Sheikh celebrated Ajrakh, natural dyes, and hand painting through minimal silhouettes, while Anam Husain transformed Rajasthan's Kathpuli dolls into a narrative on sustainability,

repurposing nearly 1,000 kg of post-consumer denim waste. And then there was Pranita Choudhury's collection, which reinterpreted Tagore's poetry into block prints of Bengali script and Kantha stitches, merging literary memory with wearable design.

Together, these collections tell a story larger than fashion; they map the evolving psyche of Indian creativity. Today's designers are not simply reviving crafts - they are reframing them within the global aesthetics of sustainability, minimalism, and material consciousness.

The result is not fusion but integration, a seamless blending of surface, fabric, and philosophy. In this new design era, a khadi sneaker can sit comfortably next to an Italian leather loafer, a handwoven silk trench can hang beside a Parisian tweed coat, and an Ajrakh-printed dress can be as modern as any global prêt piece.

QUANTUM CODE

India's USD 730 million mission is rewriting the rules of technology

What's Quantum

Quantum computers don't think in simple 0s and 1s like regular ones; they use qubits, which can be a combination of both! This mind-bending power helps solve complex problems much faster than classical computers. Getting instant weather predictions or faster drug discoveries for rare diseases, all made possible by quantum computing.

What's the Mission

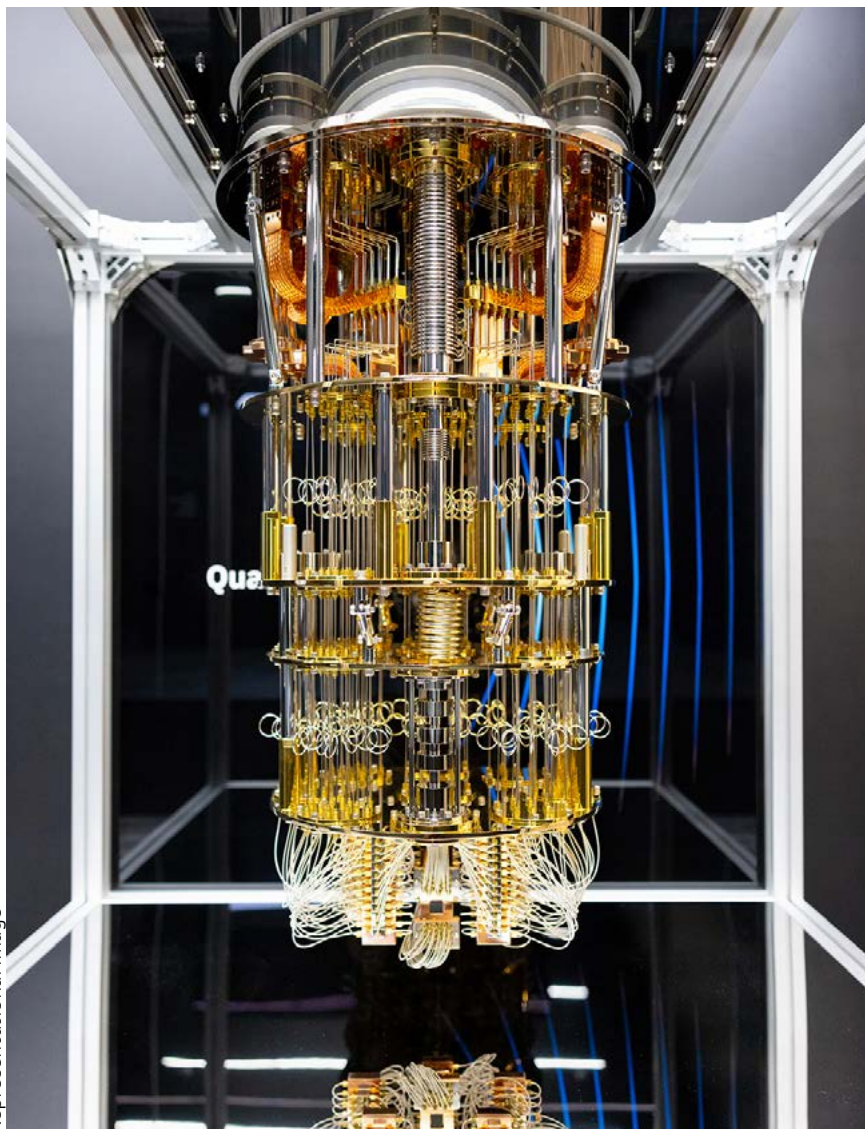
The National Quantum Mission is more than just a government initiative. It is a bold stride toward harnessing quantum technology to drive innovation, enhance security, and accelerate growth across industries, positioning India as a global leader in this frontier field.

How it works

The mission sets ambitious targets: developing quantum computers with up to 1,000 qubits, enabling satellite-based quantum communication across 2,000 km, and creating highly sensitive quantum sensors and clocks. It also focuses on cutting-edge quantum materials and devices, paving the way for breakthroughs in computing, metrology, and secure communications.

Under the mission, four Thematic Hubs (T-Hubs) have been created at IISc Bengaluru, IIT Madras, IIT Bombay, and IIT Delhi, where they coordinate research across 43 institutions.

The NQM positions India at the cutting edge of global technology, promising innovations that could redefine industries, enhance security, and accelerate sustainable development. In the quantum revolution, India is not just participating; it's aiming to lead.



Representational image

RESONANCE THROUGH DIVERSITY

India is also pioneering quantum-resilient encryption through initiatives by DRDO, C-DoT, and SETS, ensuring digital infrastructure remains secure in the quantum era. These efforts align with national programmes like Digital India, Make in India, and Start-up India.



DRIVING EVOLUTION

*India accelerates electric vehicle adoption,
emerging as a global leader*

India is rapidly emerging as a global leader in electric vehicle (EV) adoption, positioning itself among the top EV markets worldwide. As of early 2025, India has registered over 5.6 million EVs, reflecting a substantial increase from approximately 50,000 in 2016. In 2024, India's EV sales reached 2.08 million units, accounting for about 11 per cent of global EV sales.

The surge in EV adoption is underpinned by government initiatives such as the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme, Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, and the PM e-Bus Sewa. These programmes have catalysed investments in EV infrastructure,

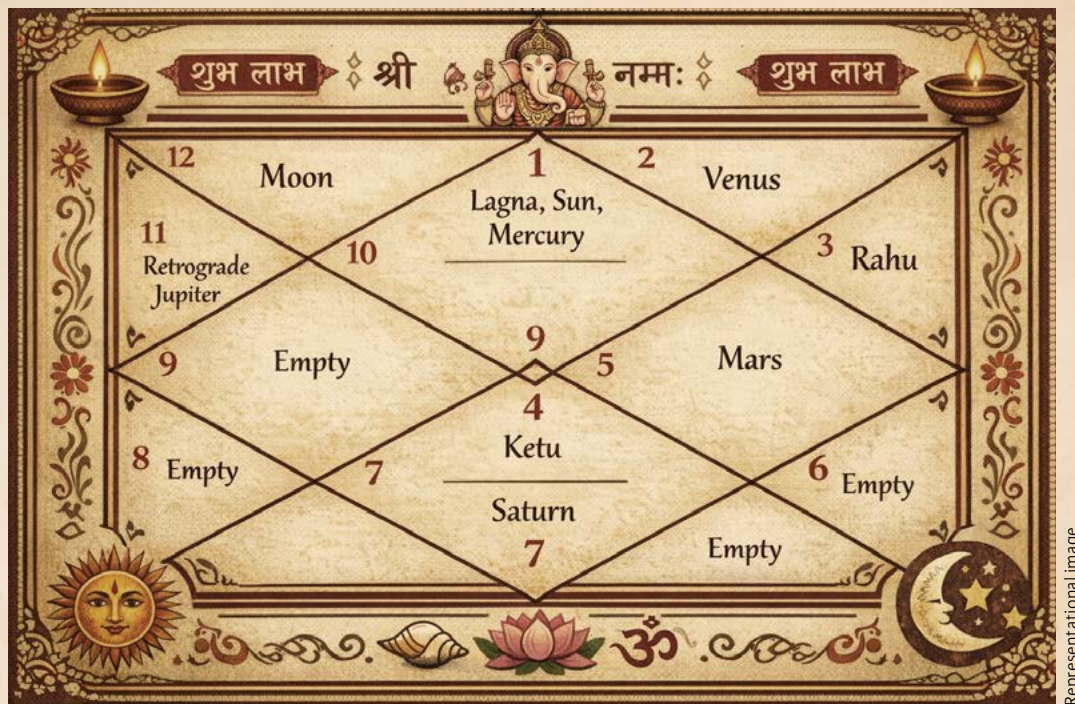
manufacturing, and research, propelling India towards its goal of achieving 30 per cent EV penetration by 2030.

In 2024, EVs accounted for 6.3 per cent of total vehicle sales in India, up from 0.7 per cent in 2020. This growth trajectory reflects a broader global trend, with India's EV penetration now exceeding 40 per cent of the global average.

India's EV market is projected to grow from 43,326 crore (US\$ 5.22 billion) in 2024 to nearly ₹151,890 crore (US\$ 18.3 billion) by 2029.

The two-wheeler segment leads the market, with electric two-wheelers comprising a significant share of sales. Additionally, India has emerged as a global leader in electric three-wheeler adoption, holding a 57 per cent share of global sales in 2024.

India's commitment to achieving 30 per cent EV penetration by 2030 underscores its dedication to sustainable mobility and energy security. And the government's continued focus on policy support, infrastructure development, and public-private partnerships is essential to sustain and accelerate the EV adoption momentum across the country.



Representational image

AN ASTROLOGER'S DAY



by **R. K. NARAYAN**

Punctually At Midday He Opened His Bag And Spread Out His professional equipment, which consisted of a dozen cowrie shells, a square piece of cloth with obscure mystic charts on it, a notebook, and a bundle of palmyra writing. His forehead was resplendent with sacred ash and vermillion, and his eyes sparkled with a sharp abnormal gleam which was really an outcome of a continual searching look for customers, but which his simple clients took to be a prophetic light and felt comforted. The power of his eyes was considerably enhanced by their position—placed as they were between the painted forehead and the dark whiskers which streamed down his cheeks: even a half-wit's eyes would sparkle in such a setting.

To crown the effect he wound a saffron-coloured turban around his head. This colour scheme never failed. People were attracted to him as bees are attracted to cosmos or dahlia stalks. He sat under the boughs of a spreading tamarind tree which flanked a path running through the Town Hall Park. It was a remarkable place in many ways: a surging crowd was always moving up and down this narrow road morning till night.

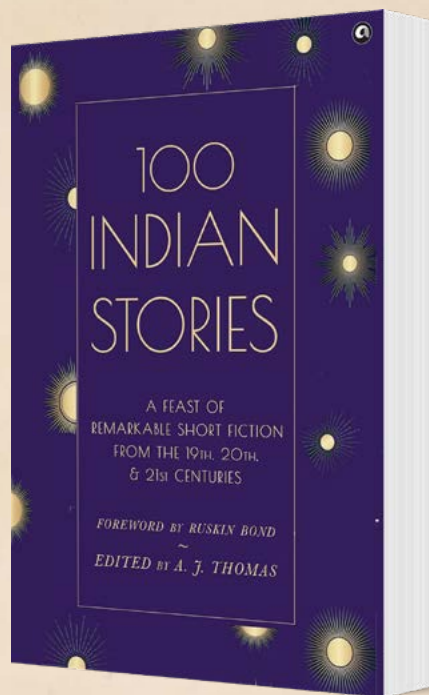
A variety of trades and occupations was represented all along its way: medicine-sellers, sellers of stolen hardware and junk, magicians and, above all, an auctioneer of cheap cloth, who created enough din all day to attract the whole town. Next to him in vociferousness came a vendor of fried groundnuts, who gave his ware a fancy name each day, calling it Bombay Ice Cream one day, and on the next Delhi Almond, and on the third Raja's Delicacy, and so on and so forth, and people flocked to him. A considerable portion of this crowd dallied before the astrologer too.

The astrologer transacted his business by the light of a flare which crackled and smoked up above the

groundnut heap nearby. Half the enchantment of the place was due to the fact that it did not have the benefit of municipal lighting. The place was lit up by shop lights. One or two had hissing gaslights, some had naked flares stuck on poles, some were lit up by old cycle lamps and one or two, like the astrologer's, managed without lights of their own. It was a bewildering criss-cross of light rays and moving shadows. This suited the astrologer very well, for the simple reason that he had not in the least intended to be an astrologer when he began life; and he knew no more of what was going to happen to others than he knew what was going to happen to himself next minute. He was as much a stranger to the stars as were his innocent customers.

Yet he said things which pleased and astonished everyone: that was more a matter of study, practice, and shrewd an astrologer's day 99 guesswork. All the same, it was as much an honest man's labour as any other, and he deserved the wages he carried home at the end of a day.

He had left his village without any previous thought or plan. If he had continued there he would have carried on the work of his forefathers—namely, tilling the land,



living, marrying, and ripening in his cornfield and ancestral home. But that was not to be. He had to leave home without telling anyone, and he could not rest till he left it behind a couple of hundred miles. To a villager it is a great deal, as if an ocean flowed between. He had a working analysis of mankind's troubles: marriage, money, and the tangles of human ties. Long practice had sharpened his perception.

Within five minutes he understood what was wrong. He charged three pies per question and never opened his mouth till the other had spoken for at least ten minutes, which provided him enough stuff for a dozen answers and advice. When he told the person before him, gazing at his palm, 'In many ways you are not getting the fullest results for your efforts,' nine out of ten were disposed to agree with him. Or he questioned: 'Is there any woman in your family, maybe even a distant relative, who is not well disposed towards you?' Or he gave an analysis of character: 'Most of your troubles are due to your nature. How can you be otherwise with Saturn where he is? You have an impetuous nature and a rough exterior.' This endeared him to their hearts immediately, for even the mildest of us loves to think that he has a forbidding exterior.

To be continued...



ECHOES IN INK

India's Manuscripts Being Reborn

From ancient palm leaves to AI-powered digital archives, Gyan Bharatam safeguards India's manuscripts.

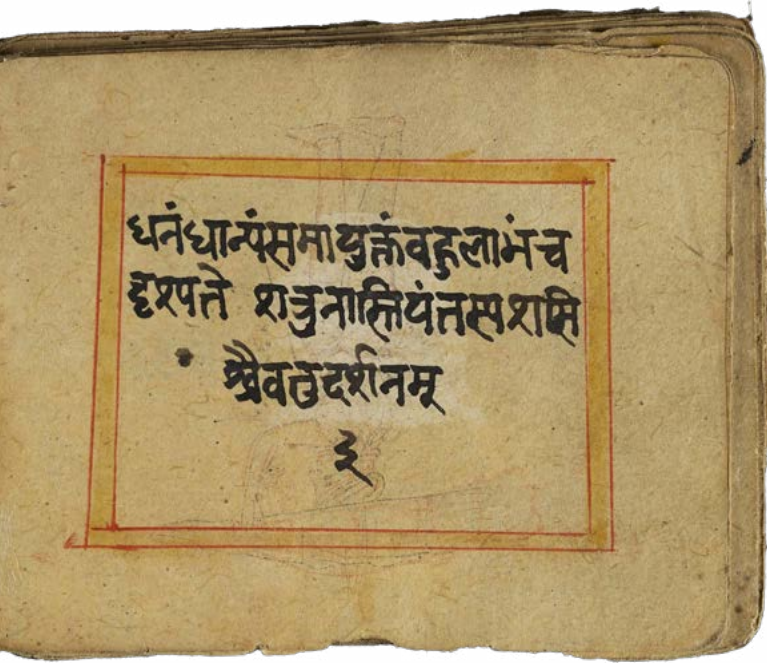
By Sudha Gopalakrishnan

"My back is stooped and my neck bent. The long, deep attention I gave to the manuscript has made my eyes weary. I have laboured greatly at making this copy. Please take care to protect it..." This colophon, found in numerous ancient Indian manuscripts, evokes the dedication and painstaking effort of the scribes who created them.

India's intellectual wealth is as diverse as its landscapes. Across centuries, observation, experimentation, and reflection gave rise to a multiplicity of thoughts, languages, lifestyles, and scientific, artistic, and philosophical insights. The classical and regional languages of India have preserved this collective imagination: Sanskrit forms the backbone of most Indo-European



So far, approximately **3.5 lakh** manuscripts, covering over **3.5 crore** folios, have been digitised.



languages; Pali carries Buddhist teachings; Urdu conveys the thoughts of saints as well as rich poetic traditions; Jain literature flourished in Prakrit. Northern Indian and Dravidian languages alike boast literary histories spanning over two millennia, creating a vibrant mosaic of expression.

This treasure of knowledge has survived in manuscripts, the oldest and possibly largest collection anywhere in the world. For centuries, scribes painstakingly copied texts, ensuring the wisdom of the ages reached future generations. These manuscripts, composed in diverse languages, are scattered across India, in libraries, temples, monasteries, mutts, and private collections, waiting to be rediscovered, catalogued, and preserved.

A National Mission

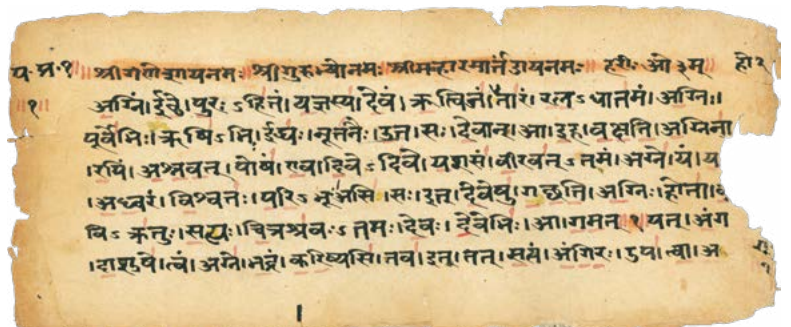
The government had earlier initiated the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM), which laid the groundwork for locating collections, creating databases, conserving vulnerable texts, training scholars, and promoting public awareness. Building on this legacy,

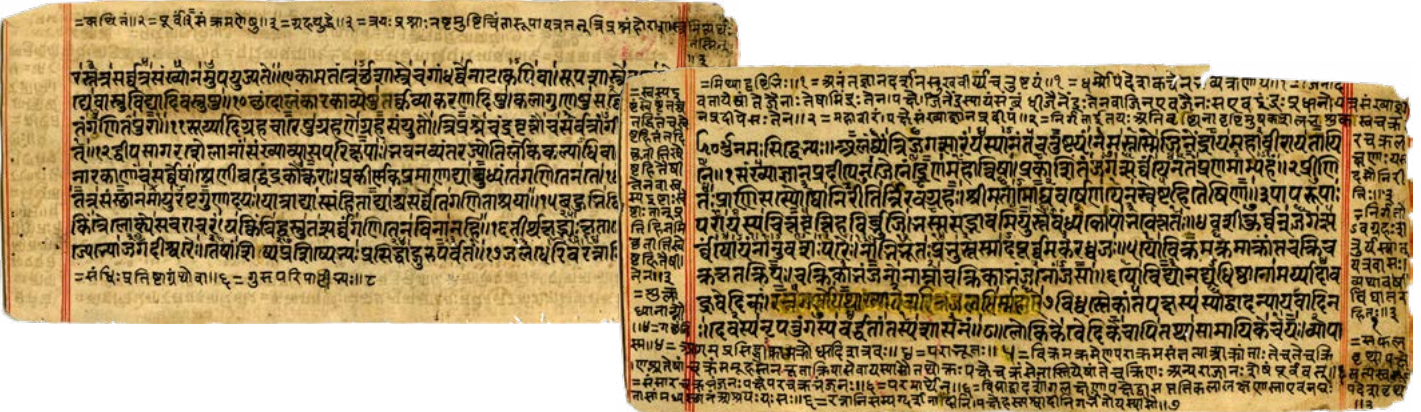
Gyan Bharatam now takes manuscript preservation to a national and international scale, aiming for structured, collaborative, and sustained engagement that revitalises India's textual heritage in the digital era. Launched during an international conference in New Delhi in 2025, the mission brought together scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to chart a roadmap for the future.

Eight expert working groups presented status reports and recommendations on critical areas: metadata standards and digital archiving, digitisation platforms and protocols, cultural diplomacy, and legal frameworks. These discussions were consolidated into the Delhi Declaration, which now guides the mission's objectives.

Core Collaboration

A recurring theme of Gyan Bharatam is collaboration; bridging gaps between libraries, universities, and institutions across borders to address uneven training and fragmented digital integration. Experts emphasise the need for exchange programmes sensitive to the histories, cultures, and needs of different regions, ensuring a truly inclusive and representative approach to manuscript preservation.





The Mission

- Aims to preserve over 1 crore ancient manuscripts and make them accessible online.
- ₹60 crore (US\$ 7.2–7.3 million approx.) budgetary allocation for the mission.
- Links authors, texts, and traditions using relational metadata.
- Prompts libraries, universities, and museums to work together.
- Encourages public participation and integration into education.

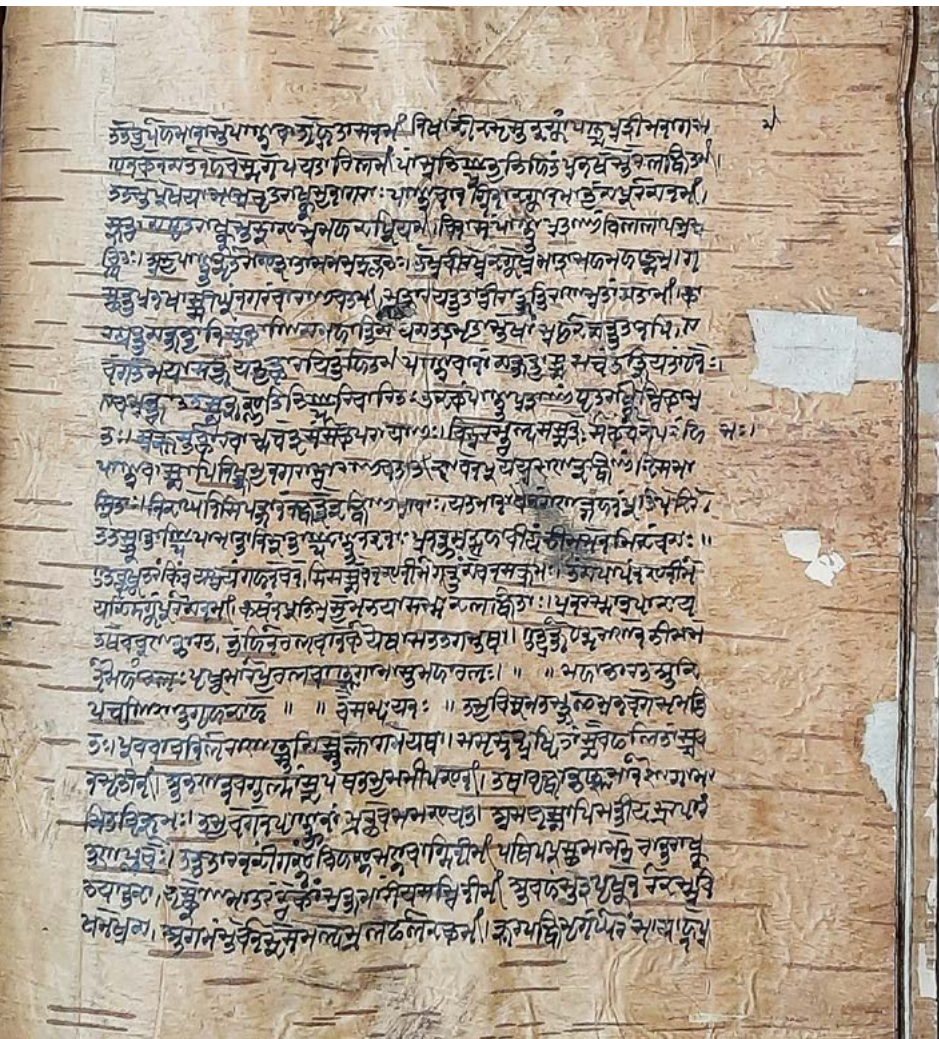


At the event, three topics addressed by the Working Groups—relational data, interoperability, and Prior Informed Consent from stakeholders, reflect both contemporary best practices and lessons from initiatives such as SAMHiTA: South Asian Manuscript Histories and Textual Archive (2023). Relational data, for instance, allows metadata to capture relationships between authors, disciples, works, and commentaries, providing context, enhancing discovery, and supporting AI-based research applications.

Modern Tools

Interoperability between online digital repositories is another cornerstone. Tools like the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF), widely adopted by international libraries since 2013, remain underused in India, with a few exceptions such as SAMHiTA and the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS). Gyan Bharatam envisions clusters of institutions sharing resources and expertise, leveraging IIIF to reduce storage and bandwidth demands, empower smaller libraries with a distinct digital identity, and facilitate crowd-sourced annotations.

These digital tools are not just technical solutions, they are enablers of cross-disciplinary research,



participation of Central and state governments, cultural and knowledge institutions in both public and private sectors, and engaged citizens and is an invitation to collective responsibility: to safeguard, study, and revitalise India's manuscripts for the generations to come.

Beyond conservation, it seeks to revive a living tradition. Manuscripts are not relics; they are repositories of ideas, experimentation, and cultural dialogue. Preserving them safeguards centuries of scientific, artistic, and philosophical inquiry. Digitisation and modern cataloguing techniques offer new possibilities for research, education, and international collaboration.

From the painstaking work of ancient scribes to the cutting-edge technologies enabling relational databases, AI-based text analysis, and interoperable digital repositories, the journey of India's manuscripts is a story of continuity, adaptation, and rediscovery.

With inputs from project manager, SAMHITA, Niharika Gupta



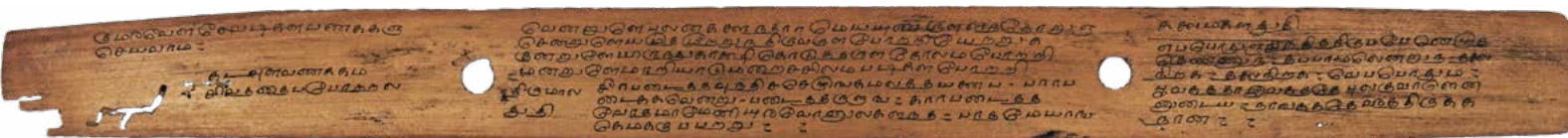
Sudha Gopalakrishnan, has been an Executive Director of the International Research Division, India International Centre Delhi. Heading the National Mission for Manuscripts, she is also the Executive Director of Sahapedia.

public engagement, and education. By integrating manuscript studies into secondary and university curricula, the mission aims to cultivate a people's movement, where India's textual heritage becomes accessible, relevant, and celebrated by all citizens.

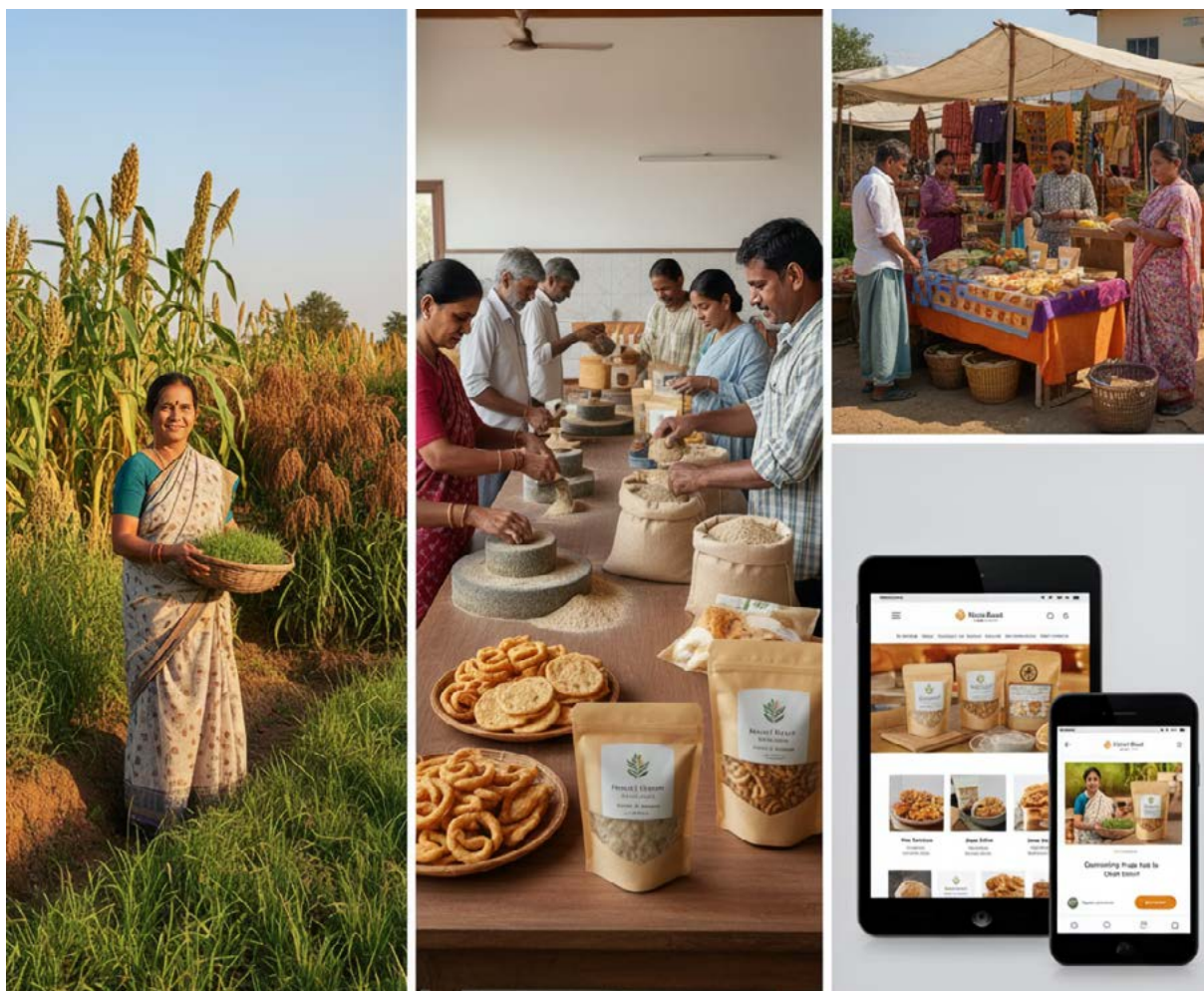
Why It Matters

Conceived in a mission-mode framework, it prioritises structured, time-bound action with clear milestones. It calls for the

The mission aims to cultivate a people's movement, where India's textual heritage becomes accessible, relevant, and celebrated by all citizens.



MILLET MATRIARCHS



From Bhadravadi to Bastar, tribal and rural women from across India are transforming millets into livelihoods, nutrition, and climate-smart solutions.

By Soumya Swaminathan

In India's evolving food landscape, a quiet revolution is underway. Women farmers, self-help groups (SHGs), and tribal entrepreneurs are reclaiming millets, once dismissed as "poor man's grains", as superfoods, climate-smart crops, and engines of rural empowerment. Through local

innovation, value addition, and alignment with national priorities like LiFE (Lifestyle for the Environment), Shree Anna (millets), Atmanirbhar Bharat, and women's entrepreneurship, rural and tribal women are not just cultivating millets; they are transforming lives.



Real Women, Real Change

In Telangana, the Bhadradri Millet Magic initiative has mobilised over 200 women farmers. They cultivate ragi, jowar, and kodo millet, process them into flours and snacks, and sell products through local haats and online platforms. Members earn ₹6,000–8,000 (US\$ 66.53–88.71 approx.) per month, while the collective sales of the SHG network crossed ₹50 lakh (US\$ 60,000–61,000 approx.) in 2023. In fact, India's Prime Minister had applauded their work in 'Mann ki Baat'.

In Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh, the Nyshu SHG has revived traditional millet cultivation and processing techniques. They prepare fermented millet beverages and nutritious snacks for local markets and tourism enterprises, earning around ₹4,000–6,000 (US\$ 48–72 approx.) monthly per member, while

strengthening food security in remote high-altitude villages.

In Bastar, Chhattisgarh, the Guda SHG runs a small-scale processing unit. Finger millet and little millet are cleaned, roasted, and packaged for urban markets, and the sale proceeds add to household income.

In Karnataka's Thirthahalli region, BibiFathima Swa Sahaya Sangha manages a community seed bank with over 100 millet varieties. Seeds are distributed to farmers and sold to agricultural universities, making these women financially independent and conserving biodiversity.

In Tamil Nadu's Nilgiri Hills, tribal SHGs cultivate finger and barnyard millet using traditional terrace farming. Through value-addition like flours, porridges, and biscuits, they earn a substantial amount per month, while improving local nutrition among children and the elderly.

LED BY WOMEN

Bhadradri, Telangana

Bhadradri Millet Magic: ragi, jowar, kodo; cultivation, processing, online/local sales. Collective sales ₹50 lakh (2023)

Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh

Nyshu SHG: Finger millet; fermented drinks & snacks

Bastar, Chhattisgarh

Guda SHG: Finger & little millet; processing and packaging

Thirthahalli, Karnataka

Bibi Fathima Swasahaya Sangha: Finger and little millet; seed bank and sales; ₹3 lakh/year; conserves 100+ varieties

Nilgiri Hills, Tamil Nadu

Tribal SHGs: Finger and barnyard millet; terrace cultivation and value addition





Millets & LiFE

These grassroot women-led enterprises embody LiFE. By choosing drought-resilient millets over water-intensive crops, processing them locally, and selling within communities, they reduce environmental impact, enhance nutrition, and strengthen resilience.

National initiatives promoting Shree Anna complement these efforts. Minimum Support Price schemes, integration into Mid-Day Meal and ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) programs, government training, and visibility through the International Year of Millets 2023 have provided structural support, enabling women-led SHGs to scale operations, access institutional buyers, and participate in sustainable value chains.

Path Ahead

Challenges remain: transportation costs, limited MSP awareness, insufficient processing infrastructure, access to finance, gender norms, and marketing beyond local markets. Many SHGs overcome these through federations, mobile processing units, seed banks, and cooperative marketing, ensuring collective resilience.



The story of women custodians of millets is one of resilience, knowledge, and modern enterprise. Through SHGs, seed banks, small-scale processing units, and market linkages, women are moving from subsistence to enterprise, and from marginality to agency. They are giving life to LiFE, advancing Shree Anna, and helping India achieve sustainable food systems, improved nutrition, climate resilience, and women's empowerment. These are scalable, replicable, and inspiring models for the future of rural India.



Soumya Swaminathan is a leading pediatrician and global expert in tuberculosis and HIV research, having 40+ years of experience. Currently Chairperson of MSSRF.



UN Secretary-General António Guterres (left) meets with PM Modi at museum inside the Statue of Unity, in Narmada Valley Kevadiya, Narmada, Gujarat, during a visit in 2022.



Within this mission, millets have emerged as a cornerstone of sustainable agriculture.

MISSION LiFE

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India launched Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for the Environment) at COP26 to embed climate-responsible lifestyles into everyday choices, aiming to mobilise one billion people by 2028. Food and diets occupy a central role in this initiative, linking nutrition, livelihoods, and climate resilience. Within this framework, millets, promoted as Shree Anna, have emerged as a cornerstone of sustainable agriculture and healthy diets. Once considered minor cereals, millets are now recognised for their ability to thrive in rain-fed, drought-prone regions, requiring minimal irrigation, emitting negligible methane, and providing rich nutrients such as iron, calcium, and fibre.

Decades of scientific research and grassroots advocacy, including efforts by ICAR, state universities, and the Millet

Network of India, have repositioned millets as climate-smart “nutri-cereals.” Women’s cooperatives and self-help groups play a central role in cultivation, processing, and enterprise development, complementing government programmes like the Public Distribution System, Mid-Day Meals, and ICDS. India’s leadership culminated in the UN declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets, boosting global recognition. Through Mission LiFE, the millet movement demonstrates how policy, local innovation, and citizen participation can converge to promote sustainable diets, strengthen rural livelihoods, enhance nutrition, and advance climate resilience, showcasing a model where traditional grains, women’s agency, and environmental stewardship align for global well-being.

DIGITAL PLAYBOOK



World Is Borrowing From India

From Aadhaar to UPI, India's Digital Public Infrastructure is redefining governance, inclusion, and innovation, offering a transparent, scalable model for the world.

By Swapnil Karkare

On October 9, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India's tech systems are simple, easy to use, and accessible to everyone across the country.

From the 2011 vision of biometric identity for every citizen to building one of the world's strongest payment systems, India's DPI has gained global attention. At the heart of it is India Stack. "India Stack is not merely a story of India's success, but a beacon of hope for the world, especially for countries in the Global South," PM Modi said.

Understanding UPI

PM Modi highlighted that half of the world's real-time digital transactions happen in India, powered by UPI, the backbone of India Stack. In FY25 alone, UPI processed over 185 billion transactions worth ₹261 lakh crore, accounting for more than 80 per cent of domestic payments.

UPI Lite enables offline payments, and UPI123Pay helps people transact using feature phones. With banks now lending through UPI apps, a new wave of financial inclusion is emerging. UPI has become a part of everyday life, used by street vendors, retail chains, online stores, and investors applying for IPOs. Moreover, UPI has gone

WHAT IS INDIA STACK?

It isn't any software, app or website. It's an open-source system that lets governments, businesses, and developers build services on it. It consists of four foundational layers:

1. PRESENCE-LESS LAYER

Enables universal digital identity through Aadhaar – the world's largest biometric ID system. It allows citizens to access services remotely.

2. PAPERLESS LAYER

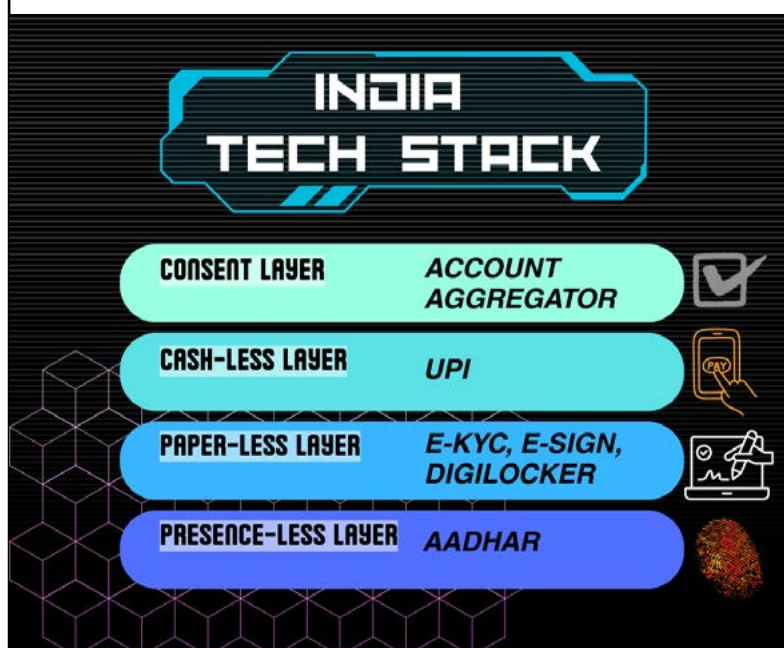
Digitises records via e-KYC and e-signature. These tools have sharply reduced paperwork across banking, education, and governance.

3. CASHLESS LAYER

Powers interoperable digital payments led by UPI (Unified Payments Interface), enabling peer-to-peer transfers, merchant payments, and even IPO (Initial Public Offering) subscriptions. It has made cashless transactions affordable and universal.

4. CONSENT LAYER

Ensures privacy-enabled data sharing through the RBI's Account Aggregator framework, giving users control over how their financial data is shared.



 **India Stack is not merely a story of India's success, but a beacon of hope for the world, especially for countries in the Global South."**

Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister of India

global, connecting with Singapore, the UAE, Nepal, Bhutan, and France.

DPI in Action

In addition to UPI, India Stack powers a range of platforms that are reshaping governance and service delivery:

Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT): India's DBT system has digitally transferred over ₹46.5 lakh crore (US\$ 511.5 billion approx.) worth of subsidies across 327 schemes. By eliminating middlemen, it has saved ₹4.31 lakh crore (US\$ 51.9 billion approx.) in leakages. Beneficiary coverage has surged 16-fold, from ₹11 crore (US\$ 1.32 million approx.) in 2014 to ₹176 crore (US\$ 21.2 million approx.) in 2024.

ONDC: Open Network for Digital Commerce helps small shops and services sell online without relying on big e-commerce platforms. It makes e-commerce open, fair, and



PM Modi at the launch of RuPay, Bhim App and UPI enabled remittance App by State Bank of India, Singapore, in 2018

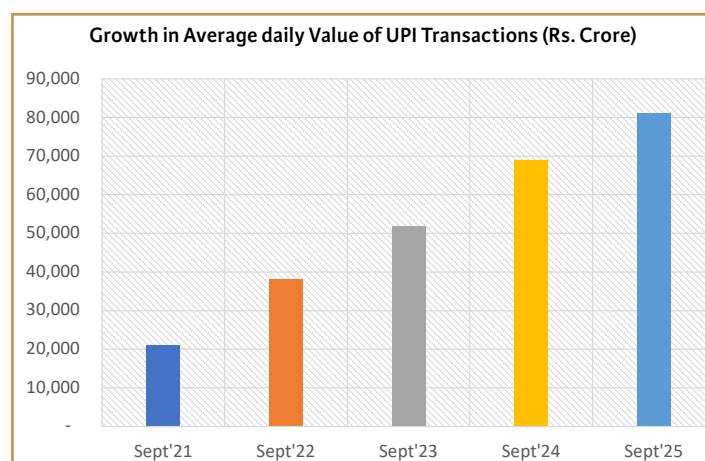
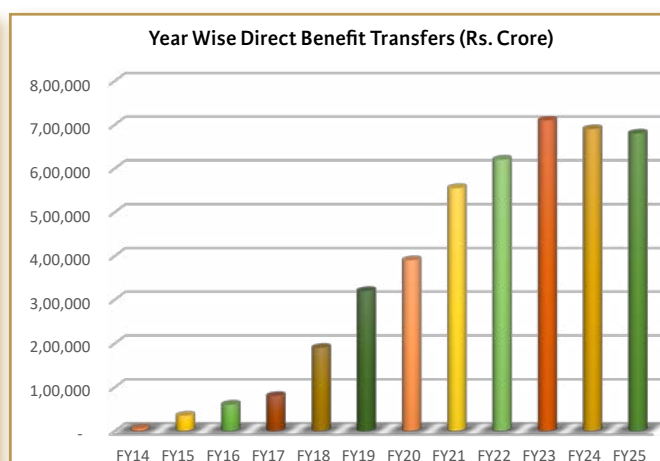
accessible to all. It's live in over 600 cities, with over 7.6 lakh sellers and over 16 million orders across sectors like food, fashion, and mobility.

UMANG: Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance provides access to over 1,500 services from more than 50 departments. Citizens

can apply for passports, pay utility bills, check EPFO balance, and view health records, all through a single app. Over 9 crore users are registered, with total transactions in 2024 reaching ₹129.84 crore (US\$ 15.64 million approx.)

Jeevan Pramaan: It is a digital life certificate system based on biometric

UPI has become a part of everyday life, used by street vendors, retail chains, online stores, and investors applying for IPOs. Moreover, UPI has gone global, connecting with Singapore, the UAE, Nepal, Bhutan, and France.



authentication that has issued over 1.6 crore certificates. It has helped pensioners avoid physical visits to banks or government offices.

e-NAM: National Agriculture Market connects over 1,300 wholesale markets, allowing farmers to sell produce online and access better prices. Over 1.8 crore farmers and traders are registered, and the platform has handled trade over ₹4 lakh crore (US\$ 48.2 billion approx.) by 2024.

DigiLocker: It stores and provides access to digital versions of official documents, including driving licenses, Aadhaar cards, and PAN cards, eliminating the need for physical copies. Over 59 crore users and 835 crore documents have been issued.

Aadhaar eKYC & eSign: Aadhaar-based eKYC has reduced onboarding costs from ₹23 to ₹0.15 per customer for any financial institution. eSign allows secure digital signatures for contracts, loans, and applications.

Account Aggregator (AA): Operating across 10 platforms, AA enables secure data sharing within financial services, empowering users to access loans, insurance, and investments through consent-driven data portability.

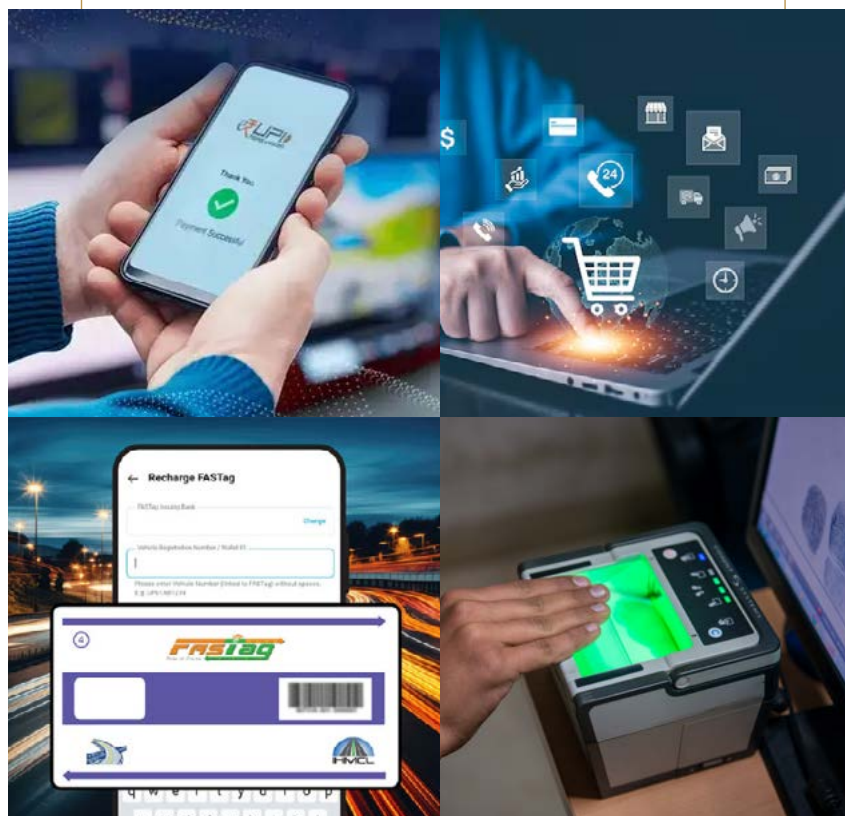
Global Public Good

India's digital model is now seen as a global public good, open, affordable, and inclusive. It's considered more open than the US' market-led model, simpler than Europe's regulation-heavy framework, and more transparent than China's state-controlled setup.

The Road Ahead

Even with its rapid progress, India's digital journey still faces a few hurdles. Financial literacy and internet penetration, though

INDIA'S DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE



steadily improving, remain uneven across regions. Ongoing efforts to expand infrastructure and boost digital awareness aim to bridge this divide.

Recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) bring new risks, but also new possibilities. For instance, AI is already detecting fraud in UPI transactions in real time. Looking ahead, PM Modi said that efforts are underway to deliver the benefits of AI to every district and in every language. By driving inclusive development both within the country and across borders, India Stack has emerged as one of the most impactful models of digital public infrastructure in the world.



Swapnil Karkare is known for bridging economics and storytelling. A Chartered Accountant and economist by profession, he analyses finance and policy through research, writing, and podcasts.

FROM ROCKETS TO E-PLANES



India is redefining the future of flight and space from 3D-printed rockets to electric aircraft, fast-tracking space access, and transforming how we move through the skies. At the forefront of this revolution is Prof. Satya Chakravarthy of IIT Madras, shaping the nation's vision in aerospace and aviation.

From 3D-printed rockets to visionary ideas of ubiquitous flying through e-planes and VTOL aircraft, Prof. Satyanarayanan Chakravarthy embodies a rare combination of technical mastery, practical ingenuity, and forward-looking vision, making him a defining figure in India's ascent as a spacefaring nation.

On May 30, 2024, India marked a historic milestone in its space journey with the launch of its first fully 3D-printed rocket, an achievement that captured the imagination of scientists, engineers, and space enthusiasts across the globe. For decades, India has steadily carved a place for itself in the global space arena—from the pioneering efforts of ISRO in satellite launches to the ambitious Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme. Yet this launch represented something profoundly

new; a technological leap that fused cutting-edge additive manufacturing with indigenous propulsion systems, reducing thousands of components into a single, seamless structure while maintaining the precision required to breach the skies.

At the heart of this achievement is Prof. Chakravarthy of IIT Madras, often called India's new 'Space Man', whose vision, expertise, and relentless drive have helped turn what once seemed futuristic into a tangible reality. "I think pride comes first, the fact that this achievement is happening entirely in India. But its significance goes beyond national boundaries; it's a global milestone," he says.

He further adds, "successfully launching fully 3D-printed rockets shows the world that we're capable of pushing the frontiers of aerospace technology. Everyone is watching, and we're contributing to advancing the global state of the art."

Early Days

Prof. Chakravarthy's fascination with aerospace began in his youth. "My initial interest in aerospace came from the fact that my JEE rank allowed me to choose it as a branch," he recalls. "At that time, aerospace really stood out



Prof. Satyanarayanan Chakravarthy is the Co-Founder and Technical Lead of The ePlane Company and Professor of Aerospace Engineering at IIT Madras

to me. The other options seemed more about memorising, whereas aerospace felt more physics-oriented, which I had always enjoyed in high school." Once he took the branch, his curiosity only deepened. Known for actively engaging in class discussions, he quickly found himself surrounded by like-minded classmates, and together they explored, debated, and immersed themselves in the principles and challenges of flight.

"India continues to soar higher in the world of space! Powered by India's youth, our space programme is getting more advanced and impactful."

Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister of India





The prototype of an e-plane

At IIT Madras

Through it all, IIT Madras remains a pivotal partner in India's space ambitions. The National Centre for Combustion R&D under Prof. Chakravarthy has contributed to spray diagnostics, combustion instabilities, and acoustic suppression, guiding numerous PhD students along the way. "Academia allows us to combine insights from different industries to create novel solutions," he notes, pointing to concepts like mobile launchers and rapid deployment systems that were previously confined to defence applications.

This early fascination laid the foundation for a career that seamlessly blends rigorous academic training with hands-on innovation. After pursuing specialised training at Georgia Institute of Technology, Prof. Chakravarthy returned to India, applying his knowledge to real-world aerospace challenges. His decade-long work in combustion, including contributions to the GSLV Mark 3's acoustic suppression, not only honed his technical expertise but also laid the groundwork for IIT Madras' pioneering indigenous rocket systems.

3D Innovation

The technological breakthroughs in 3D printing have particularly energised him. "It drastically reduces part counts. For example, in one of our rockets, nearly a thousand parts and about 3,000 welds were eliminated in a single step. What normally takes over a month to assemble with high precision can now be completed in just a few days, often with equal or better accuracy," he says. By owning and operating their own 3D printers, his team is now scaling production capabilities to meet launch-on-demand requirements, a transformative capability for satellite deployment and national defense. "Launch-on-demand allows strategic deployment when



Image: <https://x.com/narendramodi>

Beyond rockets, Prof. Chakravarthy is also exploring the future of electric aircraft, which focuses on developing e-planes and VTOL solutions for India's rapidly evolving aviation landscape.

necessary, positioning satellites precisely where they're needed," he explains. "It also enables building satellite constellations, upgrading or replacing satellites, and optimising resources. All of this becomes feasible with 3D-printed rockets."

Electric Planes

Beyond rockets, Prof. Satya Chakravarthy is also exploring the future of electric aircraft through his company, which develops e-planes and VTOL (vertical takeoff and landing) solutions for India's rapidly evolving aviation landscape. He sees this as a transformative opportunity, envisioning what he calls "ubiquitous flying"—a future where people think about flying rather than driving for daily commutes, city-to-city travel, or even direct trips from home. In the near term, electric aircraft and VTOLs will likely serve intra-city routes, while hybrid aircraft using local runways could make short-haul city-to-city travel feasible, efficiently connecting multiple urban centres.

Next Frontier

Looking forward, Prof. Chakravarthy sees vast potential in emerging technologies, including digital twins, AI, sustainable fuels, reusable rockets, and even sea-based launches. Prof. believes that "ISRO has set ambitious milestones. Once we've reached space with Indian astronauts, we can aim for the Moon and perhaps even Mars."

THE SACRED WALLS



OF MITHILA

During festivals, Mithila's walls come alive with Bhittichitra, vibrant murals that tell tales of gods, folklore, and daily life, a centuries-old tradition blending devotion, storytelling, and artistic heritage.

By Hema Narayanan

Traditionally, **Bhittichitra** is created in three rooms in a home: the deity's room, newlyweds' room, and front room.



Diwali, the festival of lights, is not just about diyas and fireworks; it is also a celebration of life, memory, and creativity. In the villages of Bihar's Mithila region, this celebration extends to the very walls of homes. Mud walls shimmer with sacred stories of gods, lovers, and heroic ancestors, brought to life through Bhittichitra, the traditional wall paintings that form the foundation of what the world knows as Madhubani art. During Diwali, homes become living canvases, where devotion, storytelling, and artistic expression merge in vibrant harmony.

What is Bhittichitra?

The term Bhittichitra originated from Sanskrit, where bhatti means wall and chitra means painting. Across India, from Odisha and Chhattisgarh to Bihar and Rajasthan, similar wall murals have been practised under the same name. More than decoration, Bhittichitra is a storytelling medium, a way for communities, particularly women, to record myths, everyday experiences, and prayers in their homes. While scholars preserved knowledge through manuscripts, Bhittichitra and other mural traditions, including Kalamkari, Pattachitra, and

Kavad, captured the experiences of ordinary people, keeping local folklore and generational wisdom alive. The mud walls of homes thus transform into repositories of memory, belief, and artistry, where mythology and daily life coexist.

Themes & Motifs

Bhittichitra often depicts scenes from Hindu epics, folklore, and deities or heroic ancestors. Paintings are created using natural pigments — turmeric, soot, rice paste, and indigo, applied with twigs, fingers, or matchsticks. Each motif is both symbolic and



Bhittichitra came to wider attention in 1934, after an earthquake in Bihar exposed these painted walls.



decorative — a language of devotion and storytelling passed from mother to daughter over centuries.

Three household spaces were traditionally considered sacred for painting — the room of the family deity, the *Kohbar Ghar* (newlywed's chamber) and the reception room.

Occasions such as weddings, upanayana (thread ceremony), births, and vratas (ritual fasts) were moments when walls came alive, only to be washed clean for the next celebration. Each painting was ephemeral — meant to bless the family, protect the home, and narrate stories of faith and valour. Complementing Bhittichitra were Aripana floor patterns, created with rice paste.

**Bihar (Mithila)
- Bhittichitra /
Madhubani:**

Mud walls painted with natural pigments; motifs from mythology, nature, and daily life.

**Odisha -
Bhittichitra:**

Folk and religious scenes painted on walls; ritual significance during festivals.

**Chhattisgarh -
Bhittichitra:**

Geometric and floral patterns alongside epic narratives on village walls.

**Rajasthan -
Bhittichitra / Wall
murals:**

Local folklore, festivals, and religious iconography depicted in courtyards.

**West Bengal - Bitti
/ Aripana:**

Ritual floor and wall patterns in household shrines, ephemeral and recreated during festivals.

**New Recognition**

Though practised quietly within homes for centuries, Bhittichitra came to wider attention in 1934, after an earthquake in Bihar exposed these painted walls. A British official documented them, and by the mid-20th century, the tradition gained global recognition as Madhubani painting. Yet, in Mithila's villages, the practice remains deeply local, tied to festivals, family rituals, and community life.

Today, Bhittichitra is experiencing a revival, bridging tradition and modernity. Many Mithila homes continue to repaint walls during festivals, while artists now create versions on paper, canvas, and textiles for galleries and global markets. Men have joined the tradition to meet growing demand, and workshops teach

younger generations, ensuring that the art remains living, evolving, and accessible. Festivals like Diwali continue to provide the perfect occasion for this revival, keeping the spirit of community, devotion, and creativity alive.

Visitors to Mithila during festivals witness an open-air gallery, walls glowing in vermilion, turmeric, and indigo, narrating timeless stories of gods, heroes, and local life. Bhittichitra is not merely an art form; it is a living chronicle of faith, heritage, and human expression.



Hema Narayanan is a professional photographer, writer, and traveller. A graduate from the New York Institute of Photography, she has many photographic accolades and awards to her credit.



SCULPTING HISTORY

In the deserts of Rajasthan, where generations have sculpted gods, myths, and memories into stone, a young boy once watched his father bring divinity to life. For Naresh Kumar Kumawat, Director of Matu Ram Art Center, growing up amidst this environment was more than just an

education — it was an initiation into a centuries-old artistic lineage. Today, his works, ranging from the towering 369-foot Statue of Belief in Nathdwara to the intricate Samudra Manthan mural at India's new Parliament building, speak boundaries for him in this modern era.



Inheriting a Legacy

Belonging to a three-generation legacy of sculptors, Kumawat absorbed the rhythms of art early on. His father, the revered sculptor Matu Ram ji, specialised in divine idol installations, grounding his son in the sacred discipline of sculpture-making. The turning point came when he assisted his father in creating a 121-foot statue of Lord Shiva — an experience through which he first encountered fine arts as a formal discipline.

Turning Stones Into Wonders

India's civilisational richness often finds its voice in myths and epics. Kumawat interprets these stories not as relics of the past but as moral compasses for the future.

His magnum opus — a 369-foot-tall Statue of Belief in Nathdwara, one of the world's tallest statues of Lord Shiva — took years of engineering,



artistic detailing, and spiritual devotion. For him, such works go beyond scale; they embody India's enduring spiritual ethos and moral value systems.

The High of Monumentality

Conceptualisation involves not only artistic imagination but also mathematical precision. Details like facial expression, posture, and proportion must be determined before any material is touched. Using 3D modelling software, AI-assisted designs, and robotic moulding technologies, his team

breaks down large visions into smaller, executable steps. Casting methods like the ancient Panchdhatu alloy technique (a traditional mix of five metals) integrate heritage into the heart of innovation.

Inspiring Generations Ahead

In an age where skyscrapers often define ambition, Kumawat shows that monuments can be more than just structures; they can be carriers of memory, identity, and diplomacy. From Nathdwara to New Delhi, and from India to over 30 countries, his works embody the fusion of tradition and technology, devotion and design.

Further, he even claims, "I do not see modern techniques and heritage as polar opposites," he insists. To him, tools like robotics and AI don't replace heritage — they amplify it. By marrying technology with ancestral wisdom, he ensures that his works remain timeless yet contemporary."

How Her Boundaries Have Bowled Over A Generation

A full-page photograph of Harmanpreet Kaur, an Indian women's cricket player, in action. She is wearing a blue Indian national team jersey with orange accents, blue protective leg pads, and a blue helmet. She is captured in a powerful batting stance, with her right arm raised high holding a wooden cricket bat. The background is a blurred stadium filled with spectators. In the foreground, the stumps are visible, with the text 'Vitality Health Insurance' printed vertically on the bails.

From Moga's dusty fields to global arenas, Harmanpreet Kaur's fearless journey embodies resilience, equality, and the power to inspire millions.

By Robin Bose

From captaining India to their first-ever ICC Women's Cricket World Cup title in November, 2025, to becoming the first Indian woman with a T20I century and over 3,000 T20I runs, Arjuna Awardee, and Forbes "30 Under 30," Harmanpreet Kaur's journey from the narrow lanes of Moga to global cricketing arenas is not just a record of milestones but a testament to grit, courage, and an unwavering spirit. She embodies the essence of athletes who rise against all odds, steeled by circumstance, determination, and relentless effort, proving that greatness is not inherited but forged. For countless young girls and boys dreaming big, Kaur's story is a beacon of inspiration, showing that with passion, perseverance, and belief, barriers can be broken, ceilings shattered, and generations moved to dare, achieve, and redefine what is possible.

Pressure a privilege

Kaur grew up telling herself that obstacles and pressure were a privilege, and the best way to trump them was to thrive in this space.

The process hasn't stopped, and with each passing day, she appears to get better at it. The latest case in point is the thumping verdict against Pakistan in the recent Women's World Cup.

During the match, the onus to deliver was on the leader, and Kaur rose to have the nation in raptures by ensuring David did not get the better of Goliath this time.

It was a team effort, but it needed a shepherd to put the team's resources to best use, and, as has often been the case since she took over the reins, Kaur ensured the job got done. Like her personal journey on the cricket



field, it was a barrier that had to be crossed, and the cricketer is known to thrive when the going isn't easy.

Lone ranger

Kaur has been focused on dismantling roadblocks since it became clear that her future lay in this domain. The roadmap was chalked out, but the harsh reality remained. Not a day passed without the reminder that her 22-yard pitch was strewn with daunting uncertainties; the primary being playing the lone ranger.

Growing up in the semi-urban setting of Moga, Punjab, Kaur had little to fall back on save for some

INSPIRATION

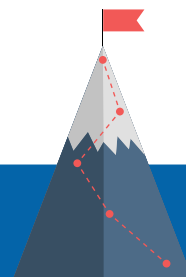
strands of support. Yet, she carried a burning desire to chart a path that, perhaps unknown to her then, would become a beacon of hope for millions in a country bursting at the seams with aspiration.

The journey has been long and arduous, but on hindsight, the 36-year-old Indian captain can be immensely proud of the boxes she has ticked along the way. Not just on the cricket field, but the impact of those achievements on women within the sporting realm, and outside it.

Career-defining brush

With its unparalleled legacy in hockey and other field disciplines, Punjab wasn't the ideal turf for Kaur and her dream of earning a place among cricket's greats. On top of that, her family faced societal pressure for allowing their daughter to play cricket — and to compete against boys in the absence of suitable competition.

What saw her through in building resolve was the support from her father Harmandar Singh Bhullar — he understood, given his grounding in volleyball and basketball — and coach Kamaldeesh Singh



Career Milestones

In eight innings of the nine matches at the 2025 ICC Women's World Cup, Harmanpreet Kaur scored.

260

runs at an average of 32.70. With a strike rate of 89.04, she struck 30 fours and 2 sixes.

In the final against **South Africa**, **Harmanpreet** scored a slow **20 off 29 balls**.

Her World Cup highlight was the **88-ball 89 defining innings**.

First Indian woman to score more than **3,000** T20I runs.

Won Player of the Tournament for the 2021-22 **Women's Big Bash League** (WBBL) season, becoming the **first non-Australian** or **New Zealander** to do so.

Received the **Arjuna Award** in 2017.

Named in Forbes' **"30 Under 30"** list in 2018.

Captained India to victory in the 2016 T20 International series in Australia.



The journey has been long and arduous, but on hindsight, the 36-year-old Indian captain can be immensely proud of the boxes she has ticked.



Sodhi. As the results started to come in and Kaur answered the naysayers with piles of runs and her leadership qualities, her mother, Satwinder Kaur, became a pillar of strength with her cheers from the sidelines.

This gender match-up honed Kaur's ability to clear long boundaries with ease, and the benefits have contributed to many crucial wins as she topped the charts across formats. More importantly, this unique experience left her with a realisation that went on to change the face of women's cricket in the country. As she stepped up against the boys in her formative years, the lessons she

learned along the way became the fuel for her sustained campaign against gender bias in the sport.

United by a dream

Women's cricket still has ground to cover, but the wheels of change have ensured that better times are in the offing. The Women's World Cup has given us a glimpse of that progress. The TV promos showing fans in jerseys of women's team members, streaming into millions of Indian households, aren't just a smart marketing ploy. There's a layered message here: whether it's 'Virat' or 'Harmanpreet,' gender counts for little — what matters is an unfiltered passion for the sport.



Robin Bose is a senior sports journalist who has reported for some of India's leading news outlets. In his free time, he enjoys playing golf.

Whispers Of A SUSTAINABLE LAND



From Himalayan villages to coastal backwaters, India offers mindful travel experiences where culture, nature, and sustainability coexist in harmony.

By Manjulika Pramod



Diskit monastery (left) and Maitreya Statue at Nubra valley, Ladakh



As one of the world's oldest civilisations, India is a land where heritage meets harmony, and where art, science, and spirituality coexist amid diverse landscapes and living traditions. Beyond its bustling icons lies a quieter India, where sustainability is a way of life and mindful living a legacy. From the lofty Himalayas to the salt flats of the Rann, and from the tea gardens of the Western Ghats to the tranquil backwaters, India invites you to journey slow, where travel is not about distance, but depth.

The Himalayas

In Takmachik, Ladakh's first certified organic village, sustainability is a way of life. Here, villagers farm organically, share water mindfully, and serve food that tells stories of the land. Ancient wisdom and modern innovation work hand in hand, from traditional water harvesting and meltwater management to solar heating, ice stupas, and micro-hydropower. Across villages like Changthang and Sham Valley, this spirit of conservation and community-led living makes Ladakh a beacon of regenerative tourism, where harmony



Map not to scale

HIGHLIGHTS



HOW TO REACH

Travel to Ladakh by flight, jeep, or bike through breathtaking Himalayan mountain passes



EXPERIENCES

Ladakh's first certified organic village Takmachik is a must visit for its sustainable way of life



SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Residents of Khonoma, Nagaland, deemed India's first Green Village, engage in sustainable agriculture, to protect the environment and support themselves.



SAVOURING PALATES

When in Assam's Majuli, you can't miss its unique, leaf-baked dishes, including fish and chicken cooked in banana leaves (like *pomnan fish*) and rice cooked in *tora pat* leaves.



WHAT TO BUY

While strolling the markets of Takmachik, you can shop for locally made items like Himalayan pashmina shawls, Tibetan handicrafts, and *thangka* paintings.

with nature is the true measure of progress.

As you descend from Ladakh into Himachal's Spiti Valley, the landscape transforms — villages cling to cliffs, monasteries crown the mountains, and silence speaks through the wind. Spiti isn't just a destination; it's an invitation to slow down and breathe in the untamed spirit of the Himalayas. Its fragile ecosystem, ancient monasteries, and snow-wrapped serenity encourage travellers to tread lightly.

From Kaza to Kibber, Tabo to Langza, and Dhankar to Demul, Spiti's timeless villages

reveal a rhythm of life rooted in balance. While snow leopards, starlit skies, and high-altitude treks capture the imagination, it's the warmth of family-run homestays, the strength of community initiatives, and the valley's unhurried pace that embody the essence of sustainable travel.

Northeast India too is fast emerging as a benchmark for responsible tourism. In West Sikkim, Uttarey is a hidden gem of emerald forests, alpine meadows, and rhododendron blooms. Beyond being a gateway to treks in the Singalila Range and Mount (Kanchenjunga), it offers virgin

From the lofty Himalayas to the salt flats of the Rann, and from the tea gardens of the Western Ghats to the tranquil backwaters, India invites you to journey, where travel is not about distance, but depth.





DO YOU KNOW?

Just 20 km from Kohima, Khonoma in Nagaland stands as India's first Green Village. Here, zero-waste living, community-led forest protection, and conservation are a way of life.

forests, alpine flora, and breathtaking Himalayan vistas. Homestays run by Limboo, Sherpa, and Lepcha families provide an authentic and sustainable experience for slow travellers.

Majuli in Assam, the world's largest inhabited river island, offers a journey as enchanting as the destination. A boat ride across Brahmaputra River leads to bamboo houses, home-cooked meals, and immersive village walks. Community-led conservation and cultural traditions thrive here, with weaving, mask-making, and folk music, captivating visitors. Nature lovers can explore floating farms, spot migratory birds, cycle through villages, or wander the lush Molai forest, famously nurtured by environmentalist Jadav Payeng. Just 20 km from Kohima, Khonoma in Nagaland stands as India's first Green Village. Here, zero-waste living, community-led forest

protection, and conservation are a way of life. Hunting and tree-felling are banned, and the Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary preserves the forests. The entire village participates in homestays, guiding visitors, and showcasing local culture, making it a living example of sustainable tourism in action.

Eco ideas

In western India, villages are setting inspiring examples of sustainability and renewable energy. Dhaj in Gujarat leads as the state's first eco-village with solar lighting, rainwater harvesting, biogas units, and women-led cooperatives, while Modhera moves toward becoming the region's first fully solar-powered village, celebrating eco-consciousness with its carbon-neutral "Jal Utsav." In Kutch, villages like Hodka and Dhordo near the Banni



River island Majuli, Assam

grasslands blend cultural immersion with eco-tourism, showcasing solar energy, handicrafts, and sustainable homestays.

Once plagued by poverty, Ralegan Siddhi in Maharashtra has transformed into a model of environmental sustainability. Through integrated water management, solar power, biogas, soil-conservation terracing, tree planting, and wind energy, it thrives as a concept village, while agro-tourism in Nashik, home to several vineyards, drives biodiversity and community growth.

Unique Experiences

The South of India is rich with sustainable travel experiences. In the misty Western Ghats, Kodagu in Karnataka stands out as a model for responsible tourism, where Kodava homestays, organic coffee estates, and community-led eco-initiatives



Dhaj in Gujarat leads as the state's first eco-village with solar lighting, rainwater harvesting, biogas units, and women-led cooperatives.

allow visitors to immerse themselves in local traditions. Here, every trail and coffee grove invites travellers to connect deeply with nature while practising mindful travel.

Kerala offers countless reasons to explore its eco-conscious villages and towns. From solar-powered houseboats in Alleppey to Thenmala, India's first planned eco-tourism project launched in 2001, the state demonstrates how tourism can balance recreation, conservation, and livelihood. Nature trails, butterfly gardens, and adventure zones encourage slow travel, making every journey an immersive experience.





Brahmagiri mountains of Trimbakeshwar, Maharashtra



Image: Coorg



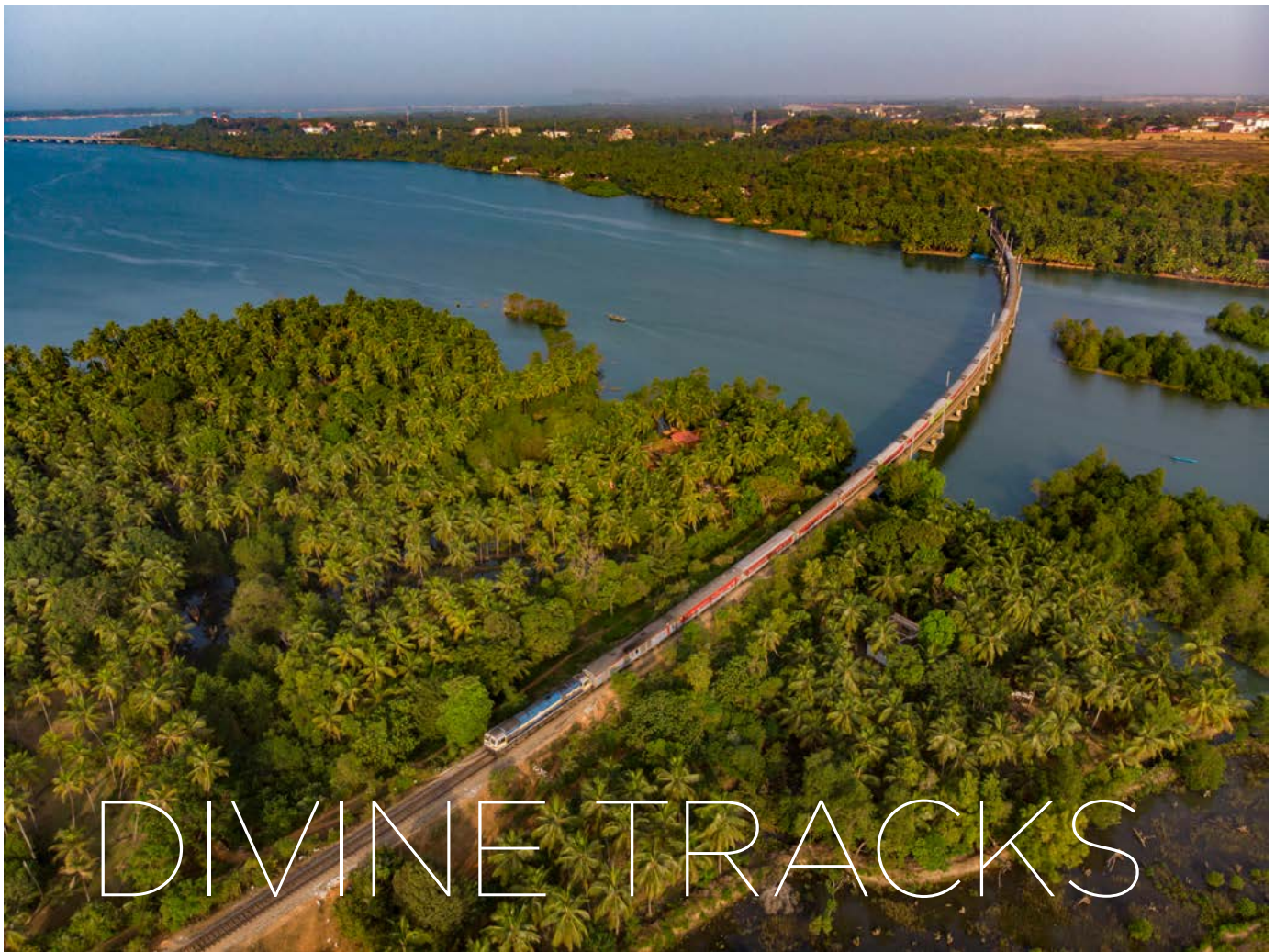
From solar-powered houseboats in Alleppey to Thenmala, India's first planned eco-tourism project was launched in 2001.

Tamil Nadu is also embracing eco-tourism with the upcoming 125-acre hub near Ramar Padham in Rameswaram at Kallangadu. Centred on local participation, this initiative will feature well-designed trekking trails and community involvement, highlighting how sustainable tourism can empower local communities while preserving the natural and cultural landscape.

Through eco-villages, renewable energy initiatives, and community-led tourism, every journey in India becomes a chance to connect deeply with culture and conserve the environment.



Manjulika Pramod An avid traveller; she narrates compelling stories, making people pack their bags. Manjuika regularly contributes globally in esteemed publications.



The Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train weaves together India's ancient devotion and modern travel, linking seven revered Jyotirlingas through a single spiritual route.

Jyotirlingas are unique temples of Lord Shiva and are among the most significant places of pilgrimage for Hindus.

In the last decade, India's sacred geography has not just been visited — it has been rediscovered. What was once a scattered map of pilgrim sites has transformed into a living.

A spiritual awakening reshaped the country's cultural journey. Kedarnath, once scarred by tragedy, rose like a phoenix with over 16 lakh pilgrims welcomed in 2024. Same spirit culminated in Mahakumbh 2025 at Prayagraj attracting over 65 crore pilgrims.

The Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla in January 2024 at the sacred Ayodhya welcomed over 11 crore devotees within just six months.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, tourism was elevated into a national mission to rediscover the sacred self. His mantra—"Wed in India,

Visit India, Invest in India"—reframed tourism into a cultural calling.

India's 7 Jyotirlingas Trip On the Way

Next on the route is the Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train, offering a 13-day spiritual journey across India's seven Jyotirlingas. Commencing the journey from Rishikesh railway station, IRCTC is Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga, Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga, Somnath Jyotirlinga, Dwarkadhish temple & Nageshwar Jyotirlinga, Triambkeshwar Jyotirlinga, Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga, Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga.

This is a new Bharat, where tourism is not seasonal but civilisational. It is where darshan meets development, where pilgrimage meets progress, and where festivals meet infrastructure.

Intriguing ARCADE

All classical dance forms are based on the Natya Shastra, which is also known as the



Answer: Fifth Veda

How Well Do You Know India?

- In Ayurveda, which of these is believed to help balance all three doshas: Vata, Pitta and Kapha?
 - Ginger
 - Triphala
 - Clove
 - Fennel
- The golden spice turmeric was once called "Indian saffron" by traders. What gives it that rich yellow hue?
 - Piperine
 - Curcumin
 - Safranal
 - Carotene
- The ancient game of Pachisi, often called the 'National Game of India,' served as the original inspiration for which modern board game?
 - Snakes & Ladders
 - Chess
 - Ludo
 - Monopoly
- Which traditional Indian drink is made from fermented rice and is part of tribal culture in eastern India?
 - Toddy
 - Handia
 - Sattu
 - Kanji
- What was the original purpose of adding spices like cumin, pepper, and asafoetida to Indian food?
 - For aroma
 - To impress guests
 - To aid digestion
 - To enhance colour
- Traditionally, Indian food has been served on Banana leaves due to its environmental sustainability. Besides that, what other functional or health-related benefits justify its continued use?
 - It adds natural sweetness
 - It has antibacterial properties
 - It stays warm longer
 - It looks festive
- Which Indian game mentioned in the Mahabharata involves the use of cowrie shells as dice?
 - Chaupar
 - Kabaddi
 - Kho-Kho
 - Lagori
- The word "Ayurveda" literally translates to:
 - "Science of Life"
 - "Science of Healing"
 - "Path to Peace"
 - "Herbal Wisdom"
- Which of these Indian pickles traditionally uses mustard oil for preservation?
 - Lemon pickle
 - Mango pickle
 - Amla pickle
 - All of the above
- The age-old "morning detox drink", warm water with lemon, actually has roots in which Ayurvedic principle?
 - Balancing Kapha
 - Cleansing Agni (digestive fire)
 - Cooling Pitta
 - Awakening Prana

Answers

- 1) Triphala
- 2) Curcumin
- 3) Ludo
- 4) Handia
- 5) To aid digestion
- 6) It has antibacterial properties
- 7) Chaupar
- 8) Science of life
- 9) All Of the above
- 10) Cleansing Agni

FORTRESSES OF FURY

The Mighty Maratha Military Landscapes

Twelve forts, 12 stories, and a strategic network showcasing Maratha innovation, power, and enduring cultural legacy across diverse terrains.

The Rajgad Fort stands tall as the former capital of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj



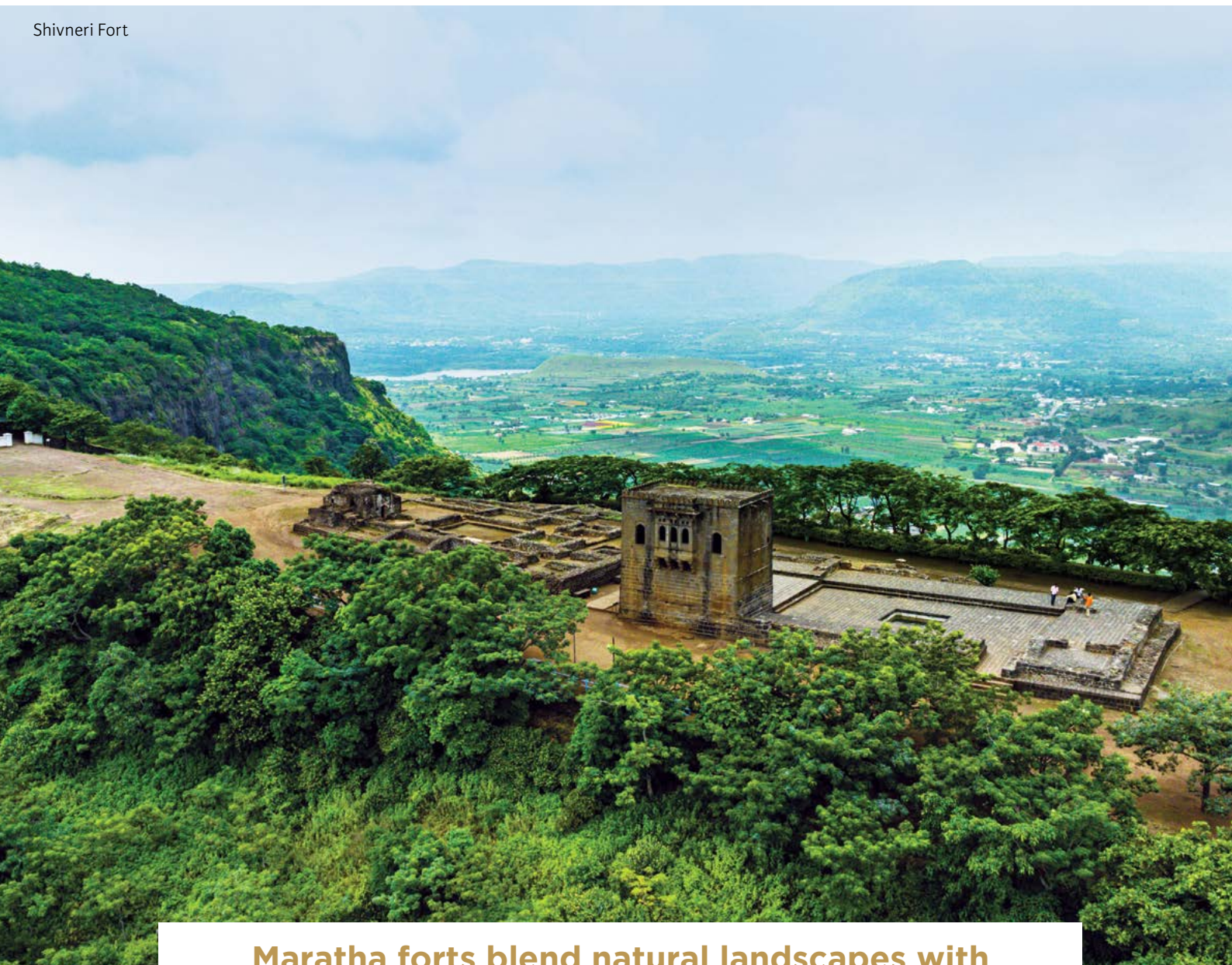
Hiker camps perched on wind-brushed ridges near Harihar Fort sit in still dialogue with the surrounding peaks. The view captures the region's rugged contours and tranquility of the surrounding hills, carved by centuries of weathering.

IN THE FRAME

Rising from rugged mountains, dense forests, and coastal waters, the Maratha Military Landscapes of India, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List this year, showcase centuries of strategic brilliance. Inscribed for their outstanding military, architectural, and cultural significance, the 12 forts highlight the ingenuity of Maratha rulers between the 17th and 19th centuries. From Raigad and Shivneri in Maharashtra to Gingee Fort in Tamil Nadu, these

fortifications blend terrain mastery with innovative defence systems. The network includes Salher, Shivneri, Lohagad, Khanderi, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg, and Gingee, representing hill, forest, plateau, coastal, and island forts. Collectively, they reflect the Marathas' ability to secure territory, protect trade, and create a lasting legacy of military, cultural, and community resilience.

Shivneri Fort



Maratha forts blend natural landscapes with strategic defence, ensuring territorial control.



Shivneri Fort, a 17th-century military fortification near Junnar, is the birthplace of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, founder of the Maratha Empire. The fort stands as a testament to strategic ingenuity and architectural strength, echoing the enduring resilience of the empire.

Raigad, Shivneri, and Sindhudurg forts showcase complex defence systems and terrain mastery.



On Maharashtra's Konkan coast, Sindhudurg reflects a maritime legacy where history, strategy, and coastal life converge in enduring Maratha character. Today, the region stands as a reminder of how the Marathas mastered both land and sea to define their dominion.

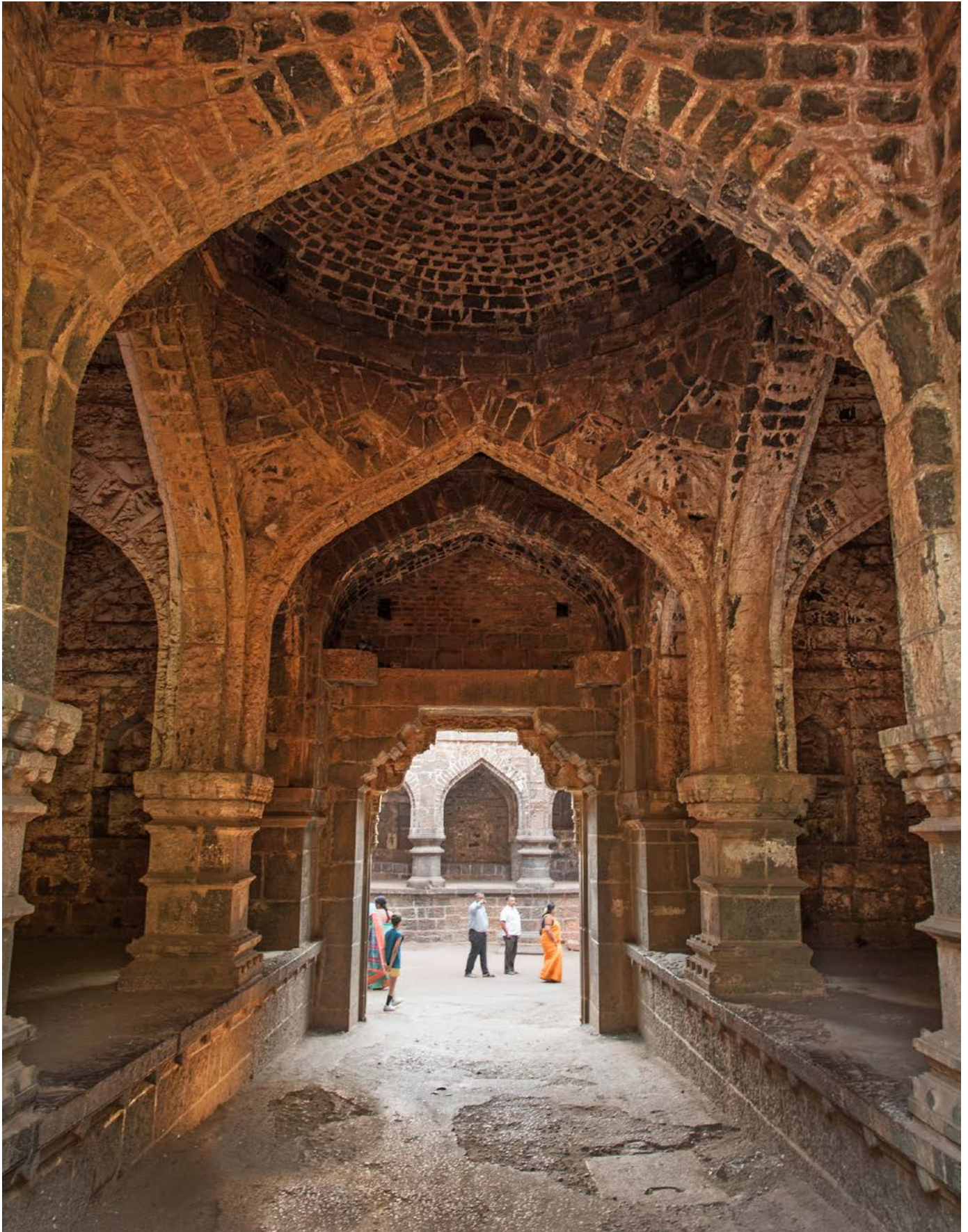


Vijaydurg Fort, situated in the coastal region of Maharashtra, was originally built by Raja Bhoj II of the Shilahar dynasty. Encircled by the ocean, it displays a magnificent architecture built for mindful natural defence. Reflecting an indomitable spirit, the place is renowned for triple layered fortifications.

Between the 17th and early 19th centuries, these forts under the Marathas formed a masterful defence network that secured trade and territory.



Rising from the hills of Viluppuram district in Tamil Nadi, the Gingee Fort Complex unfolds as a symbol of splendour that blends seamlessly with the terrain. Recognised by UNESCO in 2025, it stands as a fort where stone and strategy converge, and where time itself seems to move at the pace of the surrounding hills.



Panhala Fort in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, stands as a strong testament of Maratha resilience and power, always mentioned as a central bastion in the defence of the Deccan. The stone ramparts rise in quiet majesty, with vast walls still commanding the landscape and silently reflecting the enduring genius of Maratha culture and strategy.



Mandu, Madhya Pradesh

*Where ancient echoes meet modern dreams,
Madhya Pradesh unfolds as India's living soul*

By Namita Kumar

Kuno, National Park,
Madhya Pradesh



In the centre of the Indian map lies a pulse which is steady, ancient, and alive. Madhya Pradesh (MP) is not merely a place; it's a memory of the land itself. Here, time gathers in gentle folds, from prehistoric caves where early humans painted their dreams on stone, to temple spires that echo with chants carried by the Narmada breeze.

Cradle of Civilisation

Long before kingdoms rose and fell, the Bhimbetka rock shelters near state capital Bhopal bore witness to humankind's earliest artistry, where one can marvel at scenes of hunters and animals etched onto stone walls. These UNESCO-protected caves, dating back over 30,000 years, are among the world's oldest evidence of human imagination.

The story then unfolds through dynasties and devotion. From the Buddhist stupas of Sanchi, where

Emperor Ashoka's legacy lives in serene sandstone, to the intricate sculptures of Khajuraho celebrating life and divinity, the state's monuments are less about walls and more about ways of seeing the world. The medieval palaces of Mandu, the riverfront splendour of Maheshwar, and the towering fort of Gwalior each tell a chapter of triumph, trade, art and faith.

Cultural Soul

Every corner of Madhya Pradesh hums with a distinct cultural rhythm. Ujjain, the ancient city of the stars,

CHEETAHS IN KUNO

After 70 years, the world's fastest land animal once again roams India's grasslands. In September 2022, eight cheetahs from Namibia were released into Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, followed by a second batch from South Africa. The reintroduction, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, marked a global conservation milestone, the first intercontinental relocation of the species.



Sanchi Stupa,
Madhya Pradesh

SHOWCASE



Chanderi in making



Image: IMDb



GI-Tagged Treasures

Chanderi fabric

prized for its translucence and grace, woven since the 11th century.

Maheshwari sarees

created under Ahilyabai Holkar's patronage, merging silk and cotton into delicate checks and stripes.

Bagh prints

hand-block printed with natural dyes, an art from the Narmada valley.

Indore leather toys and bell-metal craft

examples of indigenous design and enduring craft tradition.

UNESCO Heritage Sites

Sanchi Stupa, Khajuraho Group of Monuments, and the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka.

FESTIVALS, FAME AND FILM

Few states celebrate their creative spirit as Madhya Pradesh does. The state government's festivals, from the Tansen Samaroh and the Mandu Festival to Jal Mahotsav, make heritage contemporary again.

It's also fast emerging as a film tourism hub, with its palaces, forests, and cities providing striking backdrops for films like *Stree*, *Sui Dhaaga*, *Manikarnika*, and series such as *Panchayat* and *The Family Man*.

Many personalities from the state have taken its legacy to the world: Ahilyabai Holkar, the philosopher-queen who built ghats and temples across India; Tansen, the legendary musician whose melodies still echo through Gwalior; and modern artists, writers, and filmmakers who continue to draw from this vast well of inspiration.

continues to be a celestial centre of faith and science. Here, the newly redeveloped Mahakaleshwar Corridor opens a grand avenue of devotion, a luminous promenade leading to the revered Jyotirlinga. In contrast, Indore crackles with urban energy, its air thick with the aroma of street food and entrepreneurial spirit. Crowned India's cleanest city seven years in a row, it stands as a symbol of civic pride and modern aspiration. Meanwhile, Bhopal, with its shimmering lakes and layered history, holds the balance, where Mughal-era architecture and art museums coexist with leafy boulevards and modern design.

Tapestry of Tribes and Traditions

Beyond the cities lies a living heritage as rich as its monuments. The Gond, Bhil, Baiga, Korku, and Sahariya communities keep the forests alive with myth and music. Their art, especially Gond painting, once drawn on mud walls and now adorning canvases worldwide, transforms folklore into fine art. Rural tourism here isn't staged; it's immersive. Visitors can stay in homes built of mud and bamboo, taste mahua



The annual Vikramotsav festival, held in Ujjain and Delhi, honours Emperor Vikramaditya's legacy, promotes unity ("Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat"), and showcases Madhya Pradesh's rich arts and culture.



sweets or tribal millet roti cooked over open fires.

Feast of Flavours

From the spiced dal bafla of Malwa to the crisp poha and jalebi breakfasts of Indore, from tribal kitchens that roast forest herbs to royal spreads of kebabs and curries, the food here speaks of soil and season. Street food is a celebration in itself: tangy chaats, savoury samosas, and Ratlami sev.

Into the Wild

Madhya Pradesh is India's tiger country. Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Pench, and Satpura National Parks are among the best places on Earth to glimpse a tiger in its natural splendour. Eco-

lodges and community-run safaris have transformed wildlife tourism into a sustainable experience, where travellers learn, not just look. The state's landscapes, from marble cliffs of Bhedaghat to the misty Satpura hills, create a geography both cinematic and sacred.

Weave of Craft and Art

Madhya Pradesh's artistic legacy is as textured as its terrain. The luminous Chanderi and Maheshwari sarees, once draped by queens and courtesans, are still woven on looms that hum through old town lanes. Bagh block prints, Indore's leather toys, bell-metal crafts, and tribal terracotta work carry generations of inherited skill.



Mandvi Beach Festival

The vibrant Mandvi Beach Festival 2025 is taking place from December 21 to December 31, 2025, at the picturesque Mandvi Windfarm Beach in Gujarat. This much-anticipated coastal celebration promises an enchanting blend of culture, community, and scenic beauty, offering visitors a unique opportunity to experience the charm of Mandvi like never before.

Date: December 21 – 31, 2025

Venue: Mandvi Windfarm Beach in Gujarat



Bharat Global Expo 2026

Its a major international trade and cultural event scheduled for March 12-15, 2026, in New Delhi, India, at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, focusing on connecting global innovators with Indian markets, featuring sectors like healthcare, clean energy, food tech, consumer goods, and technology, fostering partnerships, and showcasing sustainable growth opportunities through exhibitions, networking, and B2B sessions.

Date: March 12-15, 2026

Venue: Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, New Delhi, India

Indian Dance Festival

Against the timeless backdrop of Mamallapuram, where history and art converge, Tamil Nadu Tourism is hosting the Indian Dance Festival 2025–2026. The Mamallapuram Dance Festival is a 30-day festival held annually between December and January.

Date: December'25 to January'26

Venue: Tamil Nadu





India-AI Impact Summit 2026

It marks a defining global inflection point — transitioning from dialogue to demonstrable impact. Anchored in the principles of People, Planet, and Progress, it envisions a future where AI advances humanity, fosters inclusive growth, and safeguards our shared planet.

Date: February 15-20, 2026

Venue: Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

Lollapalooza India

The 4th edition of this two-day festival, featuring 40+ artists including Linkin Park, Playboi Carti, YUNGBLUD, Kehlani and Knock2, has been announced. Launched in Chicago, it has, since its India debut in 2023, become a key platform for Indian independent artists and immersive cultural experiences.

Date: January 24-25, 2026

Venue: Mahalaxmi Racecourse, Mumbai



Goa Sunsplash

What started as a grassroots gathering on the beach has grown into India's leading celebration of reggae music and sound system culture. Celebrating 10 years of Goa Sunsplash this January 2026, along with artists, dreamers, dancers, and change makers from around the world.

Date: January 17-18, 2026

Venue: Thalassa Beach Boutique Resort



XPD DIVISION
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA