

Swadeshi

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July 2026

ISRO's talent exodus:

**Why the movement
of scientists can
strengthen India's expanding
space economy**

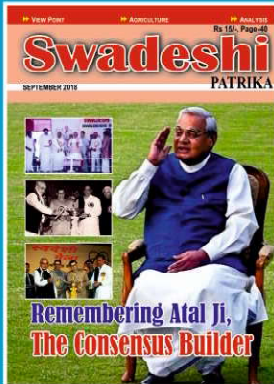
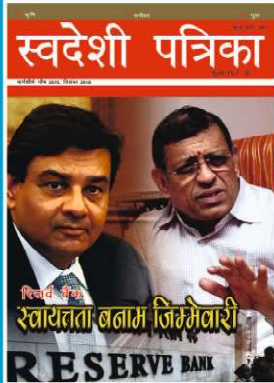


Swadeshi Activities

Swadeshi Samaveshi

Bengaluru - July 12, 2026

Pictorial Glimpses



VOICE OF

SELF RELIANT INDIA

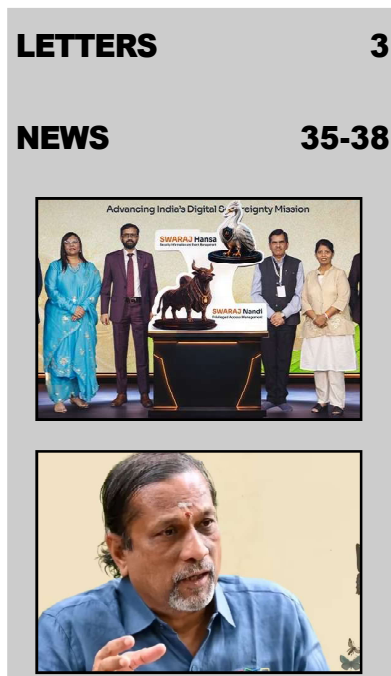
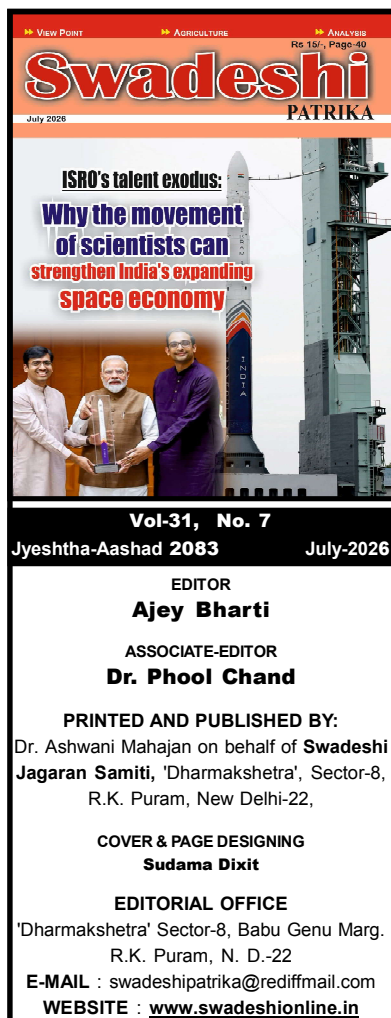
SWADESHI

Patrika

स्वदेशी

पत्रिका

पढ़ें और पढ़ायें



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Bhumi Suposhan Abhiyan: Restoring India's Soil to a Land of Prosperity and Abundance

The Bhumi Suposhan Abhiyan was launched in 2020 as a public awareness movement. Conducted annually across India from Varshapratipada (Hindu New Year) to Akshaya Tritiya, the campaign focuses on restoring depleted agricultural land to a healthy, well-nourished state. It aims to generate public awareness about the vital contributions of humans, animals, birds, and nature toward soil health, alongside conducting soil worship (Bhumi Pujan) programs.

In this modern era, soil degradation has triggered various crises for human life. Individuals who lead clean lifestyles without any substance addiction are still falling prey to serious illnesses—most notably cancer—primarily due to chemical-laden food. Consuming such produce gradually deteriorates our health, leaving us dependent on medicines for much of our lives. Driven by the goal of higher yields, farmers rely heavily on chemical fertilizers. Trace amounts of these chemicals inevitably cycle back into our food supply. When our Earth—our Mother Soil—becomes sick from over-chemicalization, how can it yield healthy produce?

This campaign calls for a return to natural and traditional farming, urging a shift away from chemical-dependent agriculture. Prior to the Green Revolution in 1966, chemical fertilizers were unused, and such severe diseases were far less prevalent. Today, there is an urgent need to rethink our agricultural practices and transition back to natural produce at the earliest.

To support this shift, the Government of India launched the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)—a dedicated scheme to promote chemical-free farming, improve soil health, and reduce input costs for farmers. Approved on November 25, 2024, with a total outlay of Rs. 2,481 crore, the mission complements nationwide ground-level efforts. Under the Bhumi Suposhan Abhiyan, soil worship rituals have already been conducted in over 2,50,000 locations.

The core vision of this movement is to rekindle among the Indian people a deep sense of reverence and responsibility toward our Mother Earth, making India truly Sujalam-Sufalam (blessed with clean water and abundant fruitfulness) once again.

— Kishan Sharma, *Akshay Krishi Parivar, New Delhi*

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IFSC: BKID 0006025 (Ramakrishnapuram)

Annual Subscription : 150/-

Life Membership : 1500/-

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Quote-Unquote



The future of India and New Zealand is intertwined and the bilateral trade agreement will accelerate India's journey towards a developed nation.

Narendra Modi, PM, Bharat



Strengthening the health sector is integral to realising the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, and Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission will serve as a critical pillar in that Journey.

JP Nadda, Health Minister, Bharat



Hydrogen is a new energy, a new fuel. How to use this fuel in transportation, how to develop that technology in India, and making it an indigenous technology under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' is very important.

Ashwini Vaishnaw, Railway Minister, Bharat



Indian scientists continue to play an important role even today at the American space agency, NASA. Not only that, Indian software engineers, Indian doctors, and Indian teachers are all earning recognition around the world as brand ambassadors for India. But unfortunately, the talent of Indians has not been fully utilized within India itself.

Ashwani Mahajan, National Co-Convenor, SJM

War-induced momentum for energy self-reliance

Following the peace agreement between the US and Iran after the roughly three-and-a-half-month-long Gulf conflict, the Strait of Hormuz-a vital conduit for massive crude oil shipments-has reopened. It is worth noting that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz not only disrupted oil transit but also caused a drastic surge in oil prices. Crude oil prices, which hovered around US \$70-80 per barrel before the war, spiked to as high as US \$126 per barrel during the conflict. Although prices fluctuated, they largely remained in the vicinity of US \$100 per barrel. The public was affected not only by shortages resulting from supply disruptions but also by rising inflation worldwide, driven by soaring oil prices. Even though the US is self-sufficient in petroleum supplies, it was also not immune to the impact of these high prices. Against this backdrop, a global conversation-including within India-began regarding the need to reduce dependence on imported crude oil. The primary question that arose was: Is fuel self-reliance achievable?

Currently, India relies on foreign sources for approximately 88 per cent of its crude oil and imports 50 per cent of its gas requirements. The sudden shortage of these commodities following the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz impacted not only prices but also businesses ranging from small restaurants and roadside tea vendors to gas-dependent industrial establishments. Consequently, the country began deliberating on how to achieve self-reliance in fuel and energy. The seven appeals Prime Minister Narendra Modi made to the nation to conserve foreign exchange-such as using public transport, carpooling and working from home-directly pointed towards reducing the country's dependence on petroleum products. However, it must be understood that while we can save foreign exchange in the short term by consuming less energy, energy self-reliance is the only viable option for the long term. Biogas can emerge as a significant alternative to petroleum gases. India possesses abundant resources-such as cattle dung, agricultural residues and household waste-that can be used to produce biogas, yet we are currently utilising only about 5 per cent of this potential. Naturally, with concerted efforts, biogas plants could be established at the village or village-cluster level. This would not only meet local fuel needs and reduce reliance on imported gas but also significantly lower fuel costs. Moreover, with minor modifications, vehicles can also be made to run on biogas. While petrol and diesel have long been considered indispensable for vehicles in the country, we must recall that just a decade ago, India was facing power shortages. Today, however, the entire nation enjoys 24-hour electricity supply, and a surplus of power is being recorded, especially during off-peak hours. Concurrently, there has been a massive expansion in renewable energy generation capacity.

Renewable energy capacity, which stood at a mere 35 gigawatts in 2014, has now surpassed 200 gigawatts, with an additional 25 to 30 gigawatts of capacity being added annually. Although rising energy prices had previously motivated us to strive for energy self-reliance, the further price hikes and supply disruptions caused by the war have accelerated these efforts. Thanks to the establishment of substantial power generation capacity, India has become virtually self-reliant in the energy sector; in fact, we even generate surplus electricity during off-peak hours. Therefore, the time has come to shift from petrol- and diesel-powered vehicles to electric vehicles. We can readily adopt electric buses, trucks, cars and scooters. Energy& Utilities

This could lead to substantial savings in petrol and diesel, thereby reducing dependence on overseas sources and conserving valuable foreign exchange. Traditionally in India, automobiles used to run on either petrol or diesel and later on CNG. In the last few years, the use of hybrid cars has also increased, where fuel consumption is lower, as vehicles run partially on petrol and partially on batteries. In more recent times, the use of electric vehicles has started increasing. The popularity of EVs can be seen from the fact that, in June 2026, the share of EVs in the scooter segment increased to more than 10 per cent, while electric cars constituted nearly 8 per cent of total car sales, and this has continuously been increasing over time. Before the war, in January 2026, the share of electric cars in total automobile purchases was hardly 3.6 per cent. Beyond transportation, we can also make greater use of electric cooking appliances, such as induction cooktops. New developments in research on nuclear power generation in the country could further strengthen our energy security. The government is giving a major push to biogas production; furthermore, research and development are facilitating the compression of biogas, making its use in vehicles feasible. Such experiments are already proving successful. Overall, it can be said that while efforts towards energy self-reliance were already underway, the conflict between the US and Iran-and the resulting surge in oil prices and supply disruptions-has provided a significant impetus to this goal. We must not allow this momentum to slow down.

ISRO's talent exodus: Why the movement of scientists can strengthen India's expanding space economy



Just a few days ago, a news emerged—initially viewed in a highly negative light—that over 100 scientists from India's prestigious public sector institution, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), have either resigned or taken premature retirement. It appeared as though, India's space program might suffer a major setback as a result. However, in a matter of few days, the successful launch of a rocket into space by a private company—without encountering any failure—clarifies the situation: while these scientists may be leaving ISRO, they are not severing ties with India's space program, as only a minuscule is going

overseas for further education or employment. Instead, they are maintaining their connection with India's space program, in a different or in a more meaningful way, scripting a new chapter of success in space, through the vibrant private sector.

On July 18, 2026, Skyroot Aerospace, an Indian private space company, made history by successfully launching multiple pay loads including satellites and technology demonstration units into the low earth orbit along with, the India's first private sector rocket 'Vikram-1'. India has now become the fourth nation—following the USA, China, and Japan—to see a private company successfully launching a rocket into the space. A remarkable aspect of the Vikram-1 mission is that, unlike private companies of other nations, that faced one or more failures before achieving a successful launch, Skyroot accomplished this feat in its very first attempt.

The manner in which ISRO achieved new milestones of success, rising from humble beginnings, has established the excellence of Indian talent in this field on the global stage. Following ISRO's numerous achievements—including missions like PSLVs, Mangalyaan, Chandrayaan and futuristic Gaganyaan program, preparing India for its first indigenous human space mission, NAVIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) and building of the world's largest fleets of remote sensing satellites for agriculture, disaster management water resources, urban planning, weather forecasting and fisheries, the Government of India made a deliberate decision to encourage private sector participation in the space sector. In the early days, when India lacked space capabilities and developed nations were far ahead, advancement in the space sector without government support was in fact impossible, as no other country was willing to share its technology. With government's support and the ingenuity and hard work of our scientists, ISRO has brought glory to the nation through various achievements. However, it is now being realized that the commercialization of the space sector holds immense potential. While ISRO has previously done significant work in areas such as telecommunications, meteo-



Vikram-1's success shows how talent mobility from ISRO can fuel India's private space economy, but retaining scientists and strengthening the public agency remain vital na priorities.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

rology, and various forms of space research, numerous private companies globally—including SpaceX, Axiom Space, Sierra Space, Astros call, D-orbit etc., have expanded their businesses and undertaken a wide range of activities. Moreover, these companies are commanding high market valuations; the valuation of Elon Musk's American company, SpaceX alone, today is USD 1.6 trillion, which is approximately 38 percent of India's GDP.

In this context, India must also prepare itself to compete with these major space companies. India's startup ecosystem has grown rapidly over the last one decade, and new startups have emerged in the space sector as well. A major advantage for these startups is the availability of a large pool of domestic scientists who have already achieved significant milestones in the field of space exploration. Consequently, scientists working in the public sector now have new options: they can either launch their own startups or collaborate with existing ones to help advance new frontiers in the space sector.

The Need to Learn from History

During the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the country's aspiring youth began migrating abroad due to lack of opportunities at home. This was a period when the government, influenced by socialist ideology virtually obstructed or even strangled the growth of the private sector. Policymakers believed that the private sector lacked the capability to foster entrepreneurship or adopt new technologies; they were perceived as lacking the necessary resources, capacity, and risk-taking appetite. Consequently, the government shouldered the responsibility

of driving industrial development itself, engaging in the production of everything from bread to machinery, electronics, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals.

Faced with these circumstances and a lack of local resources and opportunities, the country's ambitious youth turned towards foreign lands. Large numbers of Indians began migrating not only to the US and various European nations but also to the Gulf countries and Southeast Asia, playing pivotal roles in their development. In Europe and the US, Indians did not merely secure employment; they also played a significant role in fostering entrepreneurship. Indian scientists continue to play crucial roles at NASA, the US space agency. Furthermore, Indian software engineers, doctors, and educators have earned global acclaim, effectively serving as brand ambassadors for India. Regrettably, however, the full potential of Indian talent was not harnessed within the country itself.

Today, Indian scientists—who once hoisted the flag of the nation's success through the public sector entity ISRO—are setting new benchmarks by establishing private sector companies or collaborating with startups to spearhead innovative activities in the space sector. The expansion of space-based internet over just a few years suggests that the day is not far off when traveling to distant countries via space will become a reality. The space sector is poised to make significant contributions not only to telecommunications and navigation but also to defense. Given this, ceding all these development opportunities to foreign private sector companies would not be prudent. Former ISRO scientists can play a pivotal

role in mentoring new budding scientists and transforming the nation into a space superpower. As the benefits of space scientists' knowledge and experience become more apparent, an increasing number of scientists in the country will be drawn to this field.

This mindset needs to be adopted not just in the space sector, but across all sectors. India possesses the potential to emerge as a global powerhouse in defense manufacturing. Today, immense new possibilities are unfolding in AI and digital public infrastructure. There is also vast potential in the processing and production of rare-earth materials. Various sectors—including electronics, telecommunications, quantum computing, and e-commerce—are opening up new opportunities for the youth. In this context, the movement of talent between the public and private sectors could script a new narrative of national development.

The Need for Healthy Growth of Public Sector

While the migration of scientists from the public sector entity ISRO to the private sector can be considered a natural process, we must also recognize that scientists working on crucial national missions like 'Gaganyaan' are moving to the private sector—a trend that serves also as a warning for ISRO. Experts believe that scientists' autonomy is being hampered by unnecessary bureaucratic interference; therefore, there is a need to grant greater authority to ISRO and the Space Commission, alongside providing appropriate compensation to incentivize talent. Such support and fair remuneration will foster healthy competition between the private and public sectors, thereby giving a boost to India's space program. □□

A life devoted to India's unity and progress

Today, 6th July, is a special day for countless people who cherish the ideals of nationalism and selfless service. We commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, whose life remains a timeless example of courage and unwavering commitment to Maa Bharti. Few leaders in modern India embodied the seamless confluence of intellect, public service and moral conviction as profoundly as Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee.

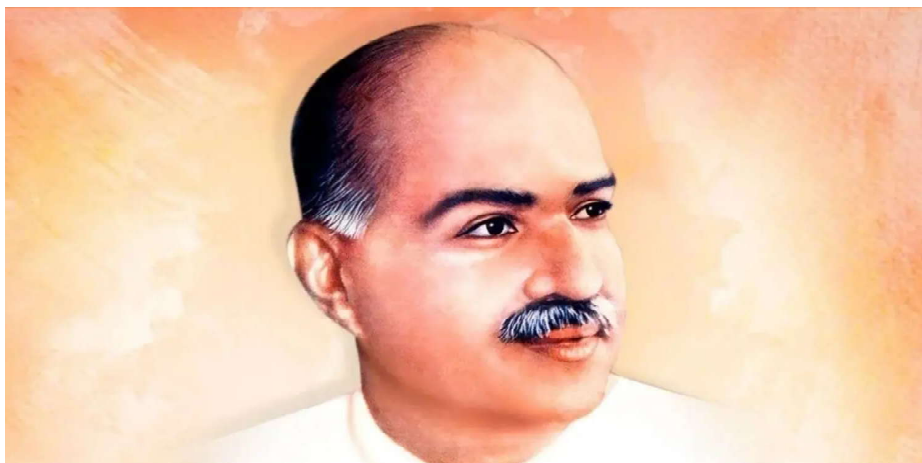
The young Syama Prasad was born into circumstances that could easily have assured him a protected and comfortable life. His father, Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee, was among the foremost educationists and intellectuals of his age. Yet, while destiny placed before him a path of privilege, his conscience led him towards one of sacrifice and national service. He was convinced that he could not remain a mute spectator to the turbulence of his times, be it fighting colonialism, communalism, humanitarian challenges and more. Along this journey, he endured profound personal tragedies, including the loss of an infant child and, later, his wife. Yet, these tragedies only deepened his resolve and strengthened his unwavering commitment to serve.

If there was one ideal that defined Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee's public life above all else, it was the indivisibility of India. He stood firm during the upheaval of Partition to ensure that West Bengal remained an integral part of India. A few years later, that very conviction drew him to Jammu and Kashmir. Imprisonment did not deter him and isolation did not diminish him. His life came to an abrupt end in detention, far from the countless people whose cause he had made his own. There are moments in history when an individual's final sacrifice transcends politics and enters the realm of national memory. Dr. Mookerjee's last journey remains one such moment. Acharya Vinoba Bhave said that Dr. Mookerjee sacrificed himself for a cause in which he had faith. Years later, the revocation of Articles 370 and 35(A) in 2019 was the most fitting tribute to his martyrdom.

Dr. Mookerjee put India First and Indian values first. And he did it by building institutions and nurturing systems that defied conventional mindsets of those



Remembering Syama Prasad Mookerjee on his 125th birth anniversary; founder of the Jan Sangh, he believed in the indivisibility of India and embodied the country's democratic spirit that celebrated dialogue and discussions.
Narendra Modi



times. He became the youngest Vice Chancellor of the University of Calcutta. In his unique style, he brought positive changes that were patriotic and futuristic. Addressing a conference of educators, Dr. Mookerjee put it wonderfully when he said, "It is incorrect to look upon educational institutions as factories to produce potential clerks and low-paid staff. We have to turn out students who are capable of providing leadership to our self-governing institutions, such as municipal corporations, provincial and central legislatures and also of directing the affairs in various fields of life such as financial, commercial and industrial ones."

Under his leadership, Calcutta University undertook unique efforts such as improving library infrastructure, boosting research in sciences, encouraging the study of artefacts and establishing courses in agriculture, to name a few. He drew attention to areas such as sports, teacher training and student welfare. To instil a sense of pride among students and alumni, he began a practice of marking 24th January as the foundation day of the University. He requested none other than Gurudev Tagore to compose a song for the University.

Yet another example of this spirit can be seen in the later part of his life, when he decided to form the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. At a time when the Congress Party was omnipresent, he felt that there was all the more reason for an alternative voice to speak up for India's progress while staying attached to our cultural roots. It was perhaps fitting that the party's symbol was the Diya, the earthen lamp. A single lamp may appear modest, yet it possesses the power to dispel darkness far be-

yond itself. It is exactly what the Jana Sangh did both during the years it was active and beyond.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee's tenure as India's first Minister for Industry and Supply reveals a statesman whose conception of development was remarkably comprehensive and humane. He viewed industry as a means of restoring dignity, opportunity and confidence to a newly independent nation. He respected wealth creation and value addition. While laying the foundations of modern industrial India through pioneering initiatives such as the Damodar Valley Corporation, the Sindri Fertiliser Plant and a robust industrial policy, he simultaneously ensured that India's traditional strengths were not neglected. Handlooms, cottage industries, artisans and textile workers found in him an equally committed champion.

Here, I would like to share a personal experience. The Sindri plant, which Dr. Mookerjee worked to establish with a clear vision of self-reliance, was ignored by those who ran the nation for several decades. I feel honoured that our Government had the opportunity to contribute to its revival. It was indeed among the most special moments to have been there for that programme.

India's civilisational tradition has long celebrated dialogue and discussions. Dr. Mookerjee embodied this democratic spirit. He joined Pandit Nehru's Cabinet, believing that the task of nation-building in the early years transcended political differences. He served with sincerity and a constructive spirit. But when he felt that questions of national importance demanded a different course, he relinquished office with dignity and devoted himself wholeheartedly to the political work

he believed the nation required.

75 years ago, Pandit Nehru brought the First Amendment, which was a direct assault on free speech. Dr. Mookerjee was among its staunchest critics. He understood fully what the Congress was capable of doing. And he was proven right. Those who brought the First Amendment 75 years ago imposed the Emergency in 1975 and 50 years ago, brought in the 42nd Amendment Act, which again struck at the core of liberal democratic values.

Dr. Mookerjee also stood out for his humanitarian efforts. When the most tragic famine struck Bengal in 1943, Dr. Mookerjee immersed himself in serving those affected. He ensured that several canteens and relief centres were opened to feed people. On one hand, he was deeply shaken by the plight of his people while on the other, he was repulsed by the insensitivity of the colonial rulers. He even wrote a book, *Panchasher Manwantar*, in which he expressed his angst. When a super cyclone hit Medinipur in 1942, his efforts to restore normalcy were widely lauded.

Speaking at a college in Kolkata, Dr. Mookerjee urged the youth, "Whatever work you undertake, do it seriously, thoroughly and well; never leave it half-done or undone, never feel yourself satisfied unless and until you have given it your very best." As India advances towards the goal of a *Viksit Bharat*, the finest tribute we can pay him is to strive every day to build the strong, united, self-confident and compassionate India that he so deeply believed in. And knowing today's youth, I am certain they will rise to the occasion and do exactly that. □□

Courtesy Press Information Bureau, Srinagar
(Shri Narendra Modi is the Prime Minister of India.)
<https://thekashmirimages.com/2026/07/06/a-life-devoted-to-indias-unity-and-progress/>

Ram Mandir theft, Hindu nationalism, and politics (Part-1)

The cash theft at Ram Mandir that dominates national and international media headlines, has escalated into a massive political controversy, recalling the ideological conflicts of the 1990s. Just as the Mandir movement assumed immense political significance then, the theft at the temple too has gained political traction with the assembly elections in UP, the nerve centre of the Mandir movement, just months away.

While this political interest is natural and understandable, the situation today presents a stark difference. The Mandir movement then did not have to face today's hyper-competitive, minute-by-minute breaking news media. When such a frenzied media apparatus mixes with political agendas, truth can be uncovered only by taking a helicopter view that avoids the narratives arrested by contextual sensationalism.

Ram's opponents now His devotees

The theft has miraculously transformed the erstwhile opponents of Ram Mandir into his ardent devotees chanting "Jai Shri Ram". The Congress party, which boycotted the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony in 2024, dispatched a nine-member high-level delegation for Ram Lala's darshan last week. Even if driven by pure political opportunism, this is a welcome development, as Mahatma Gandhi, whom it swears by, regarded "Ram Naam" as cure for all ills, national and personal.

Arvind Kejriwal, who had boycotted the 2024 Mandir ceremony, too has undergone instant metamorphosis into a Ram Bhakt, declaring that the theft had deeply pained all Sanatanis and announcing his Friday visit for darshan. Most ironically, when Mulayam Singh Yadav was Chief Minister in 1990, he ordered the police to fire and kill 16 kar sevaks and later proudly declared he would have



Just as the Mandir movement assumed immense political significance then, the theft at the temple too has gained political traction with the assembly elections in UP, the nerve centre of the Mandir movement, just months away.
S. Gurumurthy



issued the same order even if 30 had to die. Today, his Samajwadi Party sheds tears, claiming Ram Bhakts have been cheated.

The overexcited Indian media competing for breaking news, too joined this political chorus. One media predicted long-term damage to the BJP. Another claimed this was a severe setback to BJP's promise of Ram Rajya—the gold standard of probity in governance.

Capitalising on the geopolitical significance of the temple, global media entities with a history of anti-India and anti-Hindu bias, the Reuters, BBC, and Al-Jazeera, painted the incident as if it were a billion-dollar heist. “Stealing from the gods: India’s Ram Temple hit by corruption scandal. The temple is mired in embezzlement allegations before crucial state elections, embarrassing PM Modi’s government,” screamed Al-Jazeera.

A theft—not corruption or a scam

What has happened at the Ram Mandir is a theft. A pilferage easily executed by lower-level staff handling cash. Not a corruption or a scam. It would be corruption only if the top management had attempted to hush it up. On the contrary, within days of the theft coming to light, the higher-ups initiated severe, uncompromising action. There was no sign of an institutional cover-up which only will make it a scam.

Theft happens everywhere. To know the times we live in, one must recall Swami Chinmayananda’s observation: “In the Krita Yuga, good and evil lived in different worlds (Devas and Asuras). In Treta Yuga, they existed in the same world (Ram and Ravana). In Dwapara Yuga,

they were in the same family (Pandavas and Kauravas). But in Kali Yuga, they exist within the same human being.” We live in Kali Yuga, where good and evil reside simultaneously in man.

When desire and greed overpower even inherently good people, crimes can occur in the most sacred of spaces—be it churches, mosques or temples. Stealing from a temple Hundi (donation box) is notoriously easy. As the CP Ramaswami Iyer Committee report on temple administration astutely noted, money dropped into a Hundi is sacred, but the moment it is taken out, it becomes mere currency notes. It was based on this very logic that the judiciary permitted secular governments to take over temple funds.

The true metric of integrity in any institution is not the absence of wrong doing—which is ideal—but the speed and decisiveness with which authorities respond to it. Covering up a theft is what constitutes corruption and fraud—usually orchestrated to protect higher-ups. The Bofors scandal was exposed in 1987. As it involved the then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, no FIR was registered till he was ousted from power. It was filed three years later, in 1990, after he was voted out. Let us examine the Ram Temple Trust’s actions against this historical backdrop of cover-ups in recent cases of theft in temples involving the government as trustee.

The Ram Mandir theft is undoubtedly shocking and painful to anyone who cares about the nation’s reputation symbolised by the geopolitical reputation of the Mandir. Yet, the tsunami of hyperbolic news and allegations that obscured cru-

The true metric of integrity in any institution is not the absence of wrong doing—which is ideal—but the speed and decisiveness with which authorities respond to it.

cial facts, have unfairly cast an avoidable shadow on the national brand. Even neutral commentators have sadly failed to notice the sheer speed at which the Trust and the UP government acted, which was in direct contrast to similar instances of temple thefts, but was drowned out in the noise. Read on.

Speed of action: Govt temple Trusts versus Ram Mandir Trust

Recall the allegations of property misappropriation and idol thefts in government-administered temples in Sabarimala, Thiruvananthapuram, Puri, and Tamil Nadu. Comparing the response of the government bodies to that of the Ram Temple Trust reveals the stark difference between the Ram Mandir trust response and government-controlled Trusts in those cases. It doesn’t need turning the pages of decades of history. Today, the AI tool brings the history with references on the computer screen.

When AI tool Gemini was prompted to compare the scenarios of how the Ram Mandir Trust and government Trusts in those cases acted, it replied: “Compared to how governments blocked and

delayed action on allegations in temples under their control, the Ram Temple Trust's swift action is astonishingly different."

It noted that in cases like Sabarimala, Puri, and the Tamil Nadu idol thefts, the sheer inaction of government boards forced courts to intervene and order probes, delaying justice by years, sometimes decades. In stark contrast, the Ram Temple Trust requested the UP government to form a Special Investigation Team (SIT) within days of the crime coming to light.

The AI rightly summarised: "Driven by its ideology and self-esteem, the Ram Mandir Trust took immediate action. Conversely, government Trusts acted sluggishly in a bid to protect their systems and bureaucracy." (The very ideology that some media claimed would be tainted by this theft is precisely what catalysed such uncompromising action.)

The AI tool also said, "Furthermore, top officials of the Ram Temple took moral responsibility and resigned immediately. In government temple scandals, officials not only cling to their posts but fight legal battles using taxpayer money to protect their positions." It concluded: Everything regarding the Ram Mandir theft — from the SIT probe to the official report and mass arrests — happened in a matter of days.

Further, it said "the Trust voluntarily submitted its finances to a comprehensive five-year re-audit. Government-run temples routinely dodge external audits citing tradition or autonomy." An AI savvy 10th class student could have done this comparison by clicking the laptop mouse, which the multi trillion dollar global and India media in its excitement failed to do.

The unprecedented actions by the Ram Mandir Trust also clearly imply that this was a low-level theft, not a high-level scam. For political leaders, aided by the media, to suspect it as a high level affair is a tragedy.

The unprecedented actions by the Ram Mandir Trust also clearly imply that this was a low-level theft, not a high-level scam. For political leaders, aided by the media, to suspect it as a high level affair is a tragedy. Now let us turn to the "stark contrast" in facts of the Ram Mandir Trust's action as compared to the temple Trusts mentioned.

June 4 to 26: A timeline of light-speed action

It is baffling that the media missed this stark contrast: government trusts covering up wrongs till courts intervene versus the Ram Mandir Trust acting against the wrong voluntarily, at lightning speed. See the chronology of facts:

June 4: First clue emerges. An unclaimed bag containing '2 lakh in cash found in a washroom in the Mandir complex. Trust officials immediately begin reviewing CCTV footage.

June 5: General Secretary Champat Rai orders an internal probe targeting key suspect Avinash Shukla. His house is raided, and '58 lakh is recovered before the police even arrive. Rai struck first against a man in his own inner circle. This

severe crackdown terrified other accomplices into quietly depositing stolen money back into bank accounts, leading the Trust to believe for a while that the issue could be resolved internally.

June 7: News of the recovery leaks, sparking wild rumours of stolen gold and silver. Rai, relying on preliminary assessments that the money could be fully recovered internally, states that audits showed no significant discrepancies.

June 13: Realising that assessment was wrong, the Trust formally requests the UP government to set up a high-level SIT probe. This six-day stagnation was the only delay in the entire action.

June 25: SIT probe reveals that Manish Yadav, a cash counter employee, repeatedly stole money by exploiting CCTV blind spots. An FIR is registered. Midnight raids are conducted with lightning speed into the early hours of June 26, resulting in eight arrests.

June 26: Taking absolute moral responsibility for the administrative lapses, General Secretary Champat Rai and Trustee Anil Mishra resign.

Rai, an RSS pracharak who has dedicated his entire life to the nation, is a symbol of honesty and integrity. The media unfortunately drags him into the controversy, not mentioning that he was the first to initiate action ahead of the police.

Tomorrow, read how the theft may be less than half of '7.5 crore suspected by SIT, how pseudo-secular political forces are trying to weaponise the Mandir theft to smear the Hindu nationalist perspective and how their chances of finding resonance in battleground UP are slim. □□

(S Gurumurthy - Editor, Thuglak Tamil Magazine and Chairman, Vivekananda International Foundation Strategic Think Tank)
<https://www.newindianexpress.com/opinion/columnists/s-gurumurthy/2026/jul/07/ram-mandir-theft-hindu-nationalism-and-politics>

Food for Thought: The Political Economy of Food Processing and Public Health in India



As India aims to benefit from its demographic dividend and achieve long-term economic growth, the health of its population will become increasingly important. Therefore, addressing the growing consumption of ultra-processed foods is not only a public health priority but also a key development challenge for the coming decades.

Annu Kumari

Food processing has become an important part of India's development strategy. To support agricultural modernisation, industrial growth and job creation, the policymakers have promoted the food processing sector. The sharp rise in foreign direct investment in food processing sector shows its growing importance. The more than five-fold increase in equity investments noted during 2024–25 in this sector. However, the expansion of food processing has also increased the production and sale of foods that are high in sugar, salt and unhealthy fats due to which economic benefits have grown alongside public health costs. Rising obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and healthcare spending reflect this trade-off.

The rapid growth of ultra-processed foods in India is closely linked to changes in the country's food economy. Discussions on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) every so often focus on consumer behaviour and lifestyle choices but, they pay less attention to the structural changes that have reshaped food production and distribution since economic liberalisation. The growth of food processing industries, higher public and private investments, organised retail and digital food delivery platforms has increased the availability, affordability as well as appeal of processed foods. As a result, the rise of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) should be understood not only as a public health issue but also as an outcome of changes in India's food system and patterns of capital investment.

Government of India policies have strongly supported the growth of the food processing sector. India allows 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in food processing and in the retail trading of food products which includes through e-commerce, under the automatic and government routes. The food processing industry received FDI worth US\$13.49 billion between April 2000 and June 2025. It also recorded about US\$7.3 billion in FDI equity inflows between 2014–15 and 2024–25. Processed food accounted for 20% of India's agri-food exports in 2024–25. Tax policies have also supported the sector as most food products fall under the 0% or 5% GST slabs.

The food processing sector has attracted investment from both Indian and foreign companies. Major Indian investors include Amul, Cremica, ITC Limited, UFlex, Britannia Industries and Godrej Agrovet. While foreign investment has come from companies based in several countries. The United States has the largest presence, with Cargill, Del Monte, PepsiCo and Coca-Cola. Other major investors include Nestlé from Switzerland, McCain Foods from Canada, Danone from France, Ferrero from Italy, Agristo from Belgium, Unilever from the United Kingdom and Yakult from Japan. With these Indian and foreign companies, the food processing capacity expanded as well as production and distribution of processed food products increased across India.

Since the 1990s, food processing has become a key part of India's development strategy. Basically, economic liberalisation and investment reforms have en-



couraged both domestic and foreign investment in food manufacturing as investments in this sector considered important for agricultural modernisation and economic growth. As a result, the food processing sector has grown rapidly and transformed India's food environment. Today, the packaged food products have become more widely available in both urban and rural areas in India which implies that industrially processed foods more accessible and affordable across the country.

The commercial goals of the food processing industry do not always match public health goals. For producers and retailers, highly processed foods offer several advantages owing to their longer shelf life, lower transport costs, higher profit margins and standardised production. As a result of which the companies have strong incentives to expand the market for packaged snacks, sugar-sweetened beverages, confectionery products, instant foods and other ultra-processed foods. Also, the companies promote such products through aggressive marketing to target children, adolescents and young adults via television, digital media, sports sponsorships and celebrity endorsements.

The changes in food markets have also changed where processed

foods are consumed. With better logistics and stronger distribution networks, food companies have expanded into small towns and rural areas which were once dominated by locally produced and minimally processed foods. Now, the branded packaged foods are widely available in rural India. At the same time, the gap in NCD mortality between rural and urban areas has narrowed. While rural populations still face problems such as undernutrition and limited access to healthcare. However, the rural population are now increasingly exposed to the same commercial food environment that has contributed to rising obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases in urban areas.

The relationship between food processing and public health is complex. Food processing is not harmful in itself. It can reduce food losses, improve food safety, increase storage life and make nutritious foods more widely available. The main concern is the rapid growth of ultra-processed foods that contain high levels of sugar, salt and unhealthy fats. Therefore, public health policies should distinguish between food processing that improves nutrition and food processing that encourages the consumption of energy-dense and nutrient-poor foods.

India's experience highlights a major policy contradiction. On one hand, the government promotes food processing to support industrial growth, agricultural modernisation and investment. On the other hand, the health system is facing a growing burden of diet-related chronic diseases. Non-communicable diseases now account for 60% of all deaths, and cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of mortality. As a result, households, the healthcare system, and the wider economy bear the rising costs of unhealthy diets. Therefore, the economic benefits of investment in food processing are accompanied by significant public health costs.

This contradiction raises important questions about the future of India's food system. If current investment trends continue to support the expansion of ultra-processed foods, the economic benefits of industry growth may be offset by rising healthcare costs and productivity losses caused by chronic diseases. The key challenge for policymakers is to ensure that regulations encourage investments that improve nutrition rather than harm it. Understanding this challenge also requires examining the growing financial burden that NCDs place on households and the healthcare system.

As India aims to benefit from its demographic dividend and achieve long-term economic growth, the health of its population will become increasingly important. Therefore, addressing the growing consumption of ultra-processed foods is not only a public health priority but also a key development challenge for the coming decades. □□

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Shrinking Families, Shrinking Nation: Save Kutumb, Save India

For decades, India's planners treated population as a liability. "Hum Do Hamare Do" posters went up across the country. Economists called children "dependents." Policy incentivized the one-or-two-child norm. The result is now starkly visible: India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) fell from 5.9 in 1951 to 1.9 in 2024 — below the replacement level of 2.1 for the first time in the nation's history.

But something deeper was also lost in this demographic transition. The Indian concept of parivar was never the biological nuclear unit that Western sociology took for granted. It was, in Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's words, "the primary and widest foundation of society" — an institution of shared duties, collective security, and civilizational continuity. As Upadhyaya reminded us: "Kutumb bachega, tabhi sanskriti bachegi; sanskriti bachegi, tabhi rashtra bachega" — If the family survives, culture survives; if culture survives, the nation survives.

Western sociologists, from Talcott Parsons to Pitirim Sorokin, largely analyzed the nuclear family: two parents, dependent children, and neolocal residence. The metrics were income, consumption, and fertility rates. Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism rejected that narrow frame entirely. He saw the Indian kutumb as a sanskara-kendra — a center of values, not just biology. His philosophy advocated the simultaneous and integrated development of body, mind, intellect, and soul — a synthesis of the material and the spiritual, the individual and the collective.

Post-1947, Indian economics was profoundly shaped by Malthusian fear. The First Five-Year Plan (1951-56) called population growth "the greatest obstacle to development." By 1952, India had the world's first state-sponsored family plan-



The argument for preserving India's wider kinship web is not nostalgia. It is hard logic.

Prof. Deepak Sharma



ning program. The Emergency years (1975-77) took this to coercion, with 8.3 million sterilizations performed in a single year. The message to parents was moral, not just economic: having more than two children was irresponsible. Textbooks, television advertisements, and ASHA worker visits all reinforced the “small family, happy family” norm. Subsidies, school admissions, and government jobs often favored two-child families. It worked demographically — TFR crashed from 5.9 to 1.9 in just seven decades.

But the intellectual premise was deeply flawed. It assumed children were only “mouths to feed,” not “hands to build.” It ignored what Upadhyaya flagged decades ago: a society that sees its next generation as a burden will soon find itself without strength. The one-child norm has produced a new Indian childhood — and a new Indian problem. Child psychologists now report three distinct patterns emerging across urban India.

First, the “pampered kid syndrome” with no siblings to compete or cooperate with, the lone child often grows up as the sole focus of parental ambition and anxiety. Every fever becomes a crisis. Every exam becomes a family referendum. The result: low frustration tolerance and high performance pressure.

Second, young children lack social skills deficit today. Cousins and siblings were traditionally India’s first conflict-resolution workshop. You learned to negotiate, lose gracefully, share resources, and stand up for yourself. Lone children enter school without that crucial training. Teachers report more difficulty in group tasks, more tantrums

Sociologists have long debated the nature of the Indian joint family. Unlike the Western nuclear model, the joint family is based on relations among adult males rather than conjugal bonds between spouses. Arranged marriages lower the likelihood that an intense marriage bond might break up the unit into nuclear households.

when denied, and weaker peer bonding than children from larger families.

Third, mental health burden is on the rise. Studies increasingly link small-family structures to higher adolescent anxiety. With no sibling confidant, the child has only adults — who are either authority figures or projectors of expectation. Children from joint families had *bua*, *chacha*, *dada*, *dadi* as emotional buffers. The nuclear lone child often has none. Small families have not produced healthier children. They have produced lonelier children.

Sociologists have long debated the nature of the Indian joint family. Unlike the Western nuclear model, the joint family is based on relations among adult males rather than conjugal bonds between spouses. Arranged marriages lower the likelihood that an intense marriage bond might break up the unit into nuclear households. Segregation of the sexes before and after marriage further lessens the chance of such a breakup.

The joint family is characterized by co-partnership — persons who have a right to the products of the family property. This includes brothers in any generation, together with their sons in the next gener-

ation. The property is co-owned and cannot ordinarily be divided. Even if Hindu brothers live separately, they consider themselves a joint family if they continue to respect their common obligations, which include a joint budget, authority in the hands of the oldest male, and joint maintenance of property.

The argument for preserving India’s wider kinship web is not nostalgia. It is hard logic. Demographic balance demands it — with TFR at 1.9, each generation is approximately 25% smaller than the last. Child development demands it. Siblings and cousins are nature’s socialization lab. Children learn delayed gratification, empathy, and leadership by navigating relationships with multiple family members. Elder care and risk pooling demand it — in a joint-family system, the burden of ageing, illness, or unemployment is distributed across multiple shoulders rather than falling on a single individual.

Cultural continuity demands it. Language, festivals, recipes, and folk memory survive through children raised in extended families. As Upadhyaya warned, “A nation is not preserved by armies, but by families that remember.” □□

Reset of Bharat's Strategic Autonomy - II

Bharat's Strategic Autonomy in Changing World

(Continued...)

Recently there are serious discussions in the newspapers, media and think-tanks about strategic autonomy following the recent US-Iran, Israel-Lebanon, Russia-Ukraine wars where energy crisis has precipitated world over, global supply chains have been disrupted and economies have started failing. President Donald Trump is passionately pursuing MAGA through global hegemony and dictating his own terms. In Bharat's perspective, the dimensions of the strategic autonomy have been interpreted in terms of balancing international trade in the multi-polar world, trade pacts, FTAs, self-reliance in defence production, semi-conductors, industrial production and earth minerals without succumbing to global pressures. On the ground level, the pearls of wisdom of our diplomats define the strategic autonomy comprehensively. I came across the text of speech of former ambassador *DB Venkatesh Varma in memory of late Ambassador PS Raghavan, at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru on 23 February 2026* which seeks to examine international politics for coming decade while facing the challenges of the determined effort of the United States to reconfigure its domestic political - economy, referred to as the Make America Great Again (MAGA) campaign, which involves resort to what has been called 'regressive modernization' – re-industrialisation of America through imposition of tariffs, or other levies and a stringent migration policy. Obviously, we aim at our strategic autonomy while facing fierce challenges from the US and China in every aspect of international politics, global trade pacts, external threats, energy self-sufficiency and defence technology.

A few key trends are discernible. As the foremost global maritime power, the US is seeking a continental beachhead on the Eurasian continent, primarily to



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It will not be easy,
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perseverance.*
Vinod Johri



We can unfold the meaning of strategic autonomy through delineating its dimensions - declaratory, operational, economic / technological and societal, in the context of Bharat's needs and priorities. But first it is necessary to start with a working definition to set out the parameters, as very often strategic autonomy is used as a synonym for an independent foreign policy or even as justification for multi-alignment or the pursuit of multi-polarity.

encircle Russia and China, as is clearly stated in the US National Defence Strategy, and in doing so is seeking to shore up its position in key geopolitical choke points- Venezuela, Cuba, Greenland, Arctic, Iran and in different points in the Indo-Pacific. The US Secretary of State Rubio's important speech at the Munich Security Conference is a good indicator of the broader direction of US policy. In addressing his European Allies – he said, “we in America have no interest in being polite and orderly caretakers of the West's managed decline.” He received a standing ovation.

We can unfold the meaning of strategic autonomy through delineating its dimensions - declaratory, operational, economic / technological and societal, in the context of Bharat's needs and priorities. But first it is necessary to start with a working definition to set out the parameters, as very often strategic autonomy is used as a synonym for an independent foreign policy or even as justification for multi-alignment or the pursuit of multi-polarity. This is partly due to the general nature of the term - means different things to different people - but more importantly its use is often for multiple purposes - to assert a national policy choice or sometimes a convenient tool to

avoid difficult policy outcomes.

Therefore, a working definition of strategic autonomy could be *‘the will and capacity to think and act independently on matters of war and peace that affect the vital interests of the country.’* Seen from this standpoint, strategic autonomy is but a subset of an independent foreign policy but is not co-terminus with it, even as one is a necessary condition for the fulfilment of the other. *Vital interests are not merely military but also economic and cultural. It means protecting not just our territory. Protecting our economy as also our cultural identity is also an act of independence; the right to do so is an act of sovereignty; the will and capacity to do so is a measure of strategic autonomy.*

In terms of scope, strategic autonomy focuses mainly but not exclusively on the country's ability and willingness to engage in the use of armed force to secure its national interests - the use of armed force can be both direct and indirect - and in the current era, increasingly indirect and hybrid, without being unduly constrained by externally determined factors. There is a significant internal security dimension – maintaining security against multiple threats, societal cohesion and vitality that reinforce rather than impede national objectives. Thus, strategic autonomy is both a policy

prescription and a pathway to prioritise, mobilise, and channelize national resources to fulfil long-term objectives that impinge on our national security interests - *for objectives that are nationally determined and through resources that can be nationally mobilised.*

Placed in the international context, a key question for assessing strategic autonomy is – when does engagement become dependency and where does dependency slip into vulnerability? Strategic autonomy ceases to be autonomous when that redline is crossed. *The viability of strategic autonomy diminishes if national decision - making is constrained, outsourced or subordinated to decision-makers beyond national control. Diminished strategic autonomy will hollow out national independence over time. Once lost, national independence takes generations to recover - history's brutally unforgiving lesson.*

Declaratory Dimension

In recent years, strategic autonomy has been mentioned prominently both as a characteristic and objective of Bharat's foreign policy. The context is often to assert Bharat's independent view on global issues. However, contradictions tend to appear when strategic autonomy is juxtaposed with multi-alignment or our adherence to a Rule-based international order when in fact many of the challenges to Bharat's autonomy arise from that very order. The pursuit of multipolarity through forums such as G20 or BRICS is projected as a means to strengthen Bharat's options in pursuit of strategic autonomy. Multi-alignment presumes a certain maturity in multipolarity. In its absence, when the world is still largely unipolar in power terms, advocating multi-alignment then becomes

in practise a way of justifying alignment with the sole custodian of unipolarity. In the absence of multipolar options, such unipolar alignment- cohabitation with military alliances under the label of multi-alignment- can potentially cripple the pursuit of strategic autonomy even in its infancy. These power calculations are thus a necessary backdrop to the declaratory dimension of strategic autonomy - whatever the public statements, it presupposes a permanent search for options, however difficult those options might be.

Operational Dimension

We know defining war aims and the terms of war termination is perhaps the most important attribute of sovereignty, for there is no other state function that defines independence of decision making as on the issue of war and peace. On numerous occasions, Bharat has demonstrated substantive independence of decision-making, most recently in the case of Operation Sindoor. To further underline the unique operational dimension, Bharat declared that it reserved the right to use armed force in retaliation against terror perpetrators and their sponsors across the border even if it involved the use of armed force within the nuclear overhang.

With changing geopolitical conditions, Bharat's ability to respond to China's growing asymmetric power and its linkages with Pakistan and perhaps even Bangladesh, will be severely tested unless it is able to come up with an updated military doctrine that is capable of defending Bharat's national security interests within its national resources - broadly defined as military forces, supporting indus-

try, economy and technology, where external support supplements but has no controlling function on the operational dimensions of Bharat's military doctrine. The way Bharat should and can fight is dependent on the nature of the threat posed by its adversaries but also on the resources at its command. Reconciling these two parameters is of paramount importance.

In operational terms, Bharat's military doctrine would be constrained if its military capacities were critically linked to unreliable external supplies even for a short duration conflict, or the military equipment in its inventory has external linkages in the name of interoperability that doesn't preclude a 'kill switch' or our armed forces have external commitments that detract from their exclusive use for our own national priorities. This latter divergence could well occur if there is a large gap between the maritime and continental aspects of our security as China develops the capabilities to challenge us on both dimensions simultaneously. Overdependence on a few or dependence on unreliable external powers for defence material or getting sucked into an alignment with war fighting doctrines of external powers are factors that degrade strategic autonomy significantly.

In the recent past, there has been a welcome emphasis on the part of our Government on the need for comprehensive defence reforms and modernization. This process should be taken to its logical conclusion. A good military doctrine for Bharat would presume that the available external diplomatic options would be limited. This would reinforce the national focus on dealing with a huge asymmetry

In the recent past, there has been a welcome emphasis on the part of our Government on the need for comprehensive defence reforms and modernization. This process should be taken to its logical conclusion.

in power with China largely through our own resources. This focus has been somewhat blurred until now as there was an unreal expectation of external balancing through such mechanisms as QUAD. With its uncertain future, it would be imprudent for our Armed Forces to count on its deterrent potential against China. Similarly, the elevation of Pakistan in US Central Command strategy is an ominous development that requires further analysis. In a conflict-ridden world, Bharat's ability to choose to fight its own wars, only when absolutely necessary and on its own terms, will be the litmus test of its strategic autonomy.

External engagement and mutual dependencies are necessary but not at the cost of weakening national capabilities or perpetuating national vulnerabilities. Bharat should be confident about the former and vigilant about the latter. For Viksit Bharat, a determined pursuit of strategic autonomy is vital. It will not be easy, but we must persevere, for no country has ever risen as a great power without perseverance. □□

(Source - Bharat's Strategic Autonomy in Changing World, VIVEKANAND INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION - 25.02.2026)

Green Energy Transition and Green Income

There are occasions when it's time to be vocal to ensure an idea is presented with full throttle for execution. The green energy transition is among such ideas. All stakeholders will defend and amend the policy based on their level of understanding. The businessmen will seek to maintain their comfort zone undisturbed. Visionaries will look for opportunities to progress. Customers will conduct their rational search. Electoral politics will force the opposition parties to mine their errors. The social media influencers will produce episodes for loud-speakers tailored to their audiences' tastes.

Any policy is fruitful if the policy formulators, the policy executors, and the public synchronize together to move it forward. Energy security is again an endangered species despite a huge jump in renewable energy production. The transition in the mobility sector requires the full attention of all stakeholders. The resistance to change will identify all the speed bumps. All the odds need to be even.

The energy has emerged as the core of the global economy. Energy has replaced the talk that data is the new oil. Energy is now in a mode to replace oil. Data has arrived, and the data centers are under construction. Artificial intelligence, with its backward and forward integration, demands land, water, and the current, i.e., power. Power is a form of energy, and its biggest emerging customers are data centers and computing systems. The biggest emerging consumer of water resources is the semiconductor fabrication units. The pink papers are full of opinions of new drivers of the economy. Traditional benchmarks like current account deficit, fiscal deficit, and foreign exchange reserves are equally important, as are concerns such as self-reliance, supply chain disruptions, and inventory holding sizes for energy constituents, including crude, gas, and battery storage. The weaponization of energy, currency, trade, transaction systems, and many more is acknowl-



The green supply chain is profitable for all stakeholders, whether internal or external. This has been proven to be true in the manufacturing sector.

Alok Singh



edged in this world that is full of war zones.

Bharat imports approximately 22 lakh crores of petroleum products annually. The quantity of energy imports is fluctuating, but the actual demand is rising. The decline in petroleum product imports, measured quantitatively, is due to supply-side logistical hurdles. The demand is rising. The decline in imports of petroleum products can become a permanent trend only if we march at speed towards self-reliance in the energy sector.

The mobility sector has developed a variety of alternatives to petroleum products as road fuels. Customers can choose from electric, hydrogen, and biofuel vehicles. The last quarter-century has witnessed significant changes in the communication system. From fixed line, to pager, to handheld, to voice, to text, to video, to speed, and so on. The handheld manufacturers, the telecommunication service providers, the OTT platforms, the revenue sharing models, the data pricing, the voice pricing, and so many webs of interactions, not only in terms of usage but also in terms of revenue sharing and usage billing points, have witnessed disruptions.

The mobility sector has already demonstrated the profile of emerging manufacturers of electric three-wheelers and electric two-wheelers. Electric vehicles in three-wheelers and two-wheelers are presenting a decentralized manufacturing model. The electric vehicle market has dwarfed the entry barriers. These are the patterns that can be relied upon to visualize the impact of biofuels in the mobility ecosystem.

The biofuel economy is out-

dated because policymakers derailed its implementation. The bio-fuel is like old is gold. We had it, we knew it, but we delayed it.

Various think tanks and pressure groups may have delayed its implementation to benefit their stakeholders. Institutions able to invest in solar faced policy paralysis. Despite available technology and funding, solar panel installations were limited to common areas and faced many constraints. Academic institutions and hospitals with significant fixed-income investments could have adopted solar decades ago, but stakeholders in power generation and financial institutions funding such projects saw solar as competition. Now, solar farming is a viable method of electricity generation.

The story of telecommunications is relevant to drawing syllogisms about solar energy, biofuels, and alternative mobility fuels. The electric vehicle sector is visible, with many brands in the two- and three-wheeler markets. Battery swapping for these vehicles is a separate line, giving customers multiple choices. Mobility is shifting from car ownership to service use. The EV's main component is its battery. Automobile manufacturers are repositioning; they act as service providers for batteries and as goods sellers for vehicle bodies. It's hard to predict what disruption biofuels will cause in the ownership and distribution of mobility energy.

Disruption in telecommunications over the last three decades has led to a shift in the ownership paradigm. In a similar way, solar energy policy is now disrupting ownership of power generation. Both sectors have operated more as decentralized models rather than fol-

lowing the traditional monopoly model. Likewise, the rise of biofuels will empower farmers, enabling food suppliers to become fuel suppliers. This idea is gaining traction. However, opponents and businesses whose control is threatened will employ various tactics—with support from think tanks and narrative-shaping efforts—to create hurdles under the pretext of vehicle safety, biofuel availability, and economic value during the transition.

Although disruptions in telecommunications and the solar sectors didn't directly impact farmers, the move toward biofuel requires broad acceptance. Moreover, farmers' waste can be more valuable than food itself, making this the true turning point for our rural economy.

Biofuels with farmer ownership in the energy sector are a crucial and transformative policy for the future. This approach benefits everyone: it keeps food affordable for consumers, shifts foreign exchange challenges away from fuel imports, and empowers farmers to own energy assets. This marks an unprecedented, large-scale change for the rural economy. Biofuels will lead to prosperity for all.

The green supply chain is profitable for all stakeholders, whether internal or external. This has been proven to be true in the manufacturing sector. Green energy supports a sustainable climate, environmental stewardship, prudent management of foreign exchange reserves, self-reliance, rural livelihoods, a decentralized growth model, localization, and green income for our farmers. □□

(Alok Singh has a doctorate in management from the Indian Institute of Management Indore and is a promoter of Transition Research Consultancy for Policy and Management.)

Before the Word “Busy” Rob Your Relationships. Cherish Relationships, Life Becomes Golden Life



Let us therefore rediscover the timeless wisdom of nurturing relationships with sincerity, humility, and regular care.

When relationships flourish, human values flourish and a life enriched by loving relationships is truly a life transformed to golden hours.

**Mahadevayya
Karadalli**

One small English word “**busy**” is common. Four letters word “Busy” has evolved beyond merely meaning “occupied with work”; has come to symbolise success, importance, and social status. Consequently, people often portray themselves as perpetually busy. People from every walk of life, from workers to entrepreneurs, Students to teachers, professionals to politicians, homemakers, senior citizens what not! Even children frequently describe themselves as “busy.” Busy is often less meaningful work and more about misplaced priorities. No one understands that busy has quietly become one of the greatest obstacles to meaningful human relationships. So, do not give scope for “**Busy**” to **Rob Your Relationships**.

Ironically, many people who claim they have no time for family and friends spend countless hours watching television, scrolling through mobile phones, viewing short videos, or engaging endlessly on social media. While technology has made communication easier, it has also reduced genuine human interaction. Many devote more time to their phones, vehicles, or even pets than to their parents, siblings, relatives, neighbours, or friends. The result is that relationships gradually become distant, fragile, and eventually disappear.

Building relationships, however, is entirely different. They cannot be created overnight; they must be cultivated patiently through trust, affection, understanding, and regular interaction. With talent, determination, and favourable circumstances one may earn and accumulate enormous wealth in a short time. But it is not so easy to develop and maintain meaningful cordial relationship.



Today's Children are among the greatest victims of this changing lifestyle. At the cost of their health usage of either Tv/mobile or social media is common\$. Excessive dependence on mobile phones has reduced Children creativity, deprived them of outdoor games, and denied them the priceless joy of neighbourhood friendships. The lifelong bonds once formed during childhood, untouched by wealth, status, or power, have become increasingly rare.

Family, the foundation of society, nurtured relationships

Human relationships require patience, mutual respect, and time. Our ancient civilisation understood this truth profoundly. It regarded the family as the foundation of society and carefully nurtured relationships through daily interaction and shared responsibilities. At the centre of every family stand the parents, who dedicate their lives to their children's welfare without ever claiming to be "too busy." Their selfless love becomes the foundation upon which enduring relationships among family and community. For example, identifying the either men or woman not only in the family but also among relatives, and friends are addressed with relation built. viz Grandfather, Grandmother, Father-in-law, Mother-in-law, Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, Brother-in-law, Sister-in-law so on ..., Nowadays Parents may be overloaded with work pressure and busy schedule; it is their responsibility to spare few hours to their children during the day. It is the privilege of children and elders in the family. Then only parent-children bond blossoms and develop. Being busy should never become an excuse for neglecting family, friends, or neighbours.



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Relationship provides Good Physical and Mental health

Good physical and mental health depends not merely on financial security but on meaningful conversations, emotional support, and the comforting presence of loved ones. As people grow older, particularly after retirement, their dependence on wealth gradually decreases, while their need for companionship steadily increases. Loneliness cannot be cured by money; it can only be eased through relationships. The true value of relationships becomes most evident during times of family, social programs specially during crisis. For example. In ur-

ban life, bereaved families often struggle alone to organise funerals and cope with grief. However, in villages, neighbours, elders, and community members naturally assume responsibility, offering practical assistance, emotional comfort, and meals etc., until the family regains normalcy. Such compassion reflects the enduring strength of family as well as community relationships. Social media followers cannot replace genuine human companionship. A person may have thousands of online connections, yet find no one willing to stand during hardship. The weakening of relationships has given rise to distrust, loneliness, insecurity, and emotional dissatisfaction. Hospitality is declining, neighbours are becoming strangers, and friendships are increasingly driven by personal gain rather than affection.

During a personal conversation, the individual before us deserves greater attention than an incoming phone call. Guests should be welcomed warmly into the home rather than being hurried away at the doorstep. Mobile-free family hours shall become a daily routine practice. Children learn more from the behaviour of adults than from their advice; therefore, parents shall themselves demon-

strate moderation in the use of digital devices.

Rebuilding Relationships

Elders in village/ society shall consciously rebuild relationships to reverse unwanted busy trend, instead of spending endless hours before television screens and mobile phones, families should spend time together, taking children to native places, historical places, Pilgrimage, converse face to face and participate in one another's lives. Parents should encourage outdoor games, physical activity, and family conversations rather than excessive screen time. At least one meal each

finding time for the people who matter most.

The traditions are opportunities to strengthen relationships

Our ancestors wisely designed festivals and family traditions. The traditions are not merely as religious observances but as opportunities to strengthen relationships. The house is the place to nurture the seeds of family relationship to grow into a tree. So, during Amavasya and Purnima family members who live under one roof shall informally gather to perform Pooja, After Puja all members eat Lunch or Dinner as part of prasadam, informal con-

together is progress and working together is success..." To achieve successful relationships either in family /team or community members shall first meet informally. To renew relationships, accept unity in diversity and work as team is needed continuously, just as a plant be watered regularly.

Forget the word busy, Cherish Relationships to lead Golden Life

Money undoubtedly has its place in life, but only up to a point of time. In the final journey of life, wealth cannot replace the comforting presence of people. Trust, af-



Our ancestors wisely designed festivals and family traditions. The traditions are not merely as religious observances but as opportunities to strengthen relationships.

day should be shared together, and families shall regularly visit places of worship or participate in community activities/ Social Service. Elders and Parents in the Families speak gently in the presence of children, avoid quarrels, correct mistakes privately, and encourage sharing, respect, appreciate good conduct, generosity and compassion. Such simple habits, small moves of courtesy gradually create an atmosphere of trust and harmony within the home. And strengthen family relationships\$. Interestingly, those who are genuinely engaged in meaningful responsibilities rarely proclaim that they are "busy." Instead, they quietly fulfil their duties while still

versations. Family members having close blood relation will join to celebrate major festivals such as **Nag Panchami, Deepavali, Holi, Dasara, Raksha Bandhan, Makara Sankranti**, and **Ugadi** etc and community people and Villages come together to celebrate Village Programs' Jatr'a etc. Dasoha (feeding Prasada) is common feature of all programs. Occasions such as Informal games Singing Playing etc all served to reunite families/community people and reinforce affection across generations. House the platform for Best and unique model for boosting family relationship where **"Coming together is beginning; thinking**

fection, and companionship are earned slowly over many years and become life's greatest treasures. A meaningful life is measured not by the wealth we accumulate or the status we achieve, but by the relationships we build, preserve, and cherish. When we invest time, affection, and understanding in those around us, we strengthen not only our families but also the moral fabric of society. Let us therefore rediscover the timeless wisdom of nurturing relationships with sincerity, humility, and regular care. When relationships flourish, human values flourish and a life enriched by loving relationships is truly a life transformed to golden hours. □□

India–UK CETA: Sectoral Export Opportunities for India

The India–UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) opens new opportunities for Indian exporters, but gains will vary sharply by sector. GTRI's analysis finds the strongest prospects in labour-intensive goods, processed foods, seafood, automobiles and selected manufactures. Steel, petroleum and alcohol are less likely to gain significantly.

The numbers show substantial room to grow. In 2025, the UK imported US\$928.9 billion of goods from the world but only US\$15.2 billion from India. India's share of UK imports was just 1.6%. The UK, meanwhile, bought only 3.4% of India's US\$445 billion global exports. But low market share alone does not signal a big opportunity. Export potential depends on four factors: UK demand, India's export capacity, its current UK market presence and the tariff advantage created by CETA. Standards, food-safety rules, safeguards, certification and supply-chain constraints can matter as much as tariffs.

GTRI therefore groups sectors into High, Medium and Low export potential. Sectors with less than US\$1 million of UK imports from India in 2025 are excluded.

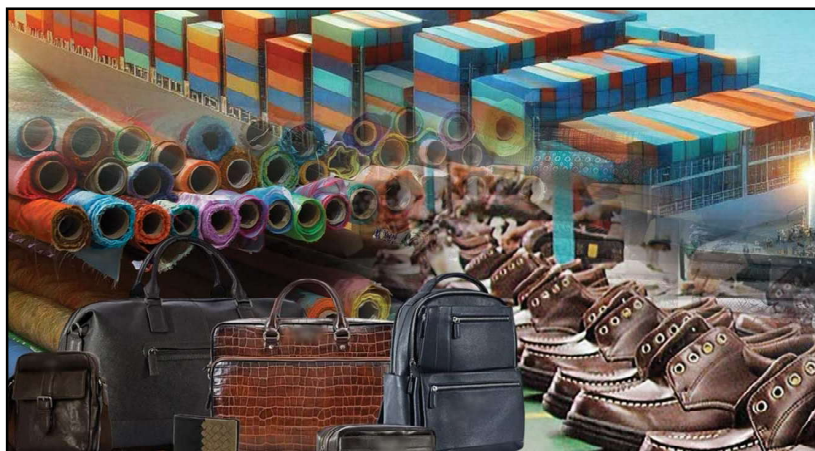


A GTRI analysis highlights which Indian sectors stand to benefit the most from the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, while cautioning that tariffs alone will not guarantee export growth.
Ajay Srivastava

1. High Potential: Where Indian Strength Meets UK Demand

Garments are among the clearest winners. India exported US\$16.3 billion globally in 2025, while the UK imported US\$21.3 billion. India supplied US\$1.3 billion, or 6.1% of UK imports. The UK already buys 8% of India's global garment exports, showing established buyer relationships. Removal of high apparel tariffs can improve India's position against preferential competitors and quickly generate new orders.





Textiles, leather and footwear also stand out. India supplied 7.8% of UK imports of textiles, fabrics, yarn and carpets, while its share was 7.3% in leather products and 4.8% in footwear. The UK already accounts for 10.2% of India's global footwear exports. These sectors combine established commercial links with meaningful tariff cuts, making them among the most immediate CETA opportunities.

Processed foods offer another major opening. The UK imported US\$33.4 billion globally but only US\$354 million from India, giving India a market share of 1.1%. India's global exports were US\$10 billion. Large UK demand, low Indian penetration and tariff cuts create strong potential in ready-to-eat foods, bakery and confectionery products, sauces and ethnic foods. Food safety, labelling and traceability will remain critical.

Cereals, vegetables, fruits and spices also have strong potential. India exported US\$25.6 billion globally, while UK imports were US\$23.2 billion. Yet India supplied only US\$716 million, or 3.1%. CETA can improve competitiveness in selected products, though SPS requirements and continued protection for some sensitive items will limit gains.

Textiles, leather and footwear also stand out. India supplied 7.8% of UK imports of textiles, fabrics, yarn and carpets, while its share was 7.3% in leather products and 4.8% in footwear.

Fish, meat and processed products show a large market gap. India exported US\$12.8 billion globally and the UK imported US\$17.2 billion, but India supplied only US\$126 million—just 0.7% of UK imports. Seafood offers especially strong potential. The main challenge is compliance with UK SPS rules, residue controls and traceability.

Automobiles, motorcycles and parts present perhaps the biggest numerical opportunity. The UK imported US\$92.2 billion globally but only US\$325 million from India, giving India a negligible 0.4% share. India's global exports were US\$25.1 billion. CETA tariff cuts

can support vehicles, motorcycles and components, though rules of origin and technical standards will be decisive.

Machinery, electronics and fabricated metal products offer major structural opportunities. The UK imported US\$106.2 billion of machinery but only US\$1.34 billion from India, a 1.3% share. It also imported US\$74.1 billion of telecom, computer and electronics products, with India supplying US\$2.1 billion, or 2.8%. In base-metal products, India supplied only 2.1% of a US\$17.9 billion UK market. Since tariffs are already low in many lines, growth will depend more on technology, standards, certification and supply-chain integration.

Ceramics, glass, stone and cement products also have good prospects. India exported US\$6 billion globally against UK imports of US\$7.3 billion and already held a 4.3% market share. India's strength in ceramics, tiles and natural stone, combined with tariff savings, can support further growth.

2. Medium Potential: Room to Grow, but Tariffs Are Not the Main Barrier

Chemicals and pharmaceuticals have strong Indian supply capacity but limited CETA-led gains. India exported US\$40 billion of chemicals globally but supplied only US\$908 million of a US\$35.2 billion UK market. In pharmaceuticals, India exported US\$25.8 billion globally but supplied only US\$1 billion, or 3.2%, of UK imports. The opportunity is real, but regulation, quality compliance, environmental rules and procurement matter more than tariffs.

Plastics and rubber products have moderate potential. India supplied only 1.9% of UK plastics



Diamonds, gold and silver require caution. The UK imported US\$178.5 billion globally but only US\$1 billion from India.

imports and 3.4% of rubber-product imports. Tariff cuts can help selected goods, but environmental rules, technical standards and strong competition will limit gains.

Diamonds, gold and silver require caution. The UK imported US\$178.5 billion globally but only US\$1 billion from India. India's 0.6% share appears to suggest enormous headroom, but the figure is heavily influenced by London's role as a global bullion and precious-metals trading centre. The realistic opportunity is therefore much smaller than the headline data suggest.

Paper and wood products, railway-aircraft-ship products, artificial flowers and umbrellas, and edible oils also fall in the Medium category. Each has some room to grow, but freight costs, sustainability rules, certification, project-based procurement, intense competition or limited Indian export surpluses constrain gains.

3. Low Potential: CETA Cannot Overcome Structural Barriers

Iron and steel products show why an FTA does not automatically guarantee market access. India exported US\$20.5 billion globally and supplied US\$959 million to the UK, giving it a 5.2% share. Yet the UK's tighter steel safeguard regime, reduced quotas and high above-

quota tariffs can overwhelm CETA preferences. Trade remedies and future carbon costs add further risks.

Ores, minerals and petroleum also have limited CETA-led potential. India exported US\$62.1 billion globally and supplied US\$1.6 billion to the UK, but tariffs are generally low. Trade is driven mainly by global prices, refinery economics, resource availability and freight.

Alcohol and wines face a different problem. The UK imported US\$10.9 billion globally but only US\$7 million from India. India's own global exports were just US\$456 million. The gap reflects weak export scale, limited brand presence and strong global competition rather than tariffs.

Tobacco products also have Low potential. India exported nearly US\$2 billion globally, but UK imports from India were only around US\$1 million. High excise taxes, strict health rules and declining smoking demand sharply limit the opportunity.

Strategy: Focus Where CETA Can Convert into Orders

The biggest gains are likely where three conditions come together: India has strong export capacity, the UK has substantial demand and CETA removes a meaningful tariff disadvantage. That points most clearly to garments,

textiles, leather, footwear, processed foods, seafood and selected farm products.

Automobiles offer a major longer-term opportunity because India's UK market share is exceptionally small. Machinery, electronics and fabricated metal products can also grow strongly, but success will depend more on quality, standards, certification and integration into UK supply chains than on tariff cuts.

India therefore needs a sector-specific export strategy. Food exporters need better testing, traceability and compliance with UK sanitary and phytosanitary rules. Machinery and electronics firms need certification, technology and stronger buyer links. Automobile exporters must meet rules-of-origin and technical requirements. Garment, leather and footwear producers should move quickly to turn tariff savings into orders before competitors adjust.

CETA creates market access, not guaranteed exports. Without parallel work on standards, certification, logistics, regulatory approvals and buyer networks, much of the opportunity will remain on paper. The agreement opens the door; India must now convert access into exports.

□□

(Author is founder of GTRI)

India's fertiliser dependence leaves its agriculture vulnerable

The war in the Middle East and Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz have adversely affected India's fertiliser economy, adding considerable hardship to the already stressed agricultural sector. Agricultural growth is projected to slow to 2.4 per cent in the 2025–26 financial year, from an above-average 4.2 per cent growth in the previous year. Disruption in fertiliser supplies could not come at a worse time.

India is the second-largest consumer and third-largest producer of fertilisers, but its position as the second-largest importer is the cause for concern. International fertiliser prices increased by 46 per cent between December 2025 and April 2026. Urea prices more than doubled in those five months. While diammonium phosphate and muriate of potash prices have not hiked as sharply, reports suggest that Indian firms are importing diammonium phosphate at prices 40 per cent above prewar levels.

Though it is among the largest producers of agricultural commodities, India has long depended on fertiliser imports, which have increased during this decade. Except in 2024, India's share in global fertiliser imports has consistently been around 15 per cent. Over the past five years, imports have been between 31 and 37 per cent of total consumption but this is expected to rise to over 41 per cent in the 2025–26 fiscal year. The rise is largely driven by imports of urea — the most popular fertiliser — which have increased by 65 per cent. The rise in overall fertiliser imports would have been even larger had imports of potassic fertilisers not declined.



Conflict in the Middle East has exposed the risks created by India's growing dependence on imported fertilisers amid slowing agricultural growth.
Biswajit Dhar



The steep rise in international fertiliser prices is likely to put further pressure on the government's subsidy bill. When it presented the 2026–27 budget in February, the government allocated Rs 1.7 trillion (US\$15.6 billion) for fertiliser subsidies, almost 10 per cent more than in the previous year. That figure is expected to increase further because the government has left the prices at which farmers buy fertilisers unchanged.

just 1.5 per cent in 2024–25 to 20 per cent in 2025–26.

The government stated in Parliament that it has adopted diversification of fertiliser import sources as a risk-mitigating strategy to ensure uninterrupted supplies of this critical product. But there remains doubt that merely diversifying import sources will meaningfully reduce its vulnerabilities so long as India continues to remain heavily dependent on fertiliser imports.

lisers, mostly urea, was prioritised over phosphorus and potash. The discovery of natural gas deposits in the 1970s further boosted urea production, though not enough to meet burgeoning domestic demand.

India's large coal deposits make coal gasification an alternative means of producing nitrogenous fertilisers, but the technology has been underutilised. In recent years, the government has started taking concrete steps to expand the use of



India has traditionally been dependent on the Gulf region for its urea supplies. Two-thirds of its urea imports were sourced from this region in 2024–25, most of which came through the Strait of Hormuz.

India has traditionally been dependent on the Gulf region for its urea supplies. Two-thirds of its urea imports were sourced from this region in 2024–25, most of which came through the Strait of Hormuz. This dependence on one region for a product that is so critical to India's agricultural sector is undoubtedly a considerable vulnerability.

India has been able to partially mitigate this problem through diversification of its urea import sources, with the share of urea imports from the Gulf states down to 38 per cent during 2025–26 from 75 per cent a year earlier. This has been made possible by the increased sourcing of urea from China and Russia, whose combined share has increased to nearly 40 per cent. China's share increased from

It is surprising that the government has not considered strengthening domestic production of fertilisers to reduce India's import dependence. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the government launched the Production Linked Incentive scheme for 14 key sectors to reduce import dependence for key goods including pharmaceutical intermediates, mobile phones and electronic components. Extending the Production Linked Incentive scheme to fertilisers could encourage greater investment in domestic production.

India's fertiliser industry has always had a lopsided production structure, with an excessive focus on urea. During the industry's first major expansion in the 1960s, domestic production of nitrogenous ferti-

this technology. Meanwhile, the production of phosphatic and potassic fertilisers has remained limited. In 2024–25, urea accounted for more than 76 per cent of India's fertiliser production.

This skewed nature of production has resulted in a nutrient imbalance, which, in turn, has adversely affected crop yields and contributed to soil degradation due to excessive use of urea. India should include the fertiliser industry in the Production Linked Incentive scheme to support domestic production of all major nutrients. This move would be a more decisive step towards reducing import dependence and addressing this imbalance. □□

Biswajit Dhar is a former professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University.
<https://eastasiaforum.org/2026/07/21/indias-fertiliser-dependence-leaves-its-agriculture-vulnerable/>

The Hidden Environmental and Social Costs of AI

Artificial Intelligence is the most transformative technology of the twenty-first century. Within just a few years, generative AI has evolved from an experimental innovation to a mainstream tool which is used by millions of people worldwide. It writes essays, generates images, creates videos, composes music, develops software, and even supports scientific discovery.

While AI is celebrated for its remarkable breakthroughs, a less discussed consequence has also emerged, the rapid growth of AI slop. Every day, millions of AI-generated images, videos, captions, memes, and animations are produced not to educate, innovate, or solve problems, but simply to capture a few seconds of attention on social media. There is an endless stream of AI-generated videos which accumulate millions of views despite offering little educational, cultural, artistic, or societal value. This raises an important question, are we using one of the greatest technological achievements to solve humanity's greatest problems, or to manufacture an infinite supply of digital distractions? Now this has implications not only for society but for the environment also.

Environmental Cost of Every AI Generation

Unlike traditional software, generative AI requires enormous computational power. Every prompt submitted to an AI model activates thousands of specialized processors housed in massive data centres distributed across the world. These processors consume electricity, generate heat, and require cooling systems to operate safely. Depending on the design of the data centre and the local climate, cooling may involve significant water consumption through evaporative cooling systems or indirect water use associated with electricity generation.



Artificial intelligence is most valuable when it helps solve problems that are beyond human capability or are too complex, time-consuming, or risky to handle efficiently.

Dr. Jaya Sharma



Although the environmental impact of a single AI prompt is negligible but the cumulative effect is substantial. Millions of users generate billions of prompts every month. Each AI-generated image, video, voice clip, or animation contributes incrementally to energy consumption, cooling requirements, network traffic, and long-term digital storage. The issue is therefore not the environmental cost of one prompt; it is the environmental consequence of billions of unnecessary prompts. Since now AI has become an integral part of our everyday life, it becomes even more important to treat it efficiently and responsibly.

quality content, but also about using AI just to get attention instead of creating something that genuinely helps people.

Most of this content is consumed within seconds and forgotten immediately. But creating, storing, hosting, and distributing it still requires real resources, including servers, GPUs, electricity, and data centres.

The Economy of Attention

Another concern here is the attention it consumes from society. Human attention has become a critical resource. As AI has made content creation faster and easier

potential to create lasting value, but much of its power is being directed towards winning the next click, view, or like.

Every technological resource carries an opportunity cost. The computational power used to generate millions of videos could instead support things like, climate modeling, medical diagnostics, disaster prediction and emergency response.

AI Is Not the Problem, Its Use Is

AI is not harmful. It does what we ask it to do. If we use it to generate endless memes, videos, clickbait, and disposable content,



AI is not harmful. It does what we ask it to do. If we use it to generate endless memes, videos, clickbait, and disposable content, that is exactly what it will produce.

The Explosion of Low-Value AI Content

Entertainment and creative expression have always been integral to the internet, and there is nothing problematic about them. The concern arises when powerful AI systems are increasingly used to mass-produce disposable content rather than solving big problems. By reducing the cost of content creation to almost zero, AI enables anyone to generate hundreds of images, videos, posts within minutes with minimal human creativity or expertise. This is known as AI slop, and it's not just about poor-

than ever before, digital platforms are now flooded with an endless stream of posts competing for people's attention. Users keep scrolling from one piece of content to the next, spending more time online but not gaining knowledge.

The irony is that the same technology capable of accelerating scientific discoveries, improving healthcare, transforming education, and solving complex global challenges is increasingly being used to produce content that is watched for a few seconds and then forgotten. AI has enormous

that is exactly what it will produce. But if we direct the same technology towards scientific research, healthcare, disaster management, climate solutions, or other complex challenges, its impact can be far greater. Artificial intelligence is most valuable when it helps solve problems that are beyond human capability or are too complex, time-consuming, or risky to handle efficiently. As users, businesses, and governments, we should focus less on asking AI to replace everyday human effort and more on using it where it can create lasting value and make the greatest difference. □□

Hormuz: The Strategic Strait



The article argues that the June 2026 US-Iran agreement and the dispute over the Strait of Hormuz reveal a declining American-led regional order, a strengthening Iranian strategic position, growing divisions within the Western alliance, and the emergence of a more multipolar Middle East geopolitical landscape.
Sandhya Jain

A French adage warns: the more things change, the more they remain the same. This is true of Israel's irridentist war against Iran for the annexation of southern Lebanon, from which the United States has attempted to retreat. On June 17, 2026, US President Donald Trump signed a Memorandum of Understanding to end the war at the famous Palace of Versailles, at the instance of French President Emmanuel Macron. Simultaneously, the MoU was digitally signed by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in Tehran. President Macron applauded the agreement as paving the way for "lasting peace" and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

The MoU was signed in both English and Persian (Farsi), and represents a major legal victory for Iran. The Persian text is not a mere translation, but has validity and binding force in the international arena. It will therefore not be possible to interpret the English words to one's convenience, as the Persian text stands on its own merits.

Even as President Trump was explaining the rationale for the deal to the American people, Israel launched a fresh assault in southern Lebanon on June 18, 2026. The beleaguered Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu opted to hold the world economy hostage to his domestic pressures and pursuit of his Greater Israel agenda. He insisted that he intends to control all of Gaza and to continue the war in Lebanon.

Inevitably, Iran suspended the proposed 60-day negotiations that were to begin in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 19, saying the agreement is pointless if Iran is the only one adhering to its commitments. US Vice President JD Vance cancelled his trip. But the backdoor facilitators leapt into action and on June 20, 2026, despite tensions, the US-Iran diplomatic dialogue was revived. The US and Iranian representatives arrived at Burgenstock, Switzerland, along with Qatari and Pakistani mediators. Talks took place on June 21, 2026.



Trump's explanation

Addressing the media after signing the MoU, President Trump confirmed that Iran would get USD 300 billion for reconstruction (to be released gradually by Gulf Cooperation Council countries), and USD 100 billion in released frozen funds. He justified his actions, saying, "If I keep bombing them, the ships remain blocked. That costs 500-600M\$ per day. And in 4 weeks we won't have any reserves [of oil] left. We wouldn't have any. Do you want to see chaos?"

Trump added, "Iran will keep its ballistic missiles... I can't stop them and allow Saudi Arabia to have them!" On nuclear enrichment, he said Iran must be allowed to have nuclear power for electricity and other peaceful purposes.

Trump reiterated his view that Israel should leave fighting Hezbollah in Lebanon to the Syrian President Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, "I was the one who placed al-Jolani in Syria, they say he's violent, that he's from Al-Qaeda..." but al-Jolani could do a better job than Israel. The news that Trump would like Al-Qaeda jihadists to invade Lebanon and fight Hezbollah as Israel's proxies caused consternation in Arab circles.

Interestingly, President Trump claimed that he got China to refrain from openly supporting Iran and thanked President Xi, and also President Putin for staying neutral.

On the issue of Iranian assets, he told journalist Peter Doocy that messing with international norms could be catastrophic. "That money is FROZEN. We HAVE to return it. If America starts stealing other nations' assets, the DOLLAR IS DEAD. No one will trust us again. The entire world financial

system collapses."

Vice President J.D. Vance explained that Trump felt frustrated as whenever "we seem to be right on the cusp of a major breakthrough in the agreement, and then all of a sudden there's a major explosion ... in a civilian population centre in Beirut and a lot of people who have nothing to do with Hezbollah lose their lives. That's not acceptable."

Vance chastised Israeli cabinet members for making personal attacks on President Trump, pointing out that Trump is the sole head of state in the world who is still sympathetic to Israel, and that it is unwise to attack their only powerful ally. Moreover, in just the past three months, the American exchequer paid for two-thirds of the weapons that protect Israel, and these were built by American labour. Exasperated at the violation of the ceasefire, Vance warned Netanyahu: "Don't play games with us, you're risking losing everything. Trump is your last ally, the entire world already hates you."

Journalist Tucker Carlson studied the US-Iran MoU and commented that Israel used the war to seize land in southern Lebanon, hence the first paragraph of the MoU forces the US to pull Israel back and return territory. The US agreed to respect Iran's sovereignty as a "great power" and to lift the naval blockade; therefore Iran opened the Strait of Hormuz, toll-free for 60 days during the proposed negotiation process. Tucker opined that the deal has officially ended America's global dominance, "This isn't victory. This is retreat." Henceforth, Iran and Oman will dictate the terms of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran again closed the Strait of Hormuz after Israel proved unrelenting in its aggression in southern Lebanon. The IRGC Navy announced that the Strait "will remain CLOSED until Israel withdraws from Lebanon, the naval blockade is fully lifted..."

Iran again closed the Strait of Hormuz after Israel proved unrelenting in its aggression in southern Lebanon. The IRGC Navy announced that the Strait "will remain CLOSED until Israel withdraws from Lebanon, the naval blockade is fully lifted, and US forces leave the Persian Gulf and the region." It warned that vessels defying the notice would be targeted.

It may be mentioned that, irrespective of the ultimate fate of the Peace talks, the world's geopolitical landscape has changed dramatically. The Gulf nations will have to come to terms with the fact that the US can no longer guarantee their defense and security, and will eventually pull its troops out of the region. Arab capitals are pondering strategic alliances with Pakistan, Russia, China, India, and Turkey.

Former US Naval veteran Michael T. Lester warned that the US Congress, in committee, quietly passed Section 224 to permanently merge US and Israeli defense research, production, and procurement into a single structure, shielded from the annual vote that currently gives Congress leverage with Israel.

Iran perspective

Iran was prescient is agreeing to the digital signing on June 17, before the official negotiations in Geneva on June 19, 2026. As the Iranian spokesperson explained: "When the text is signed by the highest authorities of both countries, violating it will naturally carry greater costs. Given our past experiences, we preferred that this happen."

Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei admitted having reservations but deferred to President Masoud Pezeshkian who personally and on behalf of the Supreme National Security Council, assured that he would safeguard the rights of the Iranian nation and the Resistance Front. The Ayatullah warned that "If the US makes excessive demands on Iran at the new stage of negotiations, Tehran will not accept them."

Iran was adamant that Israel must cease its attacks on Lebanon.

It digitally signed the MoU to put the onus on President Trump to make Israel comply. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said Iran will monitor US implementation "without any leniency" and will abide by its own commitments only after the other side fulfils its promises.

Iran also has a stake in splitting the Israeli-American alliance to erode the Zionist agenda for Greater Israel. The Zionist success in annexing Palestine into Israel could come unstuck in Lebanon. The Israeli Defense Minister has bragged about flattening the entire first line of villages in southern Lebanon, so that the 200,000 residents never return. This kind of gloating has turned major Western allies against Israel.

Conclusion

Russian philosopher Alexander Dugin opined that the agree-

ment reflects "a profound fracture within the West." While Tehran insists that the war in southern Lebanon must end, to which Donald Trump appears amenable, this clashes with Benjamin Netanyahu's political survival strategy. As a result, the "collective West" has become five distinct power centers: Trumpist America, Israel, Great Britain, the European Union, facing a resolute Iran. □□

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Dr. Ashwani Mahajan Launches Swaraj Nandi and Swaraj Hansa, Two Sovereign Enterprise Security Platforms Built Entirely in India by ESDS



Two of the most exploited weaknesses in Enterprise Security: unwatched privileged access and unread security alerts, get closed at once, by a platform built for governance and a platform born inside a live security operations centre. Launched in the presence of economist and Swadeshi Jagaran Manch National Co-Convener Dr. Ashwani Mahajan.

ESDS Software Solution Limited, a sovereign cloud and data centre provider in India, today announced the general availability of two enterprise-grade platforms built entirely on Indian soil: Swaraj Nandi, a Privileged Access Management (PAM) platform that governs the credentials, sessions and audit trails behind an organisation's most sensitive systems and Swaraj Hansa, an AI-powered autonomous SIEM platform designed to close the gap between threat detection and action. Together, the two launches address the two failure points that consistently sit at the centre of enterprise security incidents in India: who has access to what and who is watching what happens once they have it. The launch was held in the presence of Dr. Ashwani Mahajan, National Co-Convener of the Swadeshi Jagaran Manch and noted Indian economist, as chief guest.

<https://www.ptnews.com/story/business/esds-launches-swaraj-nandi-and-swaraj-hansa-two-sovereign-enterprise-security-platforms-built-entirely-in-india/3867076>

SJM organizes daylong Mahila Vichar Varg in Reasi

Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) today organized a daylong Mahila Vichar Varg in Reasi district, aimed at generating awareness about Swadeshi values, self-reliance, women empowerment, environmental re-

sponsibilities, and the use of indigenous products to support national development.

Speaking at the event in Sangh Karyalya, Sah-Vichar Pramukh, Uttar Kshetra, Ashutosh Sharma highlighted the organization's ongoing efforts to promote economic nationalism.

Prant Mahila Pramukh, Anita Sharma stressed the importance of women's role in strengthening the Swadeshi movement and contribution to a self-reliant India.

Prant Sah Mahila Pramukh Deepali Handa encouraged the adoption of Swadeshi products in daily life, support for local industries, household savings, and responsible consumption practices.

The programme concluded with participants taking a pledge to adopt Swadeshi practices in daily life and contribute to strengthening India's economic and cultural self-reliance.



Among others present on the occasion were Prant Sah Karyavah Ajay Sharma, Zila Karyavah Kuldeep Pandoh, Sangh Raksha Zila Badri Dass Sharma, Zila Mahila Pramukh Madhu Sharma, Lakshmi Sharma, and Kanika Sharma.

<https://www.dailyecalsior.com/sjm-organizes-daylong-mahila-vichar-varg-in-reasi/>

Vipin Garg, Distt Convenor, SJM vows to take Swadeshi campaign to every village

The newly appointed District Convenor, Swadeshi Jagran Manch, Vipin Garg pledged to intensify the Swadeshi movement across Ferozepur district by taking its message to every village and section of society.

Social worker Vipin Garg has been appointed as the District Convenor of Swadeshi Jagran Manch. The announcement was made by senior office-bearers of the organisation on the second day of the Punjab Provincial Ideological Camp held in Jalandhar.



Expressing gratitude to the organisation's leadership after his appointment, Vipin Garg said he would discharge the responsibility with complete dedication, sincerity, and commitment.

He said a large-scale awareness campaign would be launched to promote the use of indigenous products, encourage self-reliance, and strengthen the Indian economy. The campaign will reach schools, colleges, trade bodies, industries, and various social organisations to create greater awareness about the importance of supporting locally made products.

Emphasising the significance of the movement, Garg said adopting Swadeshi is not merely an economic necessity but also a matter of national interest and social responsibility. He particularly appealed to the youth to give preference to indigenous products and actively support local manufacturers.

On the occasion, he expressed his gratitude to Swadeshi Jagran Manch's national and state leadership, including Akhil Bharatiya Sangathak Kashmiri Lal, Organisation Minister for Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir Vinay Kumar, State Convenor Neha Sethi, State Publicity Head Arun Berry, and other senior office-bearers for reposing faith in him. He assured them that he would work tirelessly to fulfil the organisation's mission and live up to their expectations.

<https://www.babushahi.com/view-news.php?id=223413&headline=Vipin-Garg-Distt-Convenor-SJM-rows-to-take-Swadeshi-campaign-to-every-village>

Karnataka: Small traders becoming victims of e-commerce, says Manohar Agarwal

Kalaburagi: Small traders are increasingly becoming victims of policies favouring large corporate players, thanks to the rapid expansion of e-commerce and quick-commerce platforms, lamented Swadeshi Vyapar Manch national convener Manohar Agarwal.

He was speaking at 'Vyapari Samvada' organised by the Kalyana Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KKCCI) in association with the Central University of Karnataka (CUK) and Swadeshi

Jagaran Manch.

Highlighting the growing challenges faced by traditional traders due to corporate players, Agarwal said that small traders form the backbone of India's economy, besides generating employment.

Expressing concern over declining participation of younger generations in family-owned businesses, he observed that many business families encourage their children towards jobs rather than entrepreneurship, resulting in the gradual decline of traditional enterprises. He also urged the parents and business owners to speak positively about their businesses within the family and motivate the next generation to continue the family enterprise by modernising it.



Agarwal emphasised that traders must adapt to changing generations, technology, and policy changes to sustain and grow in a competitive market. Inviting trade associations to collaborate with the Swadeshi Vyapar Manch, he stated that collective representation is essential for effectively conveying local trade issues and policy concerns to governments and policymakers.

He assured that the Swadeshi Vyapar Manch would work closely with trade bodies across the country to safeguard the interests of traditional businesses.

Grain and Seed Merchants' Association president Santosh Langer pointed out that large quantities of food products and agricultural commodities are being imported despite domestic production capabilities. Such imports adversely affect farmers and traders by pushing market prices below the Minimum Support Price (MSP). He urged policymakers to frame suitable policies restricting imports of commodities that are adequately produced within India, to protect the domestic agriculture and related industries.

Participants from various trade sectors shared their concerns regarding e-commerce, quickcommerce, agriculture, retail trade, imports, market regulations, and the difficulties faced by traditional businesses. It

was decided that the issues discussed during the interaction would be consolidated and submitted as a memorandum to the Manch for further representation before the competent authorities.

KKCCI Honorary Secretary Shivraj Ingishetty emphasised the need for policies that protect local retailers, distributors, wholesalers, and traditional traders.

He suggested that major e-commerce and quick-commerce companies should be encouraged to procure products through local distributors and supply chains, strengthening local business ecosystems and generating greater economic benefits for the region.

KKCCI Vice-President Kedar Raghoji presided. Trade and Trade Adalat Committee Chairman Rajshekhar Dukandhar, Central University of Karnataka Department of Economics Studies and Planning Assistant Professor Baswaraj M S, Dal Mill Association President Chandrakant Kobal, Vice-President Vishudas Tapadia, Rice Merchants and Karna Association President Ravindra Madamshetty, Kapnoor Industrial Association President Ravindra Mukka and others were present.

<https://www.deccanherald.com/india/karnataka/karnataka-small-traders-becoming-victims-of-e-commerce-says-manohar-agarwal-4045644>

Govt orders Apple, Google to remove 7 Chinese apps



Government has ordered and to remove seven Chinese battery management apps, including BAT-BMS, Lossigy and Epoch-i-ion, from their app stores after reports surfaced online that these were being misused to remotely disable battery-operated vehicles, including e-rickshaws.

The order - against the backdrop of bans and takedowns since the Galwan confrontation in 2020 - marks the first to address issues of data security, sovereignty and remote interference linked to vehicle devices.

Govt sources said the ministry of electronics and

IT (MeitY) has warned that any other app found being used to interfere with or remotely shut down battery-operated vehicles will also be blocked.

The action followed videos showing e-rickshaws being stopped through Bluetooth-enabled battery management systems. In clips, users were seen scanning batteries through apps and switching off battery discharge, leaving drivers stranded and costing them hours of work.

MeitY secretary S Krishnan said, "There are a couple of apps which came to our notice yesterday (Thursday) and they have been taken down from the app stores."

Officials said apps like BAT-BMS are designed to monitor battery parameters such as voltage and charge status. On poorly secured systems, the interface can be used to cut power supply.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/govt-orders-apple-google-to-remove-7-chinese-apps/articleshow/132170110.cms>

Zoho's Sridhar Vembu unveils new mission, nearly 6,000 km away from India

Zoho founder Sridhar Vembu has revealed a new mission that will take him nearly 6,000 km away to Japan, where he plans to build partnerships with small and mid-sized companies in rural regions and connect them with businesses in small-town and rural India.

In a post on X, Vembu said he would travel to Japan to explore partnerships with companies that have preserved traditional manufacturing skills and craftsmanship.

"I am heading to Japan tomorrow. The agenda is to partner with small to mid-sized companies in small town Japan and bring them to small town and rural India," he wrote.

Vembu said the initiative seeks to restore India's tradition of skilled craftsmanship, referring to the Tamil term "Aasaari" and the Sanskrit word "Vishwakarma." He noted that many smaller companies in rural Japan continue to uphold these values and have built global expertise in industries that demand precision and intricate craftsmanship.

"Japanese are world leaders in areas that require intricate craftsmanship," he said.

The Zoho founder also credited his friend Britto for shaping the initiative. Originally from Madurai, Britto spent decades in Japan, where he gained a deep



understanding of the country's business culture before founding Takumi Motion Controls. Vembu pointed out that "Takumi" translates to "craftsman" in Japanese.

"I am guided by my friend Britto (Britto-san!), originally from Madurai, who spent decades in Japan and understood the culture and companies well," Vembu wrote.

Vembu said their shared admiration for Japanese craftsmanship inspired the initiative.

"Britto-san and I bonded over our admiration of Japanese craftsmanship. This has become a mission for us," he added.

Earlier this week, Vembu had revealed that 90% of Zoho's revenue comes from outside India. About 2% of Zoho's revenue comes from the government in India, Vembu said in a post on X. According to the company's website, Zoho has offices in USA, The Netherlands, China, Japan, Australia, Germany, and South Africa.

Vembu's statement came amid Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi visit to India. Takaichi was on Thursday accorded a warm ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. This is Takaichi's first official visit to India. She is visiting the country at Modi's invitation from July 1 to 3 for the 16th India-Japan annual summit.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/new-updates/sridhar-vembu-reveals-zohos-new-mission-mission/articleshow/132130250.cms?utm_source=twitter_pwa&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=socialsharebuttons&from=mdr

Zoho-Backed VoxelGrids Develops India's First Indigenous MRI Scanner

VoxelGrids, a start-up backed by Zoho, has developed India's first indigenous Magnetic Resonance Imaging scanner, marking a significant step in reducing the country's dependence on imported diagnostic

equipment.

The scanner has been installed at the Chandrapur Cancer Care Foundation near Nagpur.

The development is the outcome of a 12-year effort led by founder Arjun Arunachalam and his team to design and build an MRI system entirely in India. MRI machines are critical diagnostic tools for hospitals and are currently dominated by foreign manufacturers.

The MRI scanner has a magnetic field strength of 1.5 tesla and is not a locally assembled version of systems from global manufacturers such as Siemens or GE HealthCare.

According to Arunachalam, the machine incorporates its own technological advancements and does not require liquid helium, making it around 40 percent cheaper to build.

"Additionally, we have been able to make the electronics around the magnet extremely well-packaged while maintaining the same bore-size making it far more power efficient and reducing operating costs exponentially," he said.



VoxelGrids is also offering pay-per-use models that allow hospitals to pay for MRI machines over time. Arunachalam said this approach is aimed at smaller hospitals that may not be able to afford the high upfront cost of installing an MRI scanner.

While the company has not yet completed a full commercial launch, it currently has the capacity to manufacture 20 to 25 MRI scanners annually at its Bengaluru facility. Arunachalam said there has been strong interest from hospitals, and the company expects a commercial launch by the end of the current fiscal year.

VoxelGrids has raised \$5 million in funding from Zoho and plans to seek a larger round as it moves closer to volume production. The company is also working on further improvements to the MRI system, including a containerised mobile version, while keeping its immediate focus on domestic demand. □□

<https://www.digitalhealthnews.com/zoho-backed-voxelgrids-develops-india-s-first-indigenous-mri-scanner>

Zila Vichar Varg/Training Workshop

Pictorial Glimpses



Bijapur, Chhattisgarh



Odisha East



Gandhi Nagar, Delhi



Gujarat



Goyalpara, North Assam



Jalandhar, Punjab



Pali, Jodhpur



Tripura



Devghar, Jharkhand



Shimla, HP

Swadeshi Activities

Vichar Varga

Pictorial Glimpses



Bhagalpur, Bihar



Bhagyanagar, Hyderabad



Jammu



Kullu, HP



North 24 Pargana, South Bang



Attur, Tamil Nadu



Amroha, Meerut



Dehradun, Uttarakhand



Odisha West



Kannauj, Kanpur