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August 2026

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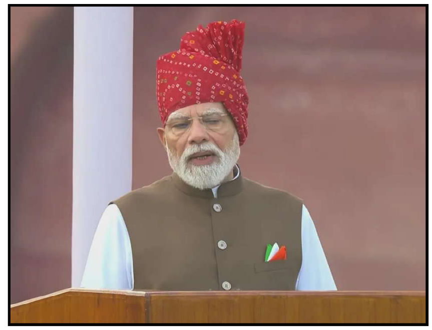

Generation Z (Gen Z): The New Generation of a Changing World

Gen Z is one of the most influential and rapidly evolving generations in today's world. Generally, those born between the late 1990s and the early 2010s are classified as Gen Z. This is the generation that has witnessed the internet, smartphones, social media, and digital technology become integral parts of their lives. Consequently, their mindset, lifestyle, and perspectives on education and careers differ significantly from those of previous generations.

Gen Z is often referred to as the "digital generation." Mobile phones, the internet, online education, digital payments, video platforms, and social media are all part of their daily lives. Instead of relying solely on books or traditional mediums for information, this generation accesses data via the internet in mere seconds. Gen Z also appears to be at the forefront of adopting new technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI). In this era of social media, they do not hesitate to experiment with and utilize available resources. Gen Z does not view traditional career paths as the only route to success; instead, they are drawn to options such as startups, freelancing, digital marketing, content creation, online businesses, becoming YouTube influencers, and remote work. This generation places great importance on work-life balance alongside their professional pursuits. For them, a good career is not defined merely by a high salary; autonomy at work, learning opportunities, and personal satisfaction hold significant value.

Gen Z is also vocal about social issues. They openly express their views on topics such as environmental conservation, climate change, equality, and social justice. Social media has provided them with a platform to voice their opinions on a global scale. However, challenges such as excessive reliance on social media, misinformation, and digital addiction are emerging as major issues for this generation. As a result, many young people struggle to align their immediate environments with the realities of this new era. In India, Gen-Z constitutes a vital part of the nation's youth power. Their technological savvy, creativity, and capacity for innovation can significantly contribute to strengthening India's economy. In this era of a new 'Digital India,' a thriving startup culture, and the expansion of artificial intelligence, the role of Gen-Z has become even more crucial.

Gen-Z is not merely a generation that grew up with technology; it is a generation that approaches thinking, working, and viewing society in new ways. With access to quality education, skill development, and ample opportunities, Gen-Z can play a pivotal role in shaping an India that is more modern, creative, and self-reliant.

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

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Quote-Unquote

Throughout the Games, our talented athletes have displayed exceptional skill, determination, and dedication. Their hardwork will keep inspiring our youngsters.

Narendra Modi, PM, Bharat

Cycling is one of the best forms of exercise. Cycling is a solution to pollution and traffic. It also helps save fuel, which in turn saves our money.

Mansukh Mandaviya, Youth Affairs Minister, Bharat

The knowledge we create, the technology we develop, and the institutions we strengthen must serve not only the present generation but also the generations to come.

Pralhad Joshi, Education Minister

FSSAI, as regulator, has the responsibility to safeguard the interests of the common people, protecting them from harmful food but its actual actions have been far from satisfactory.

Ashwani Mahajan, National Co-Convener, SJM

FCNR-B Deposits: Why Nay-Sayers Are Wrong

India seems to have come out of the crisis faced by rupee, caused by huge exodus by foreign portfolio investors, war induced crude oil inflation, including blockage of international routes, play of global speculators. Major factor, behind stability of rupee, is considered to be mobilisation of FCNR-B deposits, with the help of RBI's special swap scheme for Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank (FCNR-B) deposits with banks. According to this scheme banks have been freed from the cost of currency hedging, which they need to protect their balance sheet against currency risk, when these FCNR-B deposits would be withdrawn, after 3 to 5 years. Encouraged by this special swap scheme, overseas Indians have started pouring huge money in FCNR (B) deposits, total foreign currency inflows under RBI's special swap scheme reached more than 50 billions dollar till date. As a result of these deposits and other inflows, forex reserves increased. This scheme was generally welcomed, as this has given support to Indian rupee, which was saved from excessive depreciation, and stablised to near Rs. 95 per dollar, after depreciating to rupees 96.9 on May 2026. This has given a renewed confidence to the government and the RBI about the possibility of accumulating dollars at the time of need, and that too from the source, which is historical most dependable. Money so received is far from being hot money, as money once received is highly unlikely to be withdrawn fully. We must also keep in mind that the depositors who have deposited money in FCNR (B) deposits are neither fly by night operators, nor are guided by opaque ratings of global agencies.

Now that the RBI has decided to close this scheme early-by August 31, 2026-some have welcomed the move while also noting that it entails costs for the RBI, which could significantly reduce the central bank's future profits; this would indirectly impact government revenue and could also fuel inflation. But it seems the critics of this scheme fail to understand that this is a zero cost measure of the RBI (provided RBI keeps these dollrs in its reserves nd not spend), when it comes to FCNR-B deposits. Rther RBI cn peak there dollrs in US treassury bonds nd earn 5-6 percent return. Therefore, assuming that RBI will have to incur a huge loss when these deposits will be withdrawn, is not a correct assumption, due to several reasons.

Firstly, historically we hardly see any volatility in FCNR deposits, like FPI's investments. When it comes to cost, which RBI will have to incur, in a very unlikely event of withdrawal of these deposits, when critics have no problem in giving direct continuous to FPIs in the form of exemption from tax on interest and capital gains, then why they are so concerned about concessions to FCNR-B, even for a limited period, already announced.

Second, is the issue of cost to RBI. Critics are assuming that since, banks have been freed from incurring hedging cost under special swap arrangement by RBI, that essentially means that the cost of hedging would now be incurred by RBI, which is essentially incorrect. The fact is that these deposits would help in raising forex reserves, which will remain with RBI, and will act as a buffer to deal with any unforeseen eventuality. This buffer is very unlikely to be utilized, in normal circumstances. And in case of any unlikely event of withdrawal by overseas depositors, same foreign exchange (dollars) can be returned, from the same corpus, created by these deposits. Moreover, special swap scheme is applicable to only the deposits and not the interest.

Third, we know that presently commercial banks are under tremendous pressure due to slowing deposit growth while credit growth continues to be high. As a result they are forced to raise funds at higher interest rates, making borrowing costlier, impacting economic growth adversely. With huge amount of FCNR-B deposit at their disposal, thanks special swap scheme, banks would be having additional funds of nearly 9.5 lakh crores, assuming 100 billion USD coming to their kitty, through this scheme, partially solving the problem of paucity of funds for lending.

Fourthly, additional foreign-currency resources so received has strengthened India's external liquidity and its a big insurance against oil-price shocks, capital outflows and sudden pressure on the rupee. This is an insurance, which can't be bought at any cost by the nation.

Fifthly, we need to understand that maturity structure too, is advantageous. This special swap scheme is restricted to the fresh FCNR(B) deposits of 3-5 years. And therefore, in contrast with volatile portfolio resources, this scheme is ensures relatively stable foreign-currency resources.

Therefore, if the objective is to fetch more foreign exchange from any source, FCNR deposits, are more dependable, and relatively less costly, with zero immediate cost to the RBI, and may even cost very little in future as well as and when these deposits are withdrawn, partially or fully; but the kind of Insurance, which is provided by FCNR deposits from overseas Indians, is something which is not purchasable at any cost. With this scheme, India has also learned that there are huge possibilities of garnering foreign exchange, which is more dependable, long-term and non-volatile. In future also, such as schemes can be adopted to provide necessary insurance and resilience against uncertainties and global headwinds.

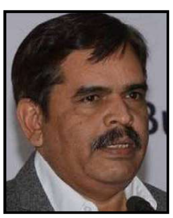
Beyond the Big Four

PM Modi pushes for Indian consulting, legal, accounting firms to become global giants

In his Independence Day address from the ramparts of the Red Fort, Prime Minister Narendra Modi not only highlighted his government's achievements but also outlined a roadmap for India's next phase of economic growth. Among the ambitions he articulated was the need for Indian banks and pharmaceutical companies to secure a place among the world's top five in their respective sectors. He also emphasised the need for Indian firms in consulting, legal services, accounting and credit ratings to emerge as globally competitive institutions, arguing that India possesses both the talent and capability required to excel in these fields.

This is not the first time the need to build globally competitive Indian professional services firms has figured in the policy discourse. On different occasions, the Prime Minister as well as the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister have highlighted India's dependence on foreign firms in areas such as consulting, auditing, legal services and credit ratings.

The issue has implications that go beyond commercial opportunity. International consulting firms advise governments across the world while simultaneously working with major multinational corporations. This creates legitimate questions around conflicts of interest, confidentiality, strategic information and data security, particularly when consultants are engaged on sensitive government projects or long-term policy formulation.



India is pushing to create global champions in consulting, law, accounting and ratings, with procurement and regulatory reforms aimed at giving domestic firms greater opportunities to scale.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

Building strong indigenous consulting and professional services firms could therefore serve multiple objectives. It could strengthen domestic capacity for policy and strategic advisory services, reduce dependence on foreign firms and limit the potential exposure of sensitive information. At the same time, professional services constitute a large global market. Indian firms that develop sufficient scale and expertise could expand overseas, generating export revenues and creating high-value employment.

In other words, the objective should not merely be to replace foreign consultants in India. The larger ambition should be to create Indian professional services companies capable of competing with the world's leading firms in international markets.

No Shortage of Talent and Capability

India's difficulty in creating global professional services champions cannot easily be attributed to a shortage of talent. A large number of Indian professionals work for the world's leading consulting, accounting, rating and law firms, both in India and overseas. Several professionals of Indian origin have risen to senior leadership positions in major international organisations.

Many of these professionals have been educated at India's premier institutions and possess extensive international experience. Indian talent is already contributing to some of the world's most sophisticated advisory, financial, legal and corporate operations. This was the context behind the Prime Minister's assertion that India does not lack either talent or capability.

The more pertinent question, therefore, is why that individual talent has not translated into Indian institutions of comparable global scale.

Where Does the Constraint Lie?

Part of the answer can be found in India's economic history. In the decades following Independence, economic policy was heavily influenced by the state-led development model. Policymakers believed that the private sector lacked sufficient capital, technology and risk-taking capacity to drive development on the required scale. The state consequently assumed a dominant role in industrialisation and economic development, while private enterprise operated within a highly regulated environment.

In such a framework, there was relatively little policy emphasis on creating Indian private-sector champions in consulting, law, accounting or other knowledge-intensive professional services.

The economic reforms initiated in 1991 transformed this environment by opening the economy to greater competition, private investment and international capital. However, the emphasis on globalisation also encouraged greater reliance on established international companies for technology, manufacturing expertise and professional services. The creation of large Indian professional services institutions did not receive comparable policy attention.

Regulatory structures added another layer of difficulty. Although India possessed a large pool of qualified professionals, rules governing lawyers, accountants and other professions often constrained corporate structures, multidisciplinary practices and certain forms of collaboration. Such restrictions made it more difficult to build firms with the scale, organisational depth and range of expertise associated with global professional services companies.

There has also been a widespread perception that multinational consulting firms possess advantages that Indian firms cannot easily replicate, including cross-country experience, proprietary research, global networks and specialised sectoral knowledge. These advantages are real, but they cannot become a permanent justification for denying domestic firms opportunities to acquire comparable experience. Institutions develop expertise by being allowed to compete, execute complex assignments and progressively move up the value chain.

The Government Procurement Problem

One of the most significant barriers has been the manner in which consultancy services have traditionally been procured by government departments and public institutions. Eligibility conditions intended to ensure quality have, in many instances, disproportionately favoured large and established consulting companies.

Government tenders for assignments worth only a few crore rupees could prescribe turnover requirements running into hundreds or even thousands of crores. Other tenders imposed conditions relating to overall staff strength, previous assignments or organisational experience that bore little relationship to the actual requirements of the project.

The effect of such conditions was predictable: smaller and mid-sized Indian firms, even when they possessed highly qualified professionals and relevant domain expertise, often found themselves excluded before the technical evaluation had even begun.

A sample study of consultancy procurement tenders issued by Central Government procuring entities on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) over the previous three financial years identified several recurring concerns. These included excessively high turnover requirements, disproportionate weightage being assigned to the consulting firm's institutional experience compared with the qualifications and experience of the professionals proposed for the assignment, and minimum payroll requirements substantially exceeding the manpower actually needed to execute the project.

Such procurement practices create a structural paradox. Indian firms are frequently told that they lack experience, but without access to significant assignments they cannot acquire the credentials required to compete for larger projects. The result can become a self-perpetuating cycle in which established firms continue accumulating experience while emerging competitors remain locked out.

Shifting from Brand to Capability

Recognising this problem, the Department of Expenditure issued an advisory on July 22, 2026, aimed at promoting a more capability-based and competition-oriented approach to government procurement of consultancy services.

The significance of this intervention lies in its attempt to shift procurement away from institutional size and brand recognition towards the actual requirements of an assignment. Qualification criteria are expected to have a clear relationship with the work being tendered rather than relying on arbitrarily high turnover, staffing or experience thresholds that unnecessarily restrict competition.

Importantly, the advisory cautions against turnover requirements that effectively limit competition to the "Big Four or Five" consulting firms.

The approach also seeks to change how consulting proposals are evaluated. Beginning with the Request for Proposal (RFP), greater emphasis is expected to be placed on the proposed methodology, work plan and quality and experience of key professionals rather than merely the reputation or size of the consulting organisation.

If implemented effectively across ministries, departments and public-sector organisations, this could represent an important change in India's consultancy procurement ecosystem. Government contracts would increasingly be awarded on the basis of task-specific capability, professional expertise, quality and value for money.

For Indian consulting firms, this could create opportunities to build credentials, acquire experience in complex assignments, invest in specialised expertise and eventually develop the institutional scale required to compete internationally.

Regulatory Reform Must Follow

Procurement reform, however, addresses only one part of the problem. If India wants to create global professional services champions, the regulatory architecture governing professional firms will also have to evolve.

There is already a movement towards enabling professionals to establish larger multidisciplinary organisations capable of bringing together expertise from different fields. Proposed changes to the Companies Act, 2013, could have implications for the ability of professionals to create firms with diversified pools of expertise and qualifications.

Such reforms are important because modern consulting assignments rarely fit neatly within the boundaries of a single profession. A major infrastructure project, digital transformation programme, corporate restructuring exercise or public-policy assignment may require expertise spanning law, finance, technology, engineering, economics, management and data analytics. Indian firms must have organisational structures capable of assembling such multidisciplinary capabilities if they are to compete with international professional services groups.

At the same time, professional regulators will have to balance legitimate concerns regarding independence, ethics and professional standards with the need to allow Indian firms to scale up and compete globally. Regulatory reform should not mean dilution of standards; rather, it should create frameworks in which professional integrity and institutional scale can coexist.

From Domestic Opportunity to Global Ambition

The government's recent steps could help create a more level playing field for Indian consulting and professional services firms. But procurement reform alone will not produce global champions. Further barriers will have to be identified and removed, and professional regulators will need to reassess rules that unnecessarily constrain scale, multidisciplinary collaboration, investment and international expansion.

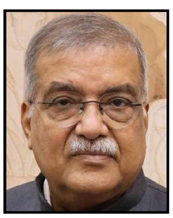
Equally important will be a change in institutional mindset. Government agencies should neither favour foreign consultants simply because of their global brands nor favour Indian firms merely because they are Indian. The objective should be competitive neutrality based on competence, expertise, innovation, confidentiality and value for money. Domestic firms that meet these standards should receive a genuine opportunity to compete.

Indian firms, for their part, will have to invest heavily in research, intellectual property, sectoral expertise, technology, global networks and talent development. Government policy can create opportunities, but ultimately Indian companies will have to demonstrate that they can deliver complex assignments at international standards.

India has already produced globally competitive companies in information technology, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, engineering and several other sectors. Professional services could become another major frontier.

The challenge now is to convert India's formidable pool of individual professional talent into institutions of global scale. If procurement reforms, regulatory changes and entrepreneurial ambition move in the same direction, India could eventually create consulting, accounting, legal and rating firms that compete not merely for government contracts at home, but for major assignments across the world. ❑❑

India's Semiconductor Mission and the Present Status of the Semiconductor Industry in India: A Comparative Global Perspective



Within five years, India's semiconductor journey has moved from policy intent to operating fabs, commercial ATMP/OSAT lines, and a doubled-down second-phase mission with a twelve-year capital horizon.

Dr. Dhanpant Ram Agarwal

Semiconductors are the foundational input of the modern economy — present in telecommunications, automobiles, defence systems, power electronics, healthcare devices and the digital and artificial-intelligence value chain. For a nation aspiring to Viksit Bharat @2047 and to close its technology-sovereignty deficit, the ability to design, fabricate, assemble and package semiconductors domestically is a strategic objective, comparable in character to energy or food security.

India's earlier attempts at building semiconductor capacity — from the Semiconductor Complex Limited in the 1980s through subsequent UPA-era proposals — did not translate into durable fabrication capability. The India Semiconductor Mission, approved in December 2021 and now entering its second phase, is the most sustained and well-capitalised effort to date, coinciding with global supply-chain diversification away from East Asia and heightened geopolitical contestation over advanced chip access.

India Semiconductor Mission (ISM 1.0): Genesis and Policy Architecture

The Union Cabinet approved the ISM in December 2021 as an independent business division under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), the nodal agency for the Semicon India Programme. Its original outlay of Rs. 76,000 crore was allocated broadly as:

- Rs. 64,000 crore for chip fabrication (fab) incentives, offering up to 50 per cent of project cost on a pari passu basis with state governments;
- Rs. 10,000 crore for a proposed semiconductor laboratory modernisation and India-specific chip design/R&D capacity;
- A Design-Linked Incentive (DLI) scheme (approximately Rs. 1,000 crore committed) supporting domestic fabless design startups with capital support and

product deployment linkage.

By mid-2025, MeitY confirmed the Rs. 75,000 crore outlay stood almost fully committed, with only a small residual balance left for further small-scale proposals - evidence that ISM 1.0 had reached the natural limits of its fiscal envelope.

Anchor Projects Approved Under ISM 1.0

The Cabinet's first tranche of approvals established three anchor facilities plus one large ATMP unit:

- Tata Electronics–PSMC (Powerchip, Taiwan) joint-venture fab at Dholera, Gujarat – India's first advanced logic fab, 50,000 wafers/month at 28/50/55nm, ~Rs. 91,000 crore (~USD 11 billion);
- Tata Semiconductor Assembly and Test (TSAT), Jagiroad, Assam — ~Rs. 27,000 crore, over 27,000 direct and indirect jobs, under the government's "Ashta Lakshmi" North-East vision;
- Micron Technology's ATMP facility at Sanand, Gujarat — first project cleared under ISM (June 2023), ~USD 2.75 billion;
- CG Power (Murugappa Group, with Renesas Electronics and Stars Microelectronics) OSAT facility at Sanand, Gujarat.

India Semiconductor Mission 2.0: Scaling and Deepening

On 15 July 2026, the Union Cabinet approved ISM 2.0 with an outlay reported at Rs. 1.25-1.27 lakh crore (the variance reflecting rounding across reported components), alongside a parallel second phase of the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme worth Rs. 62,500 crore - underlining the government's intent to couple upstream chip capacity with downstream electronics assembly.

Key Design Changes from ISM 1.0

- **Extended lifecycle:** the operating horizon has been extended from five to twelve years, to give long-horizon investors confidence for capital-intensive, multi-year projects;
- **Shift to vertical integration:** ISM 2.0 is oriented toward deepening the domestic value chain — materials, equipment and advanced-node capability — rather than simply adding assembly lines;
- **Equipment and Materials sub-scheme:** ~Rs. 40,000 crore (USD 4.8 billion) to incentivise domestic high-purity chemicals, specialty gases and substrates, addressing India's reliance on imported fabrication inputs;
- **Advanced-node ambition:** stated intent to support progression toward 2nm/3nm-class nodes and Gate-All-Around transistor architectures, alongside continued support for 28nm-and-above "lagging edge" nodes;
- **Design-Linked Incentive 2.0:** expanded support for domestic fabless design, with over fifty startups reportedly benefiting, concentrated in specialised and edge-AI silicon.

Present Status of India's Semiconductor Industry (as of July 2026)

India's semiconductor buildout remains concentrated in assembly, test, marking and packaging (ATMP/OSAT) rather than leading-edge wafer fabrication, with one major fab (Tata-PSMC, Dholera) under construction and no fa-

Project/Company	*Location*	*Segment*	*Investment (approx.)*	*Status (Jul 2026)*
Tata Electronics–PSMC Fab	Dholera, Gujarat	Logic fab (28/50/55nm)	Rs. 91,000 cr (~US$11bn)	Under construction; first silicon targeted Dec 2026
Tata Semiconductor Assembly & Test (TSAT)	Jagiroad, Assam	OSAT / ATMP	Rs. 27,000 cr	Pilot production by mid-2026; commercial scale-up by year-end
Micron Technology ATMP	Sanand, Gujarat	ATMP (DRAM/NAND packaging)	~US$2.75bn	Inaugurated Feb 2026; pilot production underway
CG Power (Murugappa/Renesas)	Sanand, Gujarat	OSAT	Multi-phase (G1/G2)	G1 pilot line live since Aug 2025; G2 scaling to 14.5m units/day
Kaynes Semicon	Sanand, Gujarat	OSAT	Rs. 3,300 cr (~US$348mn)	Commercial production reached March 2026; ~6.3m chips/day target
SiCSem Pvt Ltd (with Clas-SiC, UK)	Bhubaneswar, Odisha	Silicon Carbide compound-semi fab	Not fully disclosed	Approved Aug 2025; India's first commercial SiC fab line
3D Glass Solutions	Odisha	Glass substrate / interposer packaging	Not fully disclosed	Approved Aug 2025; under development
CDIL	Mohali, Punjab	High-power discrete semiconductors	Expansion	Approved Aug 2025; capacity expansion underway
Crystal Matrix / Suchi Semicon	Dholera (Guj.) / Surat	Compound & discr--ete semiconductors	Not fully disclosed	Under development

Sources: Business Standard (15 Jul 2026); Republic World (15 Jul 2026); The Tribune; ANI; India Briefing; IMARC Engineering industry brief (May 2026); Financial Content/TokenRing AI (Feb 2026). Figures as reported by these outlets; minor discrepancies across sources on investment values have not been independently reconciled.

cility yet in commercial operation below the 28nm node. The table below summarises major approved projects as reported through July 2026.

Talent and Design Ecosystem

India's most mature semiconductor asset is arguably not fabrication but design: MeitY estimates India already hosts approximately one-fifth of the world's semiconductor design engineering workforce, concentrated substantially in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and other southern states, serving the R&D and IP-design operations of global fabless and integrated device manufacturers. DLI 2.0 aims to convert a larger share of this talent into India-owned fabless product companies rather than captive design centres for foreign IP holders - a distinction with material bearing on long-run technology sovereignty.

Comparative Global Perspective

The global semiconductor market is estimated at roughly USD 900 billion to just under USD 1 trillion in 2026, with a trajectory toward USD 1.17-1.2 trillion by the early 2030s, driven substantially by AI accelerators and high-bandwidth memory. Production remains heavily concentrated in East Asia, with Asia-Pacific's share estimated at 53-60 per cent of revenue and as high as 72 per cent of manufacturing/equipment activity.

Taiwan — The Incumbent Leader

TSMC alone fabricates over 90 per cent of the world's advanced logic chips at 7nm and below, with a 60-72 per cent share of the broader chip market depending on segment. TSMC generated ~USD 122.4 billion in revenue in 2025 (up ~36 per cent year-on-year), with net margins near 45 per cent and 2026 revenue guided to grow a further 30 per cent. Equipment spending rose ~90 per cent to ~USD 31.5 billion, and advanced packaging (CoWoS) output is targeted at 110,000-120,000 units/month in 2026 - Taiwan's greatest economic asset and its principal geopolitical vulnerability given cross-strait tensions.

United States — Re-shoring Through the CHIPS Act

The US CHIPS and Science Act (2022) allocated ~USD 52.7 billion in manufacturing and R&D subsidies (about USD 39 billion earmarked for manufacturing), aimed at TSMC, Samsung and Intel building advanced fabs on US soil. Announced private investment reportedly exceeds USD 640 billion across ~140 projects in thirty states; the US GAO projects a single Arizona TSMC facility could raise America's leading-edge logic share from zero in 2022 to ~20 per cent by 2030, reinforced by tightening export controls on China.

European Union — Strategic Autonomy at a Slower Pace

The European Chips Act, in force since September 2023, targeted mobilising €43 billion to raise the EU's global production share from under 10 to 20 per cent by 2030; commitments have reportedly exceeded €80 billion, with €100 billion expected by 2030, including the ESMC joint venture (TSMC, Bosch, Infineon, NXP) in Dresden. Despite this, Europe's production share remains near 10 per cent and equipment spending contracted in 2025 even as sales grew - prompting all 27 member states to call, in September 2025, for a coordinated "Chips Act 2.0," now under European Commission evaluation.

China — Mature-Node Self-Sufficiency

China holds the largest aggregate wafer capacity of any country and dominates global production of mature-node microcontrollers and industrial chips, even as export controls on leading-edge lithography constrain it at the advanced-logic frontier. China, Taiwan and South Korea together accounted for ~79 per cent of global semiconductor equipment billings in 2025.

South Korea — Memory Leadership

Samsung Electronics (~USD 72 billion semiconductor revenue) and SK Hynix (~USD 54.6-60 billion, ~70 per cent share of the emerging HBM4 market) retain global leadership in memory fabrication. Some 65 per cent of Korea's semiconductor companies report difficulty recruiting engineers for sub-5nm production - evidence that talent constraints are a global bottleneck, not merely an Indian one.

India's Comparative Position

Read against this field, India's programme is best understood not as a bid to challenge Taiwan or the US at the advanced-logic frontier, but as a strategy to: (a) capture a meaningful share of ATMP/OSAT and mature-node fabrication as supply chains diversify away from Taiwan and China; (b) convert design-talent depth into higher-value, India-owned fabless enterprises; and (c) build, through ISM 2.0's equipment-and-materials focus, the upstream supply base that has historically constrained late entrants. Union Minister Vaishnaw's ambition - that India be among the world's top five semiconductor ecosystems by 2029 - should be read as a top-five position by scale of ecosystem participation and investment, not by share

Dimension	*Taiwan*	*United States*	*European Union*	*China*	*South Korea*	*India*
Leading segment	Advanced logic (<7nm)	Design+reshoring fabs	Auto/industrial chips	Mature-node volume	Memory (DRAM/HBM)	OSAT/ATMP + design
Flagship programme	N/A (incumbent)	CHIPS Act (~$52.7bn)	Chips Act (~€80bn+)	State self-sufficiency drives	K-Semiconductor strategy	ISM + ISM 2.0 (~Rs. 2 lakh cr combined)
Global share (approx.)	~60-72% of chips; 90%+ sub-7nm logic	~23% market rev.; near-0% sub-7nm fab today	~10% production share	Largest wafer-start capacity	Leader in memory/HBM	<1% of global fab output
Current stage	Mature, dominant	Re-shoring, ramping	Re-shoring, lagging targets	Scaling mature nodes	Mature, leading memory	Early-stage, building ATMP/OSAT + first fab
Key vulnerability	Geopolitical (cross-strait risk)	Cost, talent gap (~70k engineer shortfall by 2030)	Weak private capex follow-through	Equipment/ export-control exposure	Talent recruitment (65% firms report gaps)	Import dependency (~90%); equipment /materials gap

Figures compiled from multiple industry and news sources cited in Sections 4 and 5; percentages vary by methodology (revenue share vs. wafer-capacity share vs. equipment-billing share) and should be read as indicative orders of magnitude rather than a single reconciled dataset.

of advanced-node output, which will remain Taiwan- and US-concentrated for the foreseeable future.

Structural Challenges

- Equipment and materials dependency: fabs and OSAT lines remain reliant on imported lithography (chiefly ASML), specialty gases and high-purity chemicals; the Rs. 40,000 crore sub-scheme responds to this gap, but domestic substitution will take years to mature;
- Resource intensity: fabrication is water- and power-intensive (TSMC's fabs account for ~10 per cent of Taiwan's industrial water use); India's water-stressed Gujarat clusters must plan for this from the outset;
- Talent pipeline: a global shortfall of 70,000 semiconductor engineers is projected by 2030; India's design-talent depth is an advantage, but converting design engineers into process and fabrication engineers at scale is a distinct task;
- Node depth and capital intensity: the Tata–PSMC anchor fab targets 28/50/55nm — mature, not leading-edge; advancing to sub-10nm will require capital intensity and technology-transfer partnerships far beyond the current scale;
- Execution and timeline risk: project timelines have already shifted (e.g., Micron's original 2024 target moved to 2026 pilot production); execution discipline across twelve concurrent projects in six states will determine whether ISM 2.0's ambitions are met;
- Geopolitical exposure: partnerships with Taiwanese (PSMC), American (Micron) and other foreign technology providers embed India's programme in the US–China–Taiwan contest — a source of opportunity ("China Plus One") as much as risk.

Strategic Assessment

For a research programme concerned with India's technology-sovereignty deficit, the ISM's significance lies less in any single fab than in the demonstration that India can execute a large, multi-state, multi-partner industrial programme with private capital co-investment exceeding the public subsidy by more than two-to-one (Rs. 1.60 lakh crore committed investment against a Rs. 76,000 crore ISM 1.0 outlay) - suggesting genuine investor confidence rather than subsidy-chasing alone. The extension of ISM 2.0's lifecycle to twelve years is itself an implicit acknowledgement that semiconductor sovereignty is a multi-decade undertaking, consistent with the Viksit Bharat @2047 horizon.

Conclusion

Within five years, India's semiconductor journey has moved from policy intent to operating fabs, commercial ATMP/OSAT lines, and a doubled-down second-phase mission with a twelve-year capital horizon. Three plants are already in commercial production, four more are scheduled to reach that stage within 2026, and India's first advanced logic fab is expected to yield first silicon by December 2026. Set against a global industry still concentrated in Taiwan, the United States, China and South Korea, India remains an early-stage entrant - but one with distinctive design-talent depth, a large and growing domestic demand base, and now a sustained twelve-year policy commitment few emerging entrants can match. The central task for the remainder of this decade is execution: converting approved projects into operating capacity on schedule, and converting design talent into India-owned intellectual property and fabless enterprises, rather than merely hosting foreign-owned assembly lines on Indian soil. ❑❑

(CA Dr Dhanpat Ram Agarwal, Ph.D Economics — Principal Researcher & Founder Director, Institute of International Trade (IITrade), Kolkata)

Select Sources

This report draws on public reporting from Business Standard, Republic World, The Tribune, ANI, The Federal, India Briefing, IMARC Engineering, Financial Content/TokenRing AI, the LSE Business Review, Axis Intelligence, Coherent Market Insights, MarketDataForecast, New Market Pitch, and The Motley Fool, among other named sources cited in-text above, all accessed in July 2026. All figures are as reported by the cited outlets as of the date of this report and are subject to revision as the India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 notification process and individual project timelines evolve.

Will theft affect Hindutva, UP poll?

(To be continued previous issue...)

The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust had outsourced the cash-counting process to the local SBI branch, which in turn hired an external agency, 'Sainik Security Services'. SBI deployed 19 personnel, which included the few recommended by the Trust.

Of the eight arrested, six were from this counting team, and two were Trust employees—one of whom betrayed the immense trust placed in him by Trust general secretary Champat Rai on the quintessential RSS ethos that 'trust breeds trust.' The theft occurred because of over reliance on personal trust instead of systemic rigour. The counting protocols were overly relaxed, allowing for collusion.

This led to administrative negligence, paving the way for the theft. As Champat Rai himself noted, he was betrayed by someone he trusted deeply.

With elections approaching in Uttar Pradesh-the epicentre of national renaissance-the objective of the detractors is crystal clear: use the theft to fracture the temple movement which recalled and reinstated the pre-independence political philosophy of Hindu nationalism.

S. Gurumurthy

Bulldozer action

To date, Rs 80 lakh out of the stolen cash has been recovered. The special investigation team (SIT) set up by the UP government is actively tracking the remaining assets of the accused and investigating if any other valuables were compromised. The government's resolve against the wrongdoers is manifest in the move to bulldoze a Rs 80-lakh house built by one of the thieves whose salary was a mere Rs 20,000.

Stolen cash a small sum?

The Ram Mandir is said to have received over Rs 3,000 crore in donations to date, with reportedly more than 90% arriving securely via bank transfers. Between April 2025 and February 2026, Rs 74 crore was reportedly collected in cash via the Hundi. It was only from this cash pool that theft occurred.

Based on internal audits and preliminary SIT reports, the embezzled amount

was reportedly estimated at Rs 7 crore to 7.5 crore initially. The latest estimate of the theft gathered from Trust sources is far less, out of which most has been recovered partly in cash and partly traced as properties.

Trust sources confirm that there is not a single gram of jewellery lost. The latest estimate of the stolen cash, and the absence of any loss of jewellery, if finally established by SIT, will be a serious blow to the reckless opposition charge of a huge Rs 200 crore scam.

Already, their demand for a court-monitored investigation ignores the stark contrast between inaction in government Trust cases forcing the courts to step in to initiate the probe and the super promptness of the Mandir Trust's action.

Now come to the politics and ideological clashes triggered by the theft that is inevitable as the Mandir battleground of UP goes to polls early next year.

Hindu nationalism: Preached by Vivekananda, accepted by Gandhi, reclaimed by Ram

Even a single rupee stolen is a tragic betrayal of Shri Ram. Ram is not merely an idol. He is the very soul of this ancient nation. He is the very symbol of the Ayodhya movement that decisively course-corrected the pseudo-secular polity, which fractured our civilisational ethos. To recall how the Ram Mandir movement reoriented our national life, here is a bit of history that the media often forgets.

After independence, the inspiring ideals and symbols of the freedom movement—the concept of Hindu nationalism expounded by Swami Vivekananda and Maharishi Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Ram Rajya, the rallying freedom battle cries of Bharat Mata Ki Jai and Vande Mataram—were marginalised. The Ram Mandir movement catalysed their renaissance.

In his seminal work Hind Swaraj (1909), Gandhi wrote that Hindu theerth yatras, pilgrimage to Chardhams and reverence to Ganga Jal symbolise and proclaim our national integration and nationalism.

Most of those guiding the national discourse are unaware that the concept of a 'Hindu Rashtra' (Hindu nationalism) is not an invention of the RSS. Yes, it is not the RSS' conception. Decades before the RSS was formed, this nationalism was preached by Vivekananda and Aurobindo. It became the driving force of the freedom struggle. It was thoroughly embraced by leaders like—believe it!—Gandhi, Nehru, and even Communist stalwart Rajani Palme Dutt.

In his seminal work Hind Swaraj (1909), Gandhi wrote that Hindu theerth yatras, pilgrimage to Chardhams and reverence to Ganga Jal symbolise and proclaim our national integration and nationalism. He wrote that they "make us as one in the sense in which no two Englishmen are". When asked about Muslims, he said they must be assimilated into the overarching national mainstream. How many in the media know this?

Jawaharlal Nehru hailed Swami Vivekananda as the pioneer of India's freedom movement. He wrote in his Glimpses of World History (1935), "the Hindu nationalism preached by the Swami was rooted deeply in Hindu religion and culture, yet was in no way anti-Muslim." (p. 437).

Further, Nehru acknowledged, "It is not easy to draw a line between Hindu nationalism and true nationalism. The two blend together, as India is the only home of the Hindus and they form a majority there." (p. 720). How many participants in public discourse today have read Nehru's Glimpses of World History?

Rajani Palme Dutt, the Indian who founded the Communist Party of Great Britain, wrote in his book titled India Today that even if Indians had grown up in monastic isolation learning only the Sanskrit Vedas, they would have undoubtedly drawn inspiration required for the freedom struggle from them. How many in the media know his name, know that he wrote that book in 1939 and revised it in 1973 and still did not change what he had said in 1939?

This freedom movement, firmly anchored in Hindu nationalism, changed course drastically on one specific day—22 March 1940. That was the day the Muslim League under M A Jinnah passed the resolution for partition of the nation. From that day, the Hindu nationalist perspective was systematically erased from the freedom narrative.

Vande Mataram and Bharat Mata Ki Jai began fading from public life. After independence, the Nehru-led Congress actively rejected the very ideals and symbols Nehru himself had once celebrated. The foundational pillars of our independence—Hindu nationalism, Vande Mataram, Bharat Mata Ki Jai, and Ram Rajya—were orphaned by the pseudo secular political establishment. It was the RSS which kept the flame of these noble thoughts and symbols alive amid the pseudo-secular tsunami drive for vote bank politics.

Finally, it was the RSS-led mass Ram Mandir movement that reclaimed the pre-independence values of Hindu nationalism and reoriented the derailed national polity. When pseudo-secularists challenged Hindutva as not compatible with India's secular Constitution, the Supreme Court delivered a historic verdict in 1996, and ruled unequivocally that Hindutva is the national soul, culture, and way of life of the Indian people. When approached to review the ruling several times later, the court refused, thus confirming the Hindu foundations of our nation and nationalism.

Weaponising theft to sabotage nationalism

The Ram Mandir movement had successfully dismantled the pseudo-secular politics based on vote, thus restoring the Hindu nationalist perspective to its rightful place in the Constitution. Now, weaponising this Mandir theft, the forces that vehemently opposed the course-correction of the nation by the Ram Mandir movement, are desperately trying to derail it and drag the nation back into the abyss of pseudo-secularism.

The coordinated attempts by opposition parties and sections of the national and international media to undermine the reputation of the Ram Mandir movement is the present political and electoral challenge to the RSS and BJP. With elections approaching in Uttar Pradesh—the epicentre of national renaissance—the objective of the detractors is crystal clear: use the theft to fracture the temple movement which recalled and reinstated the pre-independence political philosophy of Hindu nationalism.

Since the UP election is months away, the opposition's effort to use the theft to make an impact will depend on their capacity to keep the issue alive till polling. For, in the social media-driven ecosystem, the shelf-life of all issues is increasingly becoming short. If the SIT establishes the theft to be a smaller affair and that no jewellery was lost, the opposition will have egg on its face and the issue itself will be consigned to history well before the elections. ❑❑

(S. Gurumurthy - Editor, Thuglak Tamil Magazine and **Chairman, Vivekananda International Foundation Strategic Think Tank)**

https://www.newindianexpress.com/opinion/columns/s-gurumurthy/2026/Jul/08/will-theft-affect-hindutva-up-poll

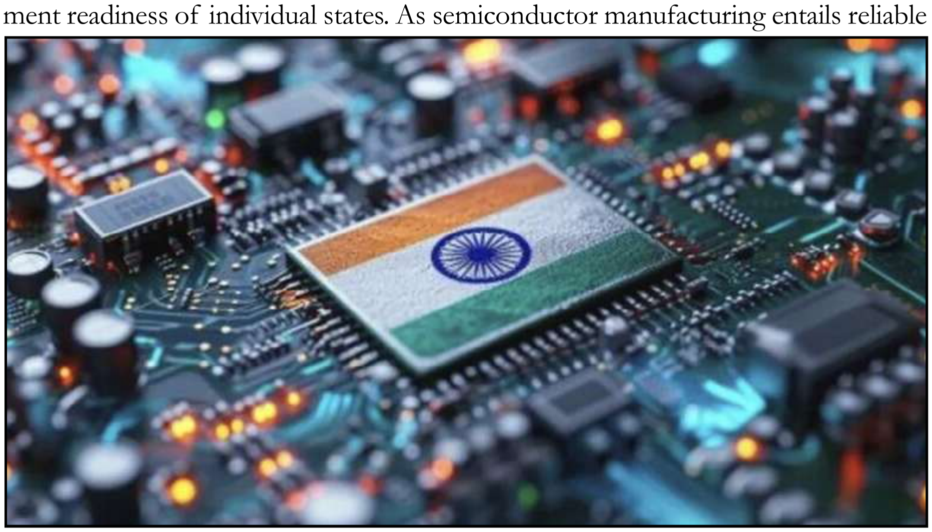
India's Semiconductor Push:
The States Hold the Key

With the swift expansion of digital technologies, semiconductors are turn out to be the utmost vital technologies in the world. The countries across the world have started investing heavily to strengthen the domestic semiconductor manufacturing as well as to lessen dependence on foreign supply chains. Such as, within the United States, the CHIPS and Science Act enacted in 2022 to encourage semiconductor manufacturing which provide US$52.7 billion in direct funding and nearly US$75 billion in loans and guarantees. Whereas, Japan has committed approximately US$26 billion to rebuild its semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem. On the other hand, South Korea has adopted an incentive-based approach through generous tax benefits, research and development support and low-interest financing to semiconductor companies. While Taiwan continues to encourage technological innovation through tax incentives for advanced manufacturing and research, China has invested approximately US$47.5 billion through its National Integrated Circuit Industry Investment Fund to expand domestic chip production. Similarly, the European Union has launched the European Chips Act which is the combination of financial assistance with regulatory reforms to strengthen semiconductor manufacturing across member states.

In this global race of semiconductor manufacturing, India has also entered through the Semiconductor Mission (Semicon) 2.0 which has a financial outlay of ₹ 1.275 lakh crore. Semicon 2.0 aims to develop a complete semiconductor ecosystem which comprises chip design, semiconductor fabrication, advanced packaging, research and development, machinery, materials and talent development. Basically, Semicon 2.0 programme build on the earlier Semicon 1.0 initiative, which laid the foundation for semiconductor manufacturing in the country. The success of Semiconductor Mission 2.0, however, relies on central government incentives as well as the investment readiness of individual states. As semiconductor manufacturing entails reliable

India must focus on improving investment conditions at the state level. In the end, the success of the national semiconductor mission will depend greatly on the effective implementation by the states.

Annu Kumari



infrastructure, uninterrupted power supply, efficient logistics, skilled human resources, supportive regulatory systems and strong industrial ecosystems which vary substantially across Indian states. In this context, the Investment Friendliness Index 2026, prepared by NITI Aayog, provides useful insights into the investment readiness of Indian states and Union Territories. It helps to identify which states are more likely to attract semiconductor investments in the coming years.

One of the most noticeable findings of the Investment Friendliness Index 2026 is the strong performance of western and southern India. According to the rankings of index, the top five states are Gujarat, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Odisha. Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are placed within the top ten.

The top ranked states reveal that long-term planning and policy continuity create favourable conditions for advanced manufacturing industries. The performance of Gujarat state is the outcome of consistently followed industrial development policies and investment in infrastructure, industrial corridors and manufacturing clusters. This is the reason why Gujarat has also emerged as one of India's leading destinations for semiconductor manufacturing. while Tamil Nadu has built a large manufacturing base in automobiles, electronics and engineering industries, Maharashtra benefits from its diversified industrial economy and strong financial ecosystem. Karnataka continues to lead in semiconductor design and research because it has a well-developed technology ecosystem.

Traditionally, Odisha is recognized for mining and heavy industries. Owing to policy reforms, improved infrastructure and proactive investment promotion, Odisha become one of the country's top investment destinations. Albeit, Goa is one of India's smallest states, it ranks fourth in the Investment Friendliness Index 2026. The reason behind Goa's rank is attributable to efficient governance, quality infrastructure and investor-friendly policies.

The rankings of Investment Friendliness Index 2026 also revealed that a large population or a large economy does not automatically make a state attractive for investment. Such as Uttar Pradesh has India's largest population, while Bihar has abundant labour resources and market potential however, both states ranked lower than many smaller states in the Investment Friendliness Index 2026 which means that infrastructure gaps, logistics challenges and institutional constraints affect the investment climate. In fact, Kerala performs well on several social indicators, yet it ranks lower than expected in the Investment Friendliness Index 2026. Thus, it needs to be noted investment decisions do not depend on population or market size alone.

Geography also influences investment decisions. Most of the leading states in the Investment Friendliness Index 2026 have long coastlines and access to major ports. Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Odisha benefit from lower logistics costs because industries can import raw materials and export finished products more efficiently. At the same time, geography alone does not determine success. Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan perform well despite being landlocked. Their performance shows that investments in highways, rail connectivity, industrial corridors and logistics infrastructure can reduce the disadvantages of inland locations.

Governance remains another important factor behind investment attractiveness which is quite visible from the rankings of Investment Friendliness Index 2026 that include states governed by different political parties. Among the top ten, several states are governed by the BJP or BJP-led alliances, including Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh (NDA alliance), Goa and Odisha. At the same time, Tamil Nadu (TVK led alliance) and Karnataka (Congress) also among the leading performers. Similarly, lower-ranked states are governed by a mix of political parties, including the BJP, Congress, regional parties and Union Territory administrations. Therefore, it can be clearly seen from the rankings of index that investors mostly look for predictable policies and efficient administration to reduce project delays and operational uncertainty.

To sum up, India's Semiconductor Mission 2.0 provides a strong national framework for building a domestic semiconductor industry however, its success will depend on in what manner individual states are prepared. As financial incentives can attract companies but incentives alone are not enough. Semiconductor companies make large investments for many years therefore, they need stable policies, reliable infrastructure, skilled workers and efficient governance. Thus, India must focus on improving investment conditions at the state level. In the end, the success of the national semiconductor mission will depend greatly on the effective implementation by the states. ❑❑

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Swadeshi 2.0: Re-reading Dadabhai Naoroji's Drain Theory in the Age of Data Drain

One hundred and twenty-five years after Dadabhai Naoroji published his seminal work, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, a new kind of colonial extraction is taking place. It does not travel via ships laden with bullion, nor does it demand the export of raw cotton or indigo. Instead, it travels at the speed of light through fibre-optic cables, carrying with it the most valuable commodity of the 21st century: Data.

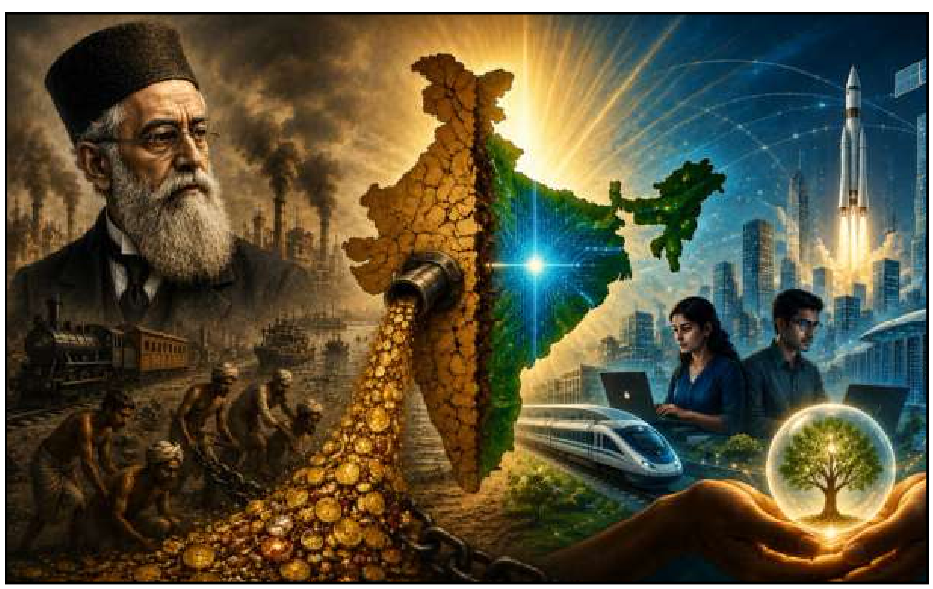
Naoroji's "Drain Theory" was a devastatingly simple economic critique. He posited that Britain's rule was bleeding India dry. Wealth was being generated in India through taxation, administrative expenses, and the export of raw materials, but none of this wealth was being reinvested into the Indian economy. Instead, it was remitted to England as "home charges," salaries for British officials, and profits for absentee landlords. This "external drain," Naoroji argued, was the primary cause of India's rampant poverty, reducing the country from a net exporter of capital to a subservient colony.

Today, as we implement the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDA) of 2026, we are forced to confront a disquieting question: Is Data the new wealth, and are we witnessing Data Drain 2.0? To understand the contemporary drain, one must consider the economics of the digital giants. Google, Meta, Amazon, and a host of AI startups operate as de facto sovereigns in Indian cyberspace. They do not extract minerals; they extract digital exhaust.

Every UPI transaction, every search query, every social media scroll, and every voice command in India generates a data point. This data is treated as "free"

The drain is no longer in the form of gold; it is in the form of bits and bytes. If we fail to monetize our data domestically, history will judge us as harshly as it judged the colonial policymakers of the 19th century.

Prof. Deepak Sharma



by the consumer, but in reality, it is the wage we pay for digital services. Once collected, this raw resource is processed, enriched, and turned into high-margin AI models, targeted advertising profiles, and behavioral insights. The final, high-value product—the service or the advertisement—is then sold globally, with the revenue flowing back to corporate headquarters in Silicon Valley.

The math echoes Naoroji's original complaint. While Indians provide the raw material (data), they see very little of the "value added." The Intellectual Property (IP), the algorithms, and the server infrastructure remain overwhelmingly foreign-owned. The wealth generated from Indian data does not fund Indian schools, roads, or healthcare. It funds buybacks in New York and dividends in California. This is not a trade deficit; this is a knowledge deficit. It is the extraction of economic surplus from the digital labour of a billion people without commensurate local reinvestment.

This brings us to the landmark Digital Personal Data Protection Act of 2026. The act is significant because it marks the first time India has explicitly attempted to assert "data sovereignty." It mandates that "critical" personal data must be stored within Indian borders -the principle of data localisation.

However, the Act has received mixed reviews. Many critics label it the "Aadhaar-before-wheat" of the digital age—a legal framework that protects privacy but does little to address the macro-economic drain of value. While data localisation ensures that the servers are physically on Indian soil, it does not necessarily ensure that the profits remain there.

If Naoroji were alive today, he would likely argue that merely localising the storage of data is akin to allowing the British to store cotton in Bombay warehouses, only to ship the finished textiles to Manchester. The processing—the "manufacturing" of data—is where the real wealth lies. If Indian data is merely stored here but crunched by foreign algorithms, the drain persists.

The urgent need of the hour is "Swadeshi 2.0." The original Swadeshi movement was a boycott of foreign goods and a revival of domestic industry. In the digital sphere, Swadeshi 2.0 must mean a radical shift from data localisation to data processing localisation.

We need to move beyond the DPDA's focus on privacy and security, and pivot toward an economic model that encourages the processing of data within India. This requires a concerted policy push to ensure that foreign "Big Tech" companies pay a "Data Royalty" or a significant user-participation tax, akin to a customs duty on finished digital products. More critically, it demands massive investment in domestic cloud infrastructure, AI research, and public digital platforms.

The government's push for the India AI Mission and the domestic semiconductor manufacturing program are steps in the right direction, but they need to be accelerated. If we can process the data locally, we can own the AI models, capture the patents, and ultimately, retain the value that is currently being drained. It would be reductive, however, to call Big Tech the "new British Raj." The British Empire used bayonets and bureaucracy to enforce its drain. Today, the extraction is voluntary, disguised as convenience. We choose to use Google Maps and WhatsApp because the utility they provide is immense. Swadeshi 2.0 cannot mean a rejection of these tools; it must mean a capitalist assertion of our worth.

The urgent need of the hour is "Swadeshi 2.0." The original Swadeshi movement was a boycott of foreign goods and a revival of domestic industry. In the digital sphere, Swadeshi 2.0 must mean a radical shift from data localisation to data processing localisation.

Naoroji's genius lay not just in showing that India was poor, but in proving that India was systematically impoverished. Today, we must prove that India is not just a "digital colony" but a digitally colonised economy. The DPDA 2026 is the first salvo in a long war. It gives us the tools to protect privacy, but we must now build the factories—the data centres and AI labs—to process the raw material.

The drain is no longer in the form of gold; it is in the form of bits and bytes. If we fail to monetize our data domestically, history will judge us as harshly as it judged the colonial policymakers of the 19th century. We have the data. We have the population. Now, we need the will to stop the drain and build a digital economy that works for India. ❑❑

Reset of Bharat's Strategic Autonomy - III

Multidimensional Approach

(Continued...)

History shows that energy competition drives geopolitical rivalries and military conflicts. Analysts note that controlling strategic resources shapes Washington's policies toward nations like Venezuela and Iran, alongside broader security goals.

Bharat handled the recent crisis remarkably well despite severe national risks. Unnecessary entangling into this conflict threatened its domestic energy supplies and endangered a massive overseas workforce. Left isolated by its neighbours during the crunch, Bharat faced the world's highest economic vulnerability. Yet, it navigated the global storm better than any other nation.

The ongoing conflict between the United States and Iran is a major global security threat. What started as economic sanctions has escalated into direct military clashes, worsening regional instability. Moreover, the US-Iran war has already engulfed the entire West Asia. The solution or peace is elusive. The US and Iran are fighting like war lords. The Red Sea, infested by Iran supported Houthy militants is already unsafe for international cargo passage.

The strategic significance of the Strait of Hormuz stems from its role as an irreplaceable energy corridor. Moving nearly 20 million barrels of petroleum products daily—one-quarter of global seaborne oil trade destined largely for Asia—alongside vital LNG exports, the strait underpins global economic stability. A sustained disruption would severely destabilize international energy markets, driving up costs across agriculture, aviation, and manufacturing.

Huge crude prices may widen Bharat's current-account deficit, pressure the rupee, increase transport and manufacturing costs, and raise food fertiliser and household energy prices. The burden falls upon consumers, businesses and the

US-Israel-Iran conflict poses a profound diplomatic and economic challenge.

Vinod Johri

government. Energy insecurity, therefore, becomes inflation insecurity, fiscal insecurity and ultimately a national-security challenge.

Renewable energy, nuclear power, biofuels, green hydrogen, electric mobility and energy efficiency must be viewed not as environmental commitments, but as instruments of strategic autonomy. Maritime security must remain intact. Naval preparedness, international cooperation and protected shipping routes are essential to prevent commercial waterways from becoming instruments of coercion.

Relying on a single fuel, supplier, or maritime route invites strategic risk. Energy must fuel stability and human welfare, not serve as a weapon of coercion. To prevent regional conflicts from triggering global catastrophes, we need resilient infrastructure, diversified supplies, and protected sea lanes—especially critical chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz, which supplies vital Asian oil and global LNG. Any prolonged blockade would devastate worldwide markets, manufacturing, and food production.

Bharat must bolster its regional footprint to monitor checkpoints by actively sharing intelligence with the friendly foreign navies thereby enhancing its Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) capabilities. This will enable Bharat to detect and identify any emerging threats at an early stage and respond effectively to potential disruption.

It is now been more than five months since 'Operation Roaring Lion' which marked a significant escalation in hostilities between Israel and Iran. It was a coordinated offensive move by Israel and the USA against Iran involving intense strikes using fighter aircrafts, long-range

Bharat must bolster its regional footprint to monitor checkpoints by actively sharing intelligence with the friendly foreign navies thereby enhancing its MDA capabilities.

bombers and precision-guided munitions targeting nuclear facilities, Islamic revolutionary guard cops (IRGC) command centres, naval assets and air defence systems. Evidently, the initial strike against Iran neutralised key members of the Iranian regime's top leadership, leading to retaliatory action by Iran, thereby launching ballistic missiles and drones on many crucial sites in Israel and allied nations. The conflict not only caused unprecedented strategic damage to Iran but also led to global energy and economic shocks coupled with the security threats throughout the Middle East. Countries like Bharat having deep ties to the region, also are not untouched especially when approximately 8.9 to 9.3 million Bharatiya nationals reside in the Gulf region and major imports of hydrocarbons pass through the 'Strait of Hormuz'. Due to the efforts at ongoing war, Bharat has witnessed critical challenges not only in energy security and economic stability but also new challenge concerning its strategic interest in the fragmented world order.

Bharat's Strategic Interest Under Present Geopolitical Turmoil

The ongoing US-Israel-Iran conflict poses a profound diplomatic and economic challenge requiring a delicate balancing act to secure its strategic interests. Incidentally, Bharat relies heavily on the Persian Gulf region for crude oil and a natural gas imports including crucial remittances from the large expatriate Bharatiya population. It can be inferred that the economic dimension emanating from the aforesaid conflict is perhaps the most immediate concern forcing Bharat to navigate the complex diplomatic tightrope. Reportedly, for many decades, Bharat has adopted multi-alignment diplomacy with Iran, the Gulf monarchies, Israel and the US. The aforesaid balancing act of Bharat though not seen as long sustaining, nevertheless, keeping in view the current situation, the aforesaid approach seems to be logical. Bharat has strategically avoided condemning the US-Israel strides on Iran including the killing of Supreme leader Ali Khamenei and other top commanders, thereby maintaining strict neutrality and urging all warring parties to exercise restraint, avoid escalation and respect national sovereignty to safeguarding its economic interests and simultaneously maintaining open channels with every actor involved. In doing so, Bharat seeks to protect its long-term interests in the region while retaining scope for further manoeuvre.

Nevertheless, neutrality alone may not be sufficient in the face of the increasingly volatile nature of the conflict. The possibility of the expansion of the conflict beyond its current contours and of a broader regional confrontation involving additional state and not-state players cannot be ruled out which may lead to significant security and economic repercussions. Further, the US-Israel-Iran conflict raises broader questions concerning the future of the international order keeping in view geopolitical fragmentation coupled with the increasing use of military force by the States to achieve their strategic interests. Therefore, for a country like Bharat aspiring to emerge as a leading global power, this conflict poses great challenge. Bharat's multi-alignment diplomacy has thus far enabled it to maintain productive relationships with competing geopolitical blocs, nonetheless sustaining the same requires continuous diplomatic recalibration, strategic foresight and institutional preparedness. As the situation in the region is very volatile, hence Bharat's ability to protect its Strategic interests, by and large, will depend upon the effectiveness of this diplomatic prudence. Again, Bharat's approach to the present crisis will also shape its role in the Middle East and offer wider insights to the other emerging states in navigate through complex international conflicts without compromising their strategic autonomy in the long run.

> ***National Green Hydrogen Mission and expanding domestic renewable Capacity will help Bharat to reduce its baseline demand for imports of petroleum fuels.***

The Approach Ahead

Far from being outdated, the term "strategic autonomy" captures the essence of Bharat's contemporary foreign policy: a commitment to sovereign decision-making, global cooperation, and national capability-building. As Bharat moves towards its long-term goal of becoming a *Viksit Bharat*, strategic autonomy must remain the bedrock of its engagement with the world.

Under the aforesaid circumstances, Bharat must complement diplomatic caution with proactive contingency planning on the energy front, including diversification of its crude basket, an increase in the Strategic Petroleum Reserves and fast-tracking the Green Transition. Though Bharat has already moved in this direction by importing crude from Russia but there is a need for accelerated expansion of long-term contracts with the other states including Latin America (Brazil, Guyana), West Africa and United States to reduce its dependency on the Strait of Hormuz. Additionally, Bharat needs to work aggressively in the direction of increasing its strategic petroleum reserves and scaling up the green transition and increase in the strategic petroleum reserves at par with the global benchmark of 90 days of oil imports would provide a sufficient buffer to deal with the future geopolitical disruptions. Moreover, scaling up the green transition i.e. National Green Hydrogen Mission and expanding domestic renewable Capacity will help Bharat to reduce its baseline demand for imports of petroleum fuels.

Further, Bharat should leverage multilateral institutions including the United Nations and the International Maritime organisation (IMO) to reinforce the principles of freedom of navigation to ensure uninterrupted maritime commerce on the high seas. Simultaneously, Bharat must bolster its regional footprint to monitor chokepoints by actively sharing intelligence with friendly foreign navies, thereby enhancing its Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) capabilities. This will enable Bharat to detect and identify any emerging threats at an early stage and respond effectively to potential disruptions. Moreover, a credible naval presence across strategically important sea lanes can serve as a deterrent and protect Bharat-flagged commercial vessels operating in the vulnerable waters. Bharat must also champion peaceful maritime dispute resolution through the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) to uphold UNCLOS principles. ❑❑

(Vinod Johri, Former IRS officer and author of the book 'The United Nations Role in Kashmir' (Released July 2026, Prabhat Prakashan, Delhi))

Source - Editor's View, India's Strategic Interests and Energy Security amid the Middle East Standoff by Shyam Sundar Rai, Defence and Security Alert magazine of Prabhat Prakashan, July 2026

Madison Square Garden to Jantar Mantar

The incumbent PM of Bharat is well known for practicing an influential interpersonal skill, whether it be with an individual or with a gathering. The Madison Square speech of September 2014 drew huge applause among the youths.

Alok Singh

Madison Square Garden is a rock-and-roll venue in Manhattan, New York, United States of America. Jantar Mantar is located at the political center of Bharat, adjoining the Parliament and Rashtrapati Bhawan.

The Madison Square was constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed over centuries starting from 1879. The current location has stood since 1968. The Jantar Mantar was constructed by the ruler of Amber, Raja Sawai Jai Singh II, in the year 1732. The garden is a planned public place, while the Jantar Mantar is a classical scientific observatory.

Madison Square mostly deals with the entertainment sector, while Jantar Mantar has an identity of serious business of planetary observations. Over a period of time, the Jantar Mantar has emerged as a venue for public gatherings. Both the garden and the Jantar Mantar are lively places. Almost every day witnesses some activities at these two venues.

Notable happenings at Maddison square garden includes the events like sports and concerts. The garden has hosted national conventions for political parties of the United States of America, Democrats as well as Republicans (i.e., the Democratic National Convention and the Republican National Convention). It has also hosted convocation ceremonies for the New York Police Academy, City University of New York, and Yeshiva University. It has hosted Grammy Awards functions on multiple occasions. This venue attracts youth and is easily identified with a crowd that is high in energy.

The Jantar Mantar has emerged as a site for social and political events to draw the attention of the Union government. It has a format of boycott, support, protest, hunger strike, and many other permutations and combinations. The Jantar Mantar is under the jurisdiction of Parliament Street police station. Jantar Mantar can be la-

beled as an iconic civic square for dissent and political protest. It has established itself as a launchpad for political outfits and political successes in terms of winning elections.

Jantar Mantar has surpassed Ramlila Maidan and India Gate in drawing the gravity of the general public. It has a locational advantage vis-à-vis Ramlila Ground and India Gate, although all three venues are in a close neighborhood. Jantar Mantar is surrounded by five-star hotels, various media houses, including Press Club of India, Indian Newspaper Society that hosts bureau offices of across the country media houses, National Media Centre, Press Trust of India, various eateries spread on Janpath road and adjoining Lutyens's roads. Easy access to various metro stations, approximately twenty minutes of travel time from Indira Gandhi International Airport, walking distance from New Delhi Railway Station, and in close vicinity of almost all the leading political parties, whether national or regional.

Madison Square Garden has multiple venues designed to satisfy the requirements of a variety of events. The organizers of the events have to pay for reserving the venue, and many events like concerts, sports, other entertainments, including speeches, are accessible to the audience by purchasing tickets. The organizers of the events can make money by selling tickets. The number of participants is restricted by the design of the venue.

The Jantar Mantar is a venue that is available to the organizers by seeking permission from the administration. The official review is done, and usually there should be sufficient time lag between the application seeking permission and the date of the events. The participants, i.e., audience or supporters, do not usually buy tickets. The organizers do not usually make money. It's the issue-based attraction that draws the stakeholders. There have been instances when the organizers themselves have been hijacked by other competing stakeholders. The trust of the people has been occasionally compromised; the lawmakers have been forced to mend their ways. That's the identity of the Jantar Mantar as a venue.

The Madison Square Garden and the Jantar Mantar are capable of fetching crowds. The profile of the crowds at Madison Square Garden is usually youths who are full of energy, and it's important to realize that age is just a number. Anyone who is full of energy, inquisitive, and has a passion is drawn to Madison Square as per their interests and issues. It is a fearless spot. There is rarely any doubt of being arrested or detained. But the Jantar Mantar is also a venue for political outrage. The history of arrests and detentions is a common phenomenon at this venue. During recent pasts Jantar Mantar is attracting more youth's vis a vis full time social and political activists.

Activism in itself seems to be a new career path for livelihood. It may be due to the youth dominating the demography of our nation today. Whosoever dominates in numbers decides the winners of the elections in a democratic structure. Jantar Mantar is a place whose engagement is closely watched by the people who are heading the government. An iota of mistake, a single casualty, and a little ignorance can lead to a bureaucratic tsunami and political challenges, sometimes leading to regime change. People who assemble at Jantar Mantar need to be treated with care, the way a fragile item is handled with care.

The incumbent prime minister of Bharat is well known for practicing an influential interpersonal skill, whether it be with an individual or with a gathering. The Madison Square speech of September 2014 drew huge applause among the youths. The tickets were sold at a premium and well in advance. The three-sixty-degree rotating cage-shaped stage that organizers of the event planned for the address by the prime minister at Madison Square helped the connection rise to a new height. It reflected the emergence of a new, energetic, young, aspirational, and transitioning Bharat. The cage-shaped stage that the rock starts feels comfortable to perform on, and to perform well, they do a lot of practice and rehearsals. This success was replicated by the spontaneous speech of our prime minister. It's the heart that matters, not the written scripts that can be reproduced to perfection after a lot of practice. Our prime minister spoke from the bottom of the heart, and the youths from America and other parts of the world got connected with the nation.

The Jantar Mantar is free. It does not need rehearsals, scripts, and practices. Jantar Mantar has witnessed dramas. Jantar Mantar is not a theater. The cooked scripts dry up. The entertainment-hungry crowd leaves if it's not fascinating. Ultimately, only the truth prevails at Jantar Mantar. Raja Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur created a scientific observatory that today is performing great as a venue for change agents. ❑❑

(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.)

India Has Huge Stake In Ending World War-III

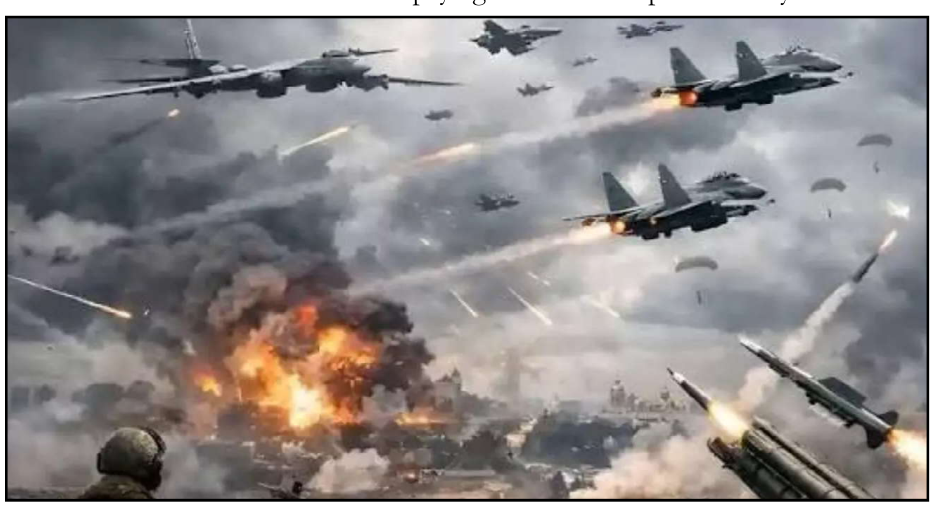
It is India's rise as a plural, liberal democracy that the world admired. It is through that personality that India can emerge as a voice of peace and seek an end to both wars, working with the developing economies of Asia, Africa and Latin America, all of which are threatened not just by the consequences of war but also by big power hegemonism.

Sanjaya Baru

Are we in the midst of World War III? The war in Europe has become a Eurasian war with North Korean troops joining and Chinese support propping up Russia. Ukraine remains in play, at least in part due to the support from Western Europe and the United States. The war in West Asia, yoyoing up and down depending on President Donald Trump's attention span, has drawn in many countries. The United States has made its military presence felt in Latin America, virtually "occupying" Venezuela and imposing a siege on Cuba. Africa has its own little wars from time to time. Its northern and eastern flanks have been drawn in one way or another into one conflict or another.

While there is no war going on currently in Asia to India's east, many of the countries in the region are being drawn into the two major ongoing conflicts in Western Europe and West Asia. North Korea is a direct recruit, while Japan is a declared ally of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) countries. Pakistan is embedded in the West Asian conflict in more ways than one. India has suffered collateral damage, with US gunboats entering the Indian Ocean region and Indians being killed in both the major wars.

Do we, therefore, declare that we are now in the midst of World War III? The question has been raised by scholars and commentators. In answering this question, it would be wrong to look for parallels from World War I and II. Both of them were essentially military campaigns in which the armed forces of rival countries were directly engaging each other. Millions died, cities were destroyed, normal life was totally disrupted in the nations that were at war, except for the United States. The same cannot as yet be said of the ongoing conflicts in Europe and West Asia. The damage to life and property has been limited to countries directly engaged in conflict, but countries around the world are paying an economic price already.



The impact of both conflicts has been felt globally. Energy and food prices have shot up. Global trade has been disrupted. The world's most powerful economies — the Group of Seven — have weaponised finance, energy and trade — and many citizens of countries around the world, including India, trapped in conflict zones due to their employment have been killed. The Indian people are bearing the burden of these conflicts.

There is as yet relative peace in Asia to our east and southeast, and China is holding its fire in the Taiwan Strait. Most countries in this region have increased their defence spending and war preparedness. Even as India deals with President Donald Trump's trade offensive and a sweeping sanctions regime, it is maintaining defence relations with the US, as it indeed is with Russia. India has also increased defence spending, and is also exporting arms: selling arms to Israel, a perpetrator of war, and selling BrahMos missiles to various Asian countries.

During World Wars I and II Indian citizens were drawn into the conflict, dying on European and Asian frontlines in defence of the British Empire. Today, Indian soldiers are not yet engaged but Indian citizens are dying as a consequence of the two wars. More importantly, the Indian economy has already paid a huge price as a result of both wars. The rise in energy and food prices, the disruption in supplies and the decline in global demand for manufactures and services have all negatively impacted India. After suffering the consequences of demonetisation and the Covid-19 pandemic, India is now burdened by the consequences of both wars.

> ***Even as recently as the turn of the century, Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew posed a question as to why the world was willing to accommodate a rising India while being suspicious of a rising China.***

Clearly India has a huge stake in bringing both conflicts to an end. Prime Minister Narendra Modi once famously declared that "this is not an era of war", but India's ability to intervene and make a difference has been limited by the fact that in both conflicts India has friendly relations with both sides. India's relations with Russia are as important for her as relations with the European Union and the United States, even if Ukraine is a lesser consideration. In West Asia, India has a stake in maintaining good relations with all sides.

India is currently seeking membership of the United Nations Security Council. It is not clear why the external affairs ministry has thrown India's hat into the ring at this late stage. But, having done so, it could consider strengthening its case by in fact being a peace activist on the world stage. India has a direct stake in ending both conflicts. It also has a stake in ensuring that all the major powers — the US, Russia and China — respect international law and the UN Charter in their own neighbourhoods.

India is hosting the Brics summit in September this year. While Russia and Iran are directly involved in a war, most Brics countries have a stake in a return to a more peaceful and stable global environment. Can Indian leadership articulate a vision for world peace and build a coalition of nations that seek an end to both the Ukraine and Gulf conflicts? Equally, they should insist that each of the major powers desist from asserting their hegemonism in their own neighbourhood.

Of course, this requires a repositioning of India as a global citizen, not a country that harasses and terrorises its own citizens. It was India's commitment to democratic and liberal values that enabled the Indian political leadership to acquire a global profile in the 1950s and 1960s. Even as recently as the turn of the century, Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew posed a question as to why the world was willing to accommodate a rising India while being suspicious of a rising China. The world has since become less accommodative of India's interests because of the new direction of our domestic politics.

If India's appeal is not that of a democratic nation but merely a rising economy with a growing market, then its appeal even now would fade in comparison with China — still a more attractive market for many. It is India's rise as a plural, liberal democracy that the world admired. It is through that personality that India can emerge as a voice of peace and seek an end to both wars, working with the developing economies of Asia, Africa and Latin America, all of which are threatened not just by the consequences of war but also by big power hegemonism. ❑❑

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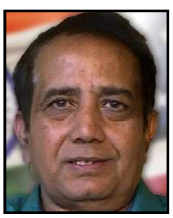
https://www.deccanchronicle.com/opinion/columnists/sanjayovacha-india-has-huge-stake-in-ending-world-war-iii-sanjaya-baru-1976060

Merchant Fees Should Not Be levied On UPI Under External Pressure

The government has introduced a legislation in Parliament that could allow merchant charges on selected Unified Payments Interface transactions, marking a possible shift from India's zero-charge digital-payment regime. On August 4, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the legislation in the Lok Sabha that would amend Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, and could change how digital transactions are priced. At present, banks and payment-system providers cannot directly or indirectly charge users for prescribed payment methods, including UPI and RuPay debit cards. The Bill proposes allowing the Central Government to decide, through notification, which electronic payment modes or transactions must remain free. The Bill itself neither introduces a merchant discount rate nor specifies a fee. However, it creates the legal authority required for the government to modify the zero-MDR framework later.

Two Charging Models Under Consideration

Policymakers are reportedly considering two possible charging models. Under the first, UPI merchant payments above Rs. 2,000 could attract an MDR of around 0.25–0.5%, while smaller transactions and person-to-person transfers would remain free. Under the second, charges could apply only to payments received by merchants with annual turnover exceeding Rs. 1.5 crore. The merchant would formally bear the fee, but businesses could recover the cost by raising prices, imposing convenience charges or encouraging customers to pay in cash.



India should not introduce MDR to address US trade complaints, or protect payments companies. Any decision needs to be based on the cost of running UPI and ensuring its long-term sustainability.

Ajay Srivastava

UPI Is Critical Public Infrastructure

UPI has become essential national digital infrastructure. In July 2026, it processed 23.6 billion transactions worth Rs. 29.9 trillion, making it one of the world's largest real-time payment systems. Zero MDR contributed significantly to this growth by allowing consumers, small shops and roadside vendors to make and receive payments without transaction charges. However, banks, the National Payments Corporation of India and payment companies must invest in cybersecurity, fraud prevention, servers, dispute resolution and system expansion. A sustainable funding model may therefore be necessary. But financing the system does not automatically require a general merchant charge. Alternatives include targeted budgetary support, government incentives, charges on large commercial transactions, cross-subsidisation from financial services and narrowly designed fees applicable only to high-turnover merchants.

USTR Criticises Pix, UPI and RuPay

The legislative change also comes against the backdrop of US criticism of domestic digital-payment systems. The US Trade Representative's 2026 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers criticised both Brazil's Pix and India's UPI and RuPay framework.

The report argued that Brazil's central bank created, owns, operates and regulates Pix, giving the system preferential treatment over American payment providers. Following a Section 301 investigation, the United States imposed an additional 25% tariff on most Brazilian goods in July 2026. Electronic payments were among several reasons cited, alongside digital trade, intellectual property, ethanol market access, anti-corruption enforcement and deforestation.

Brazil refused to change Pix. Its government defended free individual transactions, low merchant costs, central-bank operation and compulsory participation by large financial institutions. President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva publicly supported the system, while Brazilian officials said US objections were intended to protect the fees and market share of American card companies.

Visa & Mastercard Lose Business

In India's case, USTR argues that payment policies favour domestic providers, particularly RuPay. Since UPI's launch, Visa and Mastercard have lost potential business as consumers increasingly use free UPI payments instead of cards. They also object to zero transaction charges for UPI and RuPay, government promotion of RuPay, and RuPay's early access to credit-card payments through UPI. This has strengthened RuPay and reduced the fee income of US card companies.

The deeper issue is whether India's payment architecture generates enough fee-based revenue for foreign card and payment companies. Visa and Mastercard operate on a model under which banks, payment processors and card networks earn fees from merchant transactions. A widely available, interoperable and zero-MDR platform such as UPI limits this revenue pool. RuPay further challenges their position by providing an Indian card network that can be integrated closely with domestic policy objectives.

US Firms

The US has also objected to NPCI's proposed 30% transaction-volume cap for each third-party payment application. Google Pay and Walmart-controlled PhonePe together process more than 80% of UPI transactions. NPCI says the restriction is intended to reduce market concentration and systemic risk. Its implementation has been deferred until December 2026. American companies have additionally opposed India's data-localisation rules requiring payment-system data to be stored in the country.

However, UPI is clearly not closed to US companies. Google Pay and PhonePe dominate its consumer-facing application market. The disagreement is about market-share limits, data control, RuPay's position and the lack of fee income.

Do Not Change UPI

India should not introduce MDR simply to address US trade complaints or protect the profits of Visa, Mastercard and other foreign payment companies. Any decision on charges should be based on the cost of running UPI and ensuring its long-term sustainability.

American companies already have wide access to India's payment market. Google Pay and PhonePe process more than four-fifths of all UPI transactions, even though UPI was created using Indian public infrastructure and is regulated by Indian institutions. Few countries would allow foreign-controlled applications to hold such a dominant position in critical financial infrastructure. NPCI's proposed 30% market-share cap for each payment app should be seen as a measure to promote competition and reduce risk, not as discrimination. Heavy dependence on Google Pay and PhonePe limits opportunities for Indian competitors and could disrupt the system if either provider faces technical or business problems.

India should also retain its payment-data localisation rules. Payment data are sensitive and commercially valuable. Keeping these data in India helps regulators investigate fraud, improve cybersecurity and protect national security.

RuPay should continue to receive government support. Many countries promote domestic payment systems to reduce dependence on foreign companies. US objections should not prevent India from supporting RuPay and maintaining competition with Visa, Mastercard and other international card networks.

American-owned Google Pay and Walmart-backed PhonePe already control nearly 80% of UPI transactions, while India has repeatedly deferred the 30% market-share cap designed to curb such concentration as the US desires. This has given the US platforms a near-free run over one of India's most valuable digital public assets.

The warning from Brazil is clear: the United States has imposed 25% tariffs on Brazilian imports under a Section 301 action that, among other complaints, targets Brazil's public instant-payment system, Pix, for allegedly disadvantaging American payment companies.

Washington's demands have no finishing line—each concession only invites another. India must not rewrite its UPI policies under US pressure. It must defend competition, policy autonomy and the long-term sustainability of its payments ecosystem. ❑❑

https://basispointinsight.com/Story/merchant-fees-should-not-be-levied-on-upi-under-external-pressure-_47b3131d02ba.html

Reimagining Swadeshi Academic Hierarchies in the Universities:

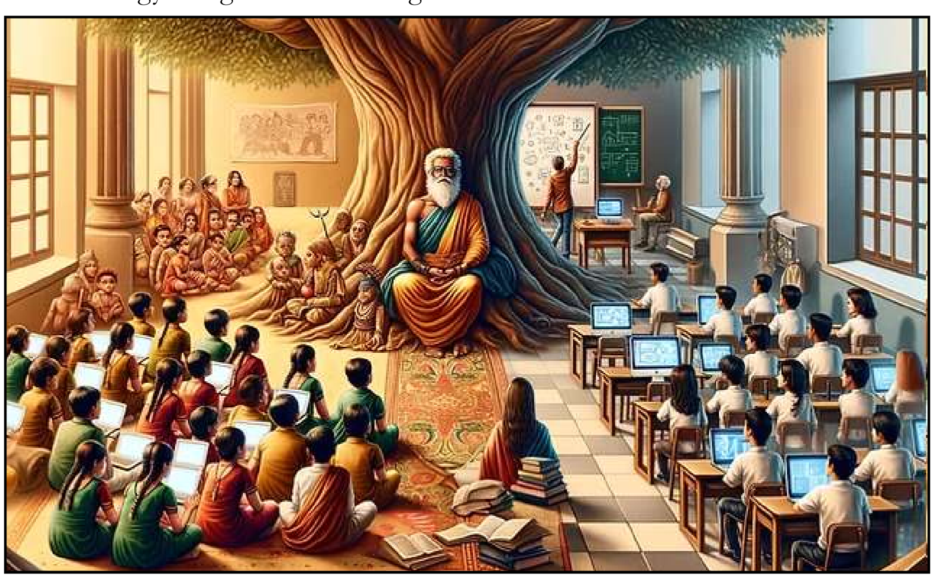
A Gurukul-NEP Perspective

The article offers a structural framework to restructure contemporary university faculty hierarchies, shifting from colonial institutional designs toward a Swadeshi framework. By infusing the insights of the traditional Gurukul system into the mandate of the NEP, it moves away from the linear colonial pyramid toward a multi-track, specialized model.

Dr. R Krishna Chaitanya

The western influence

The structure of academic hierarchy prevalent in the Indian universities is based on the traditions of medieval European universities during the 12th and 13th centuries. In the early universities, such as the University of Bologna, the student guilds pooled their financial resources to hire instructors. These scholars were designated as *professores*, a term derived from the Latin meaning to "declare" or openly profess a specialized branch of knowledge. It was not a specific rank. By the fourteenth century, this nomenclature spread to early modern English institutions such as the University of Oxford. The path from entry-level scholar to the apex of the profession followed parallel responsibilities across borders, though the specific titles diverged between the United Kingdom and North America. In the UK system, the first permanent or probationary career tier is the Lecturer, which aligns directly with the North American Assistant Professor; at this stage, faculty members are expected to establish independent research profiles and fulfill foundational teaching duties. Progression leads to the mid-career rank of Senior Lecturer, equivalent to a North American Associate Professor, which demands proven teaching excellence, a mature publication record, and independent administrative responsibilities. Historically, the UK system also utilized the distinct rank of Reader—often described as a "Professor without a Chair"—to recognize senior academics with an international reputation in research, mapping roughly to a higher-band Associate Professor or an early Full Professor. The absolute summit of this hierarchy is the title of Professor, matching the North American Full Professor or Endowed Chair, a role reserved for department heads and field leaders who drive institutional strategy and global research agendas.



India's higher education framework mirrored the traditional British model, utilizing the intermediate title of "Reader." To modernize these designations, align with international benchmarks, and elevate the global prestige of the teaching fraternity, the University Grants Commission (UGC) initiated a major overhaul of faculty structures. Driven by the recommendations of the Prof. G.K. Chadha Committee, this reform replaced the legacy commonwealth titles with the standardized three-tier American system. The formal transition was notified and executed during the implementation of the Sixth Pay Commission around 2009–2010. Under the revised UGC Regulations on Minimum Qualifications for Appointment, the historical rank of "Reader" was officially retired, and all existing readers were redesignated as Associate Professors.

The gurukul system

Since age timeless, in our system, teaching-learning process is regarded as a true service to the society and a path to eternity. It is not just any other profession which has stipulated timings to share factual knowledge in a closet. It is a process which is noble, divine, natural, creative, formal, informal, inherent, coherent, inquisitive, subjective, objective, question, answer, illustration, demonstration, animation, notation, prose, poetry, lullaby, finding, enriching, motivating, inspiring, exploring, experimenting and many more. Through this process, the student attains perfection at any or many the 64 arts (kalas) and 14 skills (Vidyas). These skills along with wisdom, morals, values, & ethos were passed on to successive generations through guru-shishya parampara. While the Western academic framework standardized across the United Kingdom and North America is structured as a bureaucratic hierarchy based on institutional seniority, teacher excellence, research metrics, and administrative governance, the ancient Indian *Gurukul* system operates on an ontological hierarchy based on depth of consciousness, holistic mastery, and the spiritual evolution of the student. The Western model positions the 'Professor' at the apex of a corporate-intellectual ladder, using tenure, peer-reviewed publications, and university payroll tracks to measure status. Conversely, the *Gurukul* model categorizes educators not by their institutional contract, but by their internal capability to transform data into experiential wisdom to the total spiritual liberation of the disciple. Rather than tracking years of tenure or publication counts, it delineates distinct archetypes of teachers based on their unique developmental functions.

The classical Indian educational hierarchy moves seamlessly from foundational literacy to complete spiritual evolution through four distinct teacher archetypes. At the baseline is the ***Adhyapak***, a title derived from *Adhyayana* (the act of reading or studying); is responsible for introducing students to basic information and ensuring its precise memorization, particularly regarding languages, scripts, and phonetics. Building upon this foundation, the ***Upadhyaya*** imparts applied knowledge who deals with specific portions of the Vedas or specialized secondary texts known as *Vedangas*. By converting general literacy into economic and functional utility, the Upadhyaya cultivates a deep intellectual understanding of the logic beneath raw information, thereby equipping the student with specific domain expertise. The integration of this knowledge is driven by the ***Acharya***, a term originating from Aacharana (conduct or behavior), who imparts practical mastery of complex crafts, behavioral ethics, and experiential application. The Acharya effectively bridges the gap between merely knowing a text and fully embodying a skill, ensuring that academic learning translates into lived discipline. Finally, while these previous tiers prepare a student to survive and thrive in the material world, the ***Guru*** goes entirely beyond texts, professions, and skills to work directly on the student's consciousness and ego. Providing absolute spiritual alignment, the Guru guides the seeker through total psychological transformation toward ultimate liberation. Beyond institutional boundaries lived the ***Rishis*,** the visionary seers and original researchers who discovered profound scientific, cosmic, and philosophical truths through deep meditative insight, thereby framing the core curriculum that would eventually be taught.

The educational crisis

For decades, the Indian higher education system faced a profound systemic crisis, where the historical, holistic role of the educator has been reduced to a bureaucratic, ritualistic eight-hour job confined within rigid concrete walls. Post-colonization structures and rigid curriculum frameworks have stifled creative pedagogical expression, substituting meaningful teaching philosophies with superficial digital tools, rote learning, and quantitative evaluation systems. This institutional decline is exacerbated by the flawed assumption that every researcher is an effective teacher, forcing diverse faculty into an identical mold that drastically dilutes quality. Driven by the rigid reliance on metrics like publication counts, citations, and the h-index, a toxic "publish or perish" culture has commercialized academia, fueling predatory journals and artificial data manipulation. Further, reducing educators to an administrative auxiliary workforce severely diminishes classroom contact hours and fractures intellectual focus. To counter this systemic decline and safeguard education in the national interest, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduces a necessary paradigm shift. However, university academic hierarchies, along with faculty selection and recruitment criteria, remain deeply tethered to colonial models; these structures must be radically reimagined through the lens of our ancient Gurukul system.

Gurukul-NEP model

To achieve deep and lasting transformation, universities must abandon incremental adjustments in favour of a revolutionary, system-wide overhaul. The current higher education framework requires a complete structural reorganization that clearly demarcates the distinct roles of teaching, research, and administration. By instituting independent entry-level recruitment pipelines, universities can channel talent into specialized teaching or research tracks aligned with individual aptitude. Rather than maintaining the colonial hierarchy of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, and Senior Professor, institutions should adopt functional designations where faculty are recognized simply as Shikshaks (Teachers) or Shodhaks (Researchers) to reflect their true professional contributions.

Aligning with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP), the pedagogical track within each department would be structured around specific operational archetypes: Adhyapak: Responsible for leading all core and foundational courses; Upadhyaya: Specialized in delivering multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary curricula; Acharya; Dedicated to driving practical sessions, skill development, and ability enhancement courses; Guru: Reserved for senior chairs tasked with macro-disciplinary synthesis, institutional character building, imparting value-based educational courses, and designing futuristic courses; Rishi: Eminent scholars who would be dedicated to research and innovation with profound subject mastery.

To ensure the integrity of this envisioned academic framework, universities must provide equal salary to all the roles proposed at the entry level, establishing an exceptionally high baseline of compensation that reflects their true societal value. This strategy eliminates financial disparity between pedagogical, and research paths, effectively eradicating institutional corruption and the systemic vulnerabilities that lead to academic conflicts, financial or administrative compromises.

True educational excellence require periodic promotions based on performance indicator model that prioritizes pedagogical and curricular innovation, rating faculty on the teaching track by their ability to design contemporary, industry-aligned course curricula, build modern instructional methodologies, and create high-retention learning resources. For the research track, scholarly accountability must take precedence over pure volume, shifting the institutional focus from numbers to peer-reviewed regional or global real-world impact, technological transfers, patent utility, & innovations thereby completely shunning the toxic "publish or perish" culture. Concurrently, evaluation metrics must pivot toward holistic student outcomes, evaluating performance through quantifiable student satisfaction, rigorous feedback systems, and definitive employment or higher education placement rate. Finally, the educators (shikshak or shodhak) must be made free of administrative responsibilities by building distinct, professional administrative cadres within universities to handle logistics, compliance, and clerical operations, thereby freeing the faculty to focus entirely on intellectual development.

A New Perspective for India's Growth

Reimagining academic hierarchies through a Swadeshi Gurukul-NEP perspective offers a profound structural cure for the systemic ailments of modern higher education, replacing transactional colonial bureaucracy with a holistic ecosystem that nurtures skilled, self-realised graduates connected to their environment. By purging Western bureaucratic ranks and replacing them with indigenous mentorship models, this transformation strips away the toxic culture of campus politics and institutional factionalism. Ultimately, this structural shift restores the historical reverence and intellectual autonomy of the educator, reclaiming the university campus as a harmonious sanctuary of true learning. ❑❑

(Dr. R Krishna Chaitanya, Associate Professor, Department of Zoology, Central University of Karnataka)

FSSAI Cornered: Victory of Public Health

(All started with a Petition. Swadeshi Jagran Manch's Petition on the subject, demanding warning signal. 27727 concerned citizens signed.)

Two weeks ago, the Supreme Court of India reprimanded the FSSAI for its laxity in implementing warning labels on harmful packaged foods, while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by 3S and Our Health Society, seeking mandatory front-of-pack warning labels on packaged foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat. The Court remarked that the agency's resistance to mandate warning labels for packaged foods high in salt, sugar, and saturated fats (HSSF), raised questions about whether it is acting under pressure from corporate houses. The Court directed the Central Government's Additional Solicitor General to ensure that action is taken within two weeks, and warned that in case of non-compliance, the Court would be constrained to issue specific directives on the matter. The Court expressed concern regarding the health of the citizens, particularly growing children. It also rejected the Central Government's argument that strict warning labels might result in traditional Indian snacks (such as *namkeen*) being marked with a red warning symbol due to their high fat or salt content. Dismissing this argument, the Court stated that such concerns should not deter the government from raising public awareness about what people are consuming.

As reported in some sections of the press, on 28, August 2026, FSSAI has proposed front-of-pack warning labels on packaged food and drinks, reversing its position following growing public anger about a lack of strict labels highlighting high sugar, fat or salt in items. The very fact that FSSAI has agreed to warning signals as part of FOPL, in the court, shows that the regulator has succumbed to the pressure from Supreme Court, media and concerned citizens.

It seems, that the Union government has now risen to the occasion and has dumped FSSAI's resistance. Now, in the next stage, FSSAI's officials should be taken to task for playing in the hands of the corporate, and working against public interest, and harming the government's image.
Swadeshi Samvad

Our country has a long-standing tradition of preparing and consuming healthy and nutritious food. Our traditional food plate typically contain a well-balanced mix of proteins, vitamins, carbohydrates, and other essential nutrients; consequently, our diet has historically been balanced. However, the consumption of processed foods has recently surged, and the market is now flooded with ultra-processed foods. Significantly, these ultra-processed foods—manufactured by major multinational corporations—have captured a substantial share of the market. Scientists clearly believe that these ultra-processed foods have been contributing to various non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cancer. Moreover, companies use excessive amounts of sugar, salt, and saturated fats to entice customers and get children hooked on—or addicted to—their products. In our country, conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and kidney and liver diseases are becoming increasingly common due to the high levels of sugar, sodium, and saturated fat in our diet. Due to a lack of nutritional awareness among the public and the absence of warning labels on food packaging, people are unknowingly consuming these harmful substances. This is driving the rise of these ailments, which are often referred to as "lifestyle diseases."

If such harmful food products carried warnings indicating that they contain sugar, salt, or saturated fat levels exceeding recommended limits, and are harmful to health, consumers would become aware of the potential side-effects and they could make informed choices when purchasing food. While it is true that sales for the companies manufacturing these products might decline, as consumers would dump their unhealthy products, there is no doubt that public health would improve as a result. This is a clear cut case of profit over public health.

Therefore, it is absolutely essential to inform consumers that the packaged foods they are consuming can be detrimental to their health. In other countries—regardless of whether specific warning labels are actually mandated—companies face pressure due to consumer awareness and the vigilance and impartiality of regulatory bodies. While the FSSAI resisted to implement warning labels, reports from independent media reveal that these same companies sell less harmful versions of their products in other countries. For instance, according to the news agency Reuters, Fanta (a soft drink) sold in In-

Swadeshi Jagran Manch started a Campaign on Change.org, demanding warming signal on harmful packaged food.

Petition is reproduced as follows:

Dear Health Minister,

Save people from harmful packaged food: Print Warning On Unhealthy Food Products

To reduce the impact of unhealthy food products on health, the Food and Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has initiated the model of Front of Packing Label (FOPL) of packaged food products. FSSAI has decided issue a draft regulation to include 'Health Star Rating' (HSR). Food product will get a half to 5 Stars depending on its contents.

We believe that this is being done under pressure from the ultra-processed food industry, who earlier opposed a traffic light label and now happy with Stars.

Minutes of the meeting show that FSSAI has chosen to ignore public health and consumer interest by giving undue importance to the opinion of large food processing industries.

Scientific evidence favours that unhealthy foods be given a Warning Label, which has demonstrated to reduce consumption of unhealthy food products. Warning labels are quick to understand and impact on consumption.

Realizing the importance of this issue, many countries have introduced mandatory warning labels including Chile, Peru, Israel, Mexico, Uruguay, and soon to be introduced in Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, and Venezuela.

The Scientific evidence does not support Health Stars on food products.

Scientists believe that these ultra-processed foods are causing many non communicable diseases (NCDs) including cancer.

We have been eating healthy and nutritious foods, real and unprocessed, our diet has always been very balanced. But in the recent past, the trend of ultra-processed foods has increased and especially markets are flooded with ultra-processed foods and these are aggressively marketed affecting the health of both children and adults.

It's notable that companies use excessive amounts of sugar, salt (sodium) and saturated fats to entice customers and make children get addicted to these products. In our country, diabetes, blood pressure, kidney and liver diseases are becoming common due to excess of sugar, salt/sodium and saturated fats in the food.

People lack such awareness and unknowingly consuming these harmful food items. Therefore it is the responsibility of the government to tell people which food products are safe to eat and which are not. If such a warning is posted on foods products having excess of sugar, salt or saturated fats beyond a WHO's prescribed threshold limit, consumers will be able to learn and make informed decisions about their food purchase and consumption.

Today, when the country's food regulatory body is taking a decision in this regard, the health of the people of the country should be the first priority and not the profit of the companies.

Therefore, we the people of India, consuming the food products available in our market, would like you to :

1. Ask FSSAI, to make decisions without the involvement of food industry or its front groups.
2. Ensure that packaged food products have warning labels expressing nutrients of concern if they are in excess to be harmful.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan, *National Co-convenor, SJM* dia contains three times more sugar, than the same product sold elsewhere. Recently it's further revealed that Nestle's Maggi is sold with red signal, for containing excessive salt, in UK, whereas the same product is being sold without any such warning. It is evident that, due to lack of awareness among parents, children in India are falling prey to diseases by consuming such beverages. This is precisely why the Supreme Court has expressed concern and reprimanded the FSSAI, questioning how it could be so insensitive regarding the health of citizens, particularly children.

Research by independent experts clearly points to a direct link between the rising consumption of harmful packaged foods and the increase in non-communicable diseases, both domestically and globally. Non-communicable diseases—including cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and kidney and heart ailments—are spreading like an epidemic across the world. Today, one in four people in India suffers from diabetes, and cancer cases are steadily rising. The only way to prevent these diseases is to avoid the excessive consumption of salt, sugar, and saturated fats. However, when products from major, well-known companies are sold without any warnings despite containing high levels of these harmful ingredients, the path to preventing these epidemics is blocked.

Showing total insensitivity to the screaming realities, FSSAI continued to ignore the sane voices of the concerned citizens, scientific community and experts, and instead of initiating warning signals on unhealthy food, especially HSSF food (food high in sugar salt and saturated fats), FSSAI, instead initiated examining Australian health star rating (HSR) model in 2019, on October 4, 2019. FSSAI published report, specifically describing 1-5 star HSR system and its nutritional algorithm in September 2021. FSSAI signed an MOU with Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A) and commissioned a study titled, Consumer Perceptions of Different Front of Pack Label for Packaged (FOPL) food among Indian population on 15 February 2022. IIM-A presented the findings to the FSSAI stakeholders' meeting. FSSAI documents says that IIM-A recommended HSR and on 20th September 2022, FSSAI issued draft regulations, incorporating FOPNL (Front of Pack Nutrition Labelling). We can conclude that HSR is not the outcome of IIM-A study. This is important to note, because this study was subsequently used to support the decision in favour of HSR. There is an ample proof in the form of contemporary stakeholders' meeting records, suggesting that HSR was introduced by FSSAI's leadership much before IIM-A study was commissioned after FSSAI issued draft guidelines for introducing HSR, there was a public-outcry, against the same and opponents approached the then Minister of Health and Family Welfare, and this opposition resulted in slowing of introduction of HSR. International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, tested five options, including warning labels, HSR and traffic lights. The results strongly favoured warnings labels for identifying unhealthy products.

Whereas FSSAI, as regulator, has the responsibility to safeguard the interests of the common people, protecting them from harmful food, its actual actions have been far from satisfactory. Whereas, FSSAI was very much aware that many countries, have adopted warning signals, traffic lights, and other others, which can protect the consumer interests, in varying degrees, and warning signals are best suited for India; it chose to promote HSR; and has not only resisted the introduction of warning signals, despite the matter being hotly debated in public, and even Supreme Court has indicated FSSAI's suspicious role in so many words.

Now, when the ball is in the Supreme Court's court and Court had shown its strong inclination towards warning signals, it's hoped that with strong media push, in favour of the warning signals to safeguard public health, warning signals are no longer a distant dream. Union government is also expected to act in public interest, coming out of FSSAI misinformation. This is imperative for the government, especially MoHFW, to prove that it's committed to safeguard public health. Moreover, this is also important for the government, that if unhealthy HSSF foods are allowed to be sold, without warning, not only NCDs will continue to impact people's health, government's expenditure on public health will rise further. It seems, that the Union government has now risen to the occasion and has dumped FSSAI's resistance. Now, in the next stage, FSSAI's officials should be taken to task for playing in the hands of the corporate, and working against public interest, and harming the government's image. ❑❑

A Swadeshi Blueprint for a Rs.3000 Trillion Bharat: The BGIF Story

The Bharat Global Industries Forum (BGIF) has moved from an idea rooted in the Swadeshi Jagran Manch's vision of self-reliant industrial growth to a fast-expanding national platform — one now filing for trademark protection, opening state chapters across India, and brokering its first cross-border industrial partnership. Its own progress reports describe the mission in a single line: "From Vision to Action — Building Bharat as a Global Industrial Hub through Collaboration, Innovation, and Industrial Excellence."

BGIF describes itself not as a conventional trade body but as a "strategic think-and-action platform" — one built to bring India's leading industrialists, corporations, policymakers, global investors, technocrats, and innovators onto a single stage. Its stated objective is striking in scale: to help India grow from its current size of roughly Rs. 350 trillion to a Rs. 3000 trillion economy by 2047, establish the country as a global hub for manufacturing and exports, generate quality employment for its youth workforce, and position India as a global centre for research and development and a focal point of international trust and respect.

For full details, please see https://www.bgif.in website.

https://www.ptinews.com/detail/business/A-Swadeshi-Blueprint-for-a-Rs-3000-Trillion-Bharat-The-BGIF-Story/3860580

A. Balakrishnan consigned to flames in Kanyakumari

The mortal remains of A. Balakrishnan, AllIndia President of Vivekananda Kendra and veteran social worker, were consigned to flames at Kanyakumari around 1 pm on Saturday (29/08/2026), following final rites that began at 11 am.

Hundreds of people gathered at Kanyakumari to pay their last respects to Balakrishnan, who passed away in the early hours of Thursday at the age of 88 due to age-related ailments.

A Shradhanjali meeting was held at Kanyakumari after the cremation. Several RSS leaders, including S. Sethumadhavan, R. Sanjayan, Harikrishnan, Prasobh, Ravikumar and Prasanth, former union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan, Thiruvananthapuram Mayor V. V. Rajesh and prominent personalities from the social and cultural fields attended the meeting. R. Sundaram, National Convener of Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), and RSS ideologue and columnist S. Gurumurthy were also present.

Balakrishnan, a native of Kerala, had Kanyakumari as the principal centre of his long public and social service. For more than five decades, he was closely associated with the spread of the message and ideals of Swami Vivekananda and the expansion of the educational and service activities of Vivekananda Kendra.

One of the earliest Jeevanvratis of the organisation, Balakrishnan joined Vivekananda Kendra in 1973 after retiring from the Indian Air Force. His association with the Kendra began after he came into contact with its founder, Eknath Ranade, and responded to Ranade's call to dedicate his life to national service.

Born in May 1937 at Venganellur near Pazhayannur in Thrissur district, Balakrishnan completed his schooling at Government High School, Chelakkara, before pursuing higher education at Kerala Varma College, Thrissur, and the Air Force Administrative College, Coimbatore. He joined the Indian Air Force in 1957 and served for nearly 16 years, including postings in various border areas of the country. After his retirement, his meeting with Eknath Ranade became a turning point in his life, leading him to dedicate himself to social and national service.

In 1973, Balakrishnan joined Vivekananda Kendra as a member of its first batch of Jeevanvratis. He underwent training as a full-time worker under Ranade and was subsequently assigned to the Northeast as Zonal Organiser. He worked extensively in Arunachal Pradesh and other parts of the Northeast, travelling through remote and tribal areas, visiting villages and homes, identifying children in need of education and promoting schooling as an instrument of social transformation and nationbuilding. His work became closely associated with the growth of the Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya movement in Arunachal Pradesh. At a time when many remote tribal and border areas had little access to organised educational facilities, he worked to create sustained educational opportunities for children in these communities.

The first Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalayas in Arunachal Pradesh were established in the late 1970s, with the residential-school model subsequently evolving as part of the Kendra's efforts to reach children in remote areas. Balakrishnan's extensive work in the region contributed significantly to the expansion of these educational activities.

In recognition of his contribution to educational upliftment in Arunachal Pradesh, the State Government honoured him with a State Award in 2014.

Balakrishnan served as All-India General Secretary of Vivekananda Kendra from 1981 to 2001. He subsequently served as All-India Vice-President until 2020. At the Managing Committee meeting held on July 19, 2020, he was elected as the sixth President of Vivekananda Kendra, succeeding P. Parameswaran. He remained in the position until his death.

The Presidents who served before him were Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Prof. Kamal Nayan Vaswani, Eknath Ranade, D. Lakshmi Kumari and P. Parameswaran.

Balakrishnan was also associated with a historic journey from Kolkata to Kanyakumari undertaken to commemorate Swami Vivekananda's Bharat Parikrama. The journey covered nearly 22,000 km over 347 days and was conceived to retrace and commemorate Vivekananda's historic journey across the country.

Despite holding the highest positions in Vivekananda Kendra, Balakrishnan was known for his simple lifestyle, humility and direct involvement in grassroots activities. Even after occupying senior positions for several decades, he maintained close contact with workers at the grassroots and continued to contribute to the expansion of the Kendra's mission. Those who worked with him closely recalled his commitment to taking Swami Vivekananda's message and ideals to remote communities and his particular dedication to education and social development in the Northeast.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had condoled Balakrishnan's death, recalling his more than five decades of service and his deep association with the Northeast. The Prime Minister said Balakrishnan had made significant contributions to educational, social and nation-building activities.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh also condoled his passing, describing him as an embodiment of Karma Yoga and recalling his simple lifestyle, selfless service and dedication to spreading the message of Swami Vivekananda.

For Arunachal Pradesh, Balakrishnan's legacy remains particularly associated with the spread of education in remote tribal and border areas. His efforts helped establish and expand Vivekananda Kendra's institutional presence in the region at a time when access to education and organised social services was extremely limited. His association with Vivekananda Kendra spanned more than five decades, during which he served as Zonal Organiser, All-India General Secretary, Vice-President and finally All-India President. From joining the organisation as a Jeevanvrati in 1973 to becoming its President in 2020, his public life remained closely connected with its educational, social and nation-building activities.

Vivekananda Kendra workers, Seva Vratis, RSS leaders and prominent personalities from social and cultural fields remembered Balakrishnan for his unwavering commitment to service and his efforts to take the message of Swami Vivekananda to different parts of the country. With his demise, Vivekananda Kendra has lost a veteran Karmayogi whose life was devoted to the service of society and the nation. His contribution to education, social service and nationbuilding, particularly in the Northeast, is expected to remain an enduring part of the legacy of Vivekananda Kendra.

https://www.uniindia.com/~/a-balakrishnan-consigned-to-flames-in-kanyakumari/States/news/3958595.html

Join hands against the US' unilateral tariff pressures

Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) expresses its deep regret over the recently passed legislation by the US Senate, authorising the US President to impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on countries that make significant oil purchases from Russia. We, at SJM, firmly believe that no country has the right to dictate India's energy security and sovereign trade policy. While we acknowledge that this legislation has not yet completed the full legislative process and that tariffs would not be imposed automatically, it clearly poses a serious threat to the principles of free and fair international trade and to the sovereign right of nations to determine their own energy policies.

SJM fully supports the Government of India's stand that India's purchase of Russian crude oil is based on considerations of energy security, availability, price, diversification of supplies, and the interests of Indian consumers. India has repeatedly made it clear that our sovereign right to purchase energy from legitimate international markets cannot be dictated by any third country. This is not the first time there have been threats to impose unfair tariffs on goods entering the USA.

SJM has stated that the proposed legislation empowering the US President to impose 100 per cent tariffs on countries purchasing oil from Russia will be used by the US administration as a pressure tactic in the ongoing negotiations in the India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement. The Government of India has rightly maintained its position on sensitive sectors such as agriculture and dairy. The SJM urges the Government to remain equally firm on India's sovereign right to determine its energy policy.

Swadeshi Jagaran Manch has expressed its unhappiness over two recent developments, where the Government of India has seemingly shown an unnecessary goodwill gesture to facilitate India-US BTA, which needs reconsideration:

Given this unilateral act of the US Senate, passing legislation to impose a 100 per cent tariff on imports from India, India should also impose a unilateral ban on US tech and social media companies. Recently, we have noticed that US social media companies have adopted unethical and illegal tactics to create social unrest, endangering national security, and the same has also been conceded by one major 'Meta'. Under the circumstances, this is the right time to immediately impose a ban on such miscreant companies.

Swadeshi Jagran Manch urges nationalist and patriotic forces to join hands against the United States of America's unilateral actions.

SJM urges the Government of India to-

- Withdraw the notification allowing FDI in e-commerce entities, like Amazon, Flipkart- Walmart, to hold inventories for exports.
- Withhold the Bill passed in the Lok Sabha, permitting banks and other electronic service providers to impose MDR, to forbid Visa and Master Card companies to regain a foothold in India.
- Reject unequivocally any attempt to use US tariffs to dictate India's oil purchases.
- Make it clear that India's energy procurement is a sovereign matter.
- Ensure that India-U.S. trade negotiations are conducted on the basis of equality, reciprocity and mutual respect.
- Refuse any demand that compromises India's agriculture, dairy sector, energy security or strategic autonomy.

Patriotic citizens are requested to boycott products like Pepsi and Coke companies, social media and E-Commerce platforms of US companies, to start with. If the US continues to act against India's interests, this boycott can be extended to services of other US giants as well.

https://organiser.org/2026/08/23/376629/bharat/join-hands-against-the-us-unilateral-tariff-pressures/

SJM launches 'Main Bhi Swadeshi Supporters' campaign

The SJM on August 1 launched 'Main Bhi Swadeshi Supporters' campaign across India. The campaign was launched by the All-India Convenor of the Manch, R Sundaram from Madurai.

Launching the campaign, he said that the progress of the country is possible only on the path of Swadeshi and therefore every person should be a supporter of Swadeshi. It is on the strength of Swadeshi that India is showing its progress on the world stage till date. Whether it is a foreign idea or a commodity, we cannot make the country progress. In order to make the country prosperous, every citizen of India has to be a supporter of Swadeshi as well as a leader in adopting Swadeshi. With this objective in mind, the Swadeshi Jagran Manch has launched the "Main Bhi Swadeshi Pro-Swadeshi Campaign" through digital form for public awareness.

All India Co-Convenor of the Manch Dr Ashwani Mahajan started this campaign from Delhi, All India Co-Convenor Dr Dhanpat Ram Agarwal from Calcutta, CoConvenor Dr Rajiv Kumar from Moradabad, Co-Convenor Dr Ajay Patki from Bikaner and All India Publicity Head of Manch Dr Dharmendra Dubey from Guwahati.

Dr Ashwani Mahajan said that this campaign will be completely conducted through digital medium. More and more people will be connected to the campaign through digital registration, social media, QR codes and online outreach. Each person who joins the campaign will also be provided a certificate of Indigenous Supporter digitally.

The following pledges will be taken in the "Main Bhi Swadeshi Supporters" campaign:

- I will give priority to buying and selling local and indigenous products in my daily life. I'll give you.
- I will work to adopt and encourage indigenous language, dress, lifestyle and large family. I will.
- "Self-reliance and quality employment of youth comes through entrepreneurship, innovation and self-employment".
- I will make all kinds of cooperation and efforts with the patriotic forces working to make India prosperous and great. I will.
- I will work for the unity and integrity of the nation, the overall promotion of Swadeshi and the all-round development of the country by rising above caste, language and creed. I will.

Dr. Dharmendra Dubey, Akhil Bhartiya Prachar Pramukh, SJM, said that a massive public awareness campaign will be launched in all the provinces and districts of the country and about 2 crore people will be given this resolution online. Link to join the campaign.

https://organiser.org/2026/08/02/373056/bharat/swadeshi-jagran-manch-launches-main-bhi-swadeshi-supporters-campaign-to-promote-self-reliance-across-india/

PM Modi carrying forward VOC's Swadeshi vision: L Murugan

Union Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting L Murugan said PM Narendra Modi is successfully carrying forward the Swadeshi movement pioneered by freedom fighter VO Chidambaranar in 1906.

Murugan was speaking at the inaugural function of the 'Coimbatore Swadeshi Mela' conducted by the Swadeshi Jagran Manch at Rathinam Grand auditorium in Eachanari to promote indigenous manufacturing. The exhibition will run till August 10.

Murugan recalled that a Swadeshi exhibition held in Coimbatore in 2001 was inaugurated by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He said India, which faced economic slowdown and corruption-related challenges before 2014, has become the world's fifth-largest economy in the last 10 years, overtaking the UK.

Murugan said domestic production increased from Rs 6.57 lakh crore in 2014-15 to Rs 331 lakh crore in a decade, while the state domestic product has doubled. Citing investment trends, he said India recorded a 143% increase in investments during 2014-2024, and foreign investment in the manufacturing sector rose to $165 billion, up 69%.

Murugan said the Centre had scrapped 1,500 "unnecessary" laws and improved India's Ease of Doing Business ranking from 142 in 2014 to 63. Referring to the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, he said Rs 1.97 lakh crore was earmarked across 14 key sectors, resulting in Rs 1.6 lakh crore in investments, over Rs 12.5 lakh crore in production and sales, Rs 4 lakh crore in exports, 9.5 lakh jobs, and the creation of 1,300 new manufacturing units nationwide.

He said Coimbatore had emerged as a fast-growing industrial region, including as a hub for defence manufacturing and exports. "When it comes to MSMEs in India, Coimbatore stands out," he said.

Linking the current Swadeshi push to Chidambaranar's 1906 movement, Murugan said events like the Coimbatore Swadeshi Mela would encourage domestic producers and help create new entrepreneurs.

On the startup ecosystem, Murugan said India had about 400 startups in 2014, which has now grown to around two lakh with Tamil Nadu accounting for 12,000. He said many startups are led by CEOs under 30 and that over 50% have women CEOs.

The mela features over 40 stalls displaying indigenous products including grinders, pumps, drones, apparel and food items. ❑❑

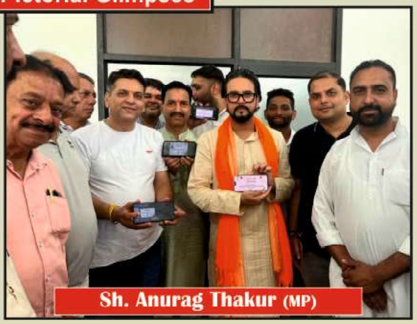
https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/coimbatore/pm-modi-advancing-vocs-swadeshi-vision-union-minister-l-murugan/articleshow/133055248.cms

Swadeshi Activities

"Main Bhi Swadeshi Samarthak" Abhiyan

(1-20 August 2026)

Pictorial Glimpses


Sh. Anurag Thakur (MP)


Sh. Arjun Singh (Labour & Trans. Minister, W.B.)


Jan Kalyan Santhan, Jaipur


Saharanpur


Sultanpur


Harda, M.P.

Vichar Varga


Andhra Pradesh


Telangana


Jodhpur


Uttar Bang

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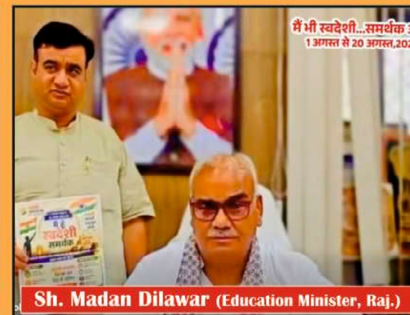
"Main Bhi Swadeshi Samarthak" Abhiyan

(1-20 August 2026)

Pictorial Glimpses

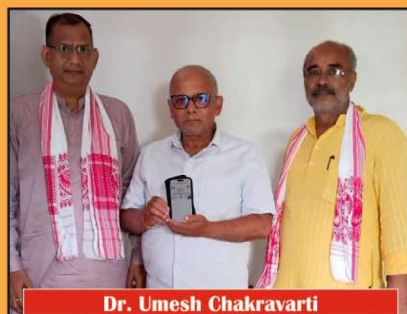
Sh. R. Sundaram (National Convenor, SJM)

Vilaspur



Sh. Madan Dilawar (Education Minister, Raj.)


Sh. Laksham Prasaad (Governor, Assam)

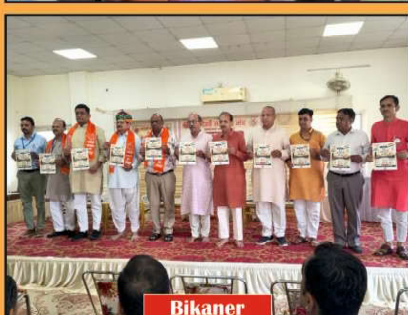

Dr. Umesh Chakravarti


Jagadguru Shankaracharya Ji Maharaj


Sh. Subir Nag (MLA, Chuchura, W. Bengal)

Sh. Sridhar Vembu (Founder, JOHO)

Banswara


Bikaner

Moradabad


Tripura

Udaipur


Kolkata

Brij Prant

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