

15-08-2025

79th

Independence Day
of



India



GULF TIMES
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT



HAPPY INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

On this proud occasion, we join Indians across the world in celebrating the spirit of freedom, resilience, and progress that defines the nation.

We also take this moment to honour the deep-rooted friendship between India and the Qatar built on mutual respect, cultural harmony, and shared dreams of growth and peace.

Wishing all Indians everywhere a joyous and meaningful Independence Day.

#HappyIndependenceDay
#indoQatarFriendship



Smt. Droupadi Murmu
President



Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Supplement Team

Marketing Manager
Violette Fakhry

Marketing
Biju Paul Simon
Jossy Abraham
Kuriakose Joseph
Sanjai Noah

Editor
Amjad Vanimal

Ad. Controllers
Thomas Jose

Circulation In-charge
Sherif Samy

Printed by
Raya Commercial Printing Press

Editorial/Advertising Office
Gulf Times/Arrayah Building
C Ring Road, P.O. Box: 533
Doha - Qatar.
Tel: (0974) 44411300/44466621
Fax: (0974) 44418811
e-mail:gtadv@gulf-times.com



SPECIAL THANKS

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preparing this supplement**

On the auspicious occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, I extend my warmest greetings to all Indians and friends of India in Qatar. Every year, August 15 marks the day of honoring India's unwavering commitment to freedom, unity, resilience, and progress. This is the day when we pay homage to the sacrifices of our freedom fighters who gave India independence in 1947 from centuries of foreign rule. We also pay our gratitude to our leaders who have shaped modern India as well as our armed forces who protect our borders to ensure that India continues its march on progress and development.

The journey of India since independence reflects its commitment to the values of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, enshrined in our Constitution. The vibrant energy of India's youth, strength of democratic institutions and the rich cultural heritage empower India's leap. As the world's largest democracy, big economy and technological power, India is continuously moving ahead on the path towards becoming a developed nation, *Viksit Bharat*, by 2047 as envisioned by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The year 2025 has been a milestone in this regard as the Indian economy crossed USD 4 trillion and became the fourth largest in the world.

India's economy has maintained impressive growth rate of 6-7% annually, making it the fastest growing large economy in the world. Over the past decade, India has achieved great success in the areas of infrastructure development, manufacturing, technology, capital markets, digital transformation and ease of doing business. Government of India's initiatives have also ensured that the fruits of development reach the poor and marginalized sections. Programs such as *Ayushman Bharat* (health), *Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana* (food security), *Ujjwala Yojana* (gas connections), *PM Awas Yojana* (housing) and *Mudra* (loans for micro enterprises) have helped millions of Indians. A recent World Bank report mentioned that India has brought out 171 million people from extreme poverty in ten years.

It is a matter of immense pride that India has made remarkable progress in S&T and achieved many new milestones this year. Under Axiom-4 mission, for the first time an Indian went to the International Space Station in July 2025. The Nisar satellite of NASA-ISRO was launched as world's first dual-band radar imaging satellite. Government has bolstered the National Quantum Mission which has already resulted in successes through Indian start-ups such as by integrating quantum hardware with AI enhanced software. PM Modi co-chaired AI Action Summit in Paris in February 2025 elevating India's role in AI governance and policy.

India's UPI digital payments system has been a resounding success reaching the mark of 650 million transactions daily, the largest in the world by far. The "Bharat 6G Vision" initiative aims to make India a pioneer in next-generation telecommunications. In sports, India's victory in the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy and World Chess championships have ignited national pride. The Indian community in Qatar celebrated these milestones with fervor.

I am also very happy that India-Qatar partnership has reached new heights in 2025. India had the honor of receiving His Highness the Amir on his second State visit to India on February 17-18, 2025. During His Highness's historic visit, the bilateral ties were elevated to strategic partnership. Several MOUs and agreements were signed covering a range of areas including investment, business, finance, sports and archives. Both sides have committed to double bilateral trade, valued at USD 14 billion currently, in the next five years and work for substantial enhancement of Qatar's investments in India.

India and Qatar have also continued to take other initiatives for further deepening our relations. The first meeting of India-Qatar Joint Business Council was held in February 2025. Our energy ties remain robust which was also witnessed in the visit of Qatar's MOS for Energy to India in February 2025. Our cultural exchanges are exemplified in events such as the second Indian Mango Festival in Doha which was attended by thousands of people. We also thank Qatar for standing with India in the face of adversity of the dastardly Pahalgam terrorist attack in April 2025. Qatar's unequivocal condemnation of the attack was also emphasized during the visit of Indian multi-party delegation to Doha in May 2025.

I wish to thank the large Indian community in Qatar for always showcasing India's unity in diversity and for being a vital bridge for trade, tourism, and cultural exchange between our countries. The contingent from Qatar was one of the largest at *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* 2025 held in Odisha. Our Embassy remains committed to providing efficient consular services and fostering community partnerships. I also express my deep and heartfelt gratitude to H.H. Amir of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, H.H. Father Amir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, members of the Royal Family, and Government of Qatar for their steadfast support and patronage for India and the Indian community in Qatar.

As we celebrate the Independence Day, I would like to urge all Indians in Qatar to renew our commitment to the ideals of our freedom struggle and strengthen the India-Qatar strategic partnership for mutual prosperity and global good. Together, we strive for building a future of peace, progress, and shared aspirations.

Jai Hind! Jai Qatar!
Vipul,
Ambassador of India to Qatar.

Ambassador's message



Amir's visit to India strengthen historic ties



HH the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani was welcomed upon arrival at Palam Air Base by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar, Ambassador of Qatar in New Delhi HE Mohammed bin Hassan Al Jaber and Ambassador of India in Doha HE Vipul. The Amir was accompanied by the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani and an official delegation. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral cooperation between the two countries, in addition to the latest regional and international developments.



HH the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani was accorded an official reception ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. Hon'ble President of India Smt Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi led well-wishers to welcome the Amir. The official reception ceremony began with the entry of the Amir's motorcade accompanied by the President's Cavalry Regiment to the ceremony venue. A 21-gun salute was fired in honour of the Amir's visit and in recognition of the strong relations between the two countries.





External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met with HH the Amir of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and his accompanying delegation in New Delhi. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations between the two countries, in addition to the latest regional and international developments. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani and a number of members of the accompanying official delegation.



Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and HH the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani held an official session of talks at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi. Bilateral relations and ways to enhance and expand them, particularly in the areas of economy, investment, and energy, in addition to several regional and international issues of mutual interest were discussed during the session. Amir and Indian Prime Minister witnessed the exchange of two agreements between the governments of their countries. They witnessed the exchange of an agreement on establishing a bilateral strategic partnership and an agreement aimed at avoiding double taxation and preventing fiscal evasion concerning income taxes. On this occasion, the Prime Minister of India hosted a luncheon banquet in honour of the Amir and the accompanying delegation.



Hon'ble President Smt. Droupadi Murmu hosted a banquet dinner in honour of HH the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and his accompanying delegation at Rashtrapati Bhavan. At the beginning of the banquet, Hon'ble President Smt. Droupadi Murmu delivered a speech welcoming the Amir and the accompanying delegation, expressing her thanks to His Highness for the visit, and lauding the level of Qatar-India relations. HH the Amir also delivered a speech during the banquet.



Minister of Health and Family Welfare Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda met with HH the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. They discussed bilateral relations and the ways to foster them, particularly across areas of health and medical care, along with topics of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani and the accompanying delegation.

India-Qatar Business Forum in New Delhi



Minister of Commerce and Industry of India Shri Piyush Goyal and Minister of Commerce and Industry of the State of Qatar, H E Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal Al Thani inaugurated the India-Qatar Business Forum in New Delhi. The event was held on the sidelines of the official visit of the Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to India. The session focused on expanding bilateral trade, promoting non-hydrocarbon sectors, and increasing private sector engagement in both countries. The forum also witnessed the signing of several MoUs, including one between the Qatari Businessmen Association (QBA) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to foster economic cooperation in trade, investment, and technical collaboration. A second memorandum was signed between Invest Qatar and Invest India, marking a significant step toward strengthening trade and investment ties and creating opportunities for mutual projects.

*Congratulations
to the Government and
the People of India on
the Joyous Occasion of*

79TH
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Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar held a phone call with EAM Dr. S Jaishankar

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H. E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani held a phone call with H. E. Dr. S Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India. During the call, they reviewed bilateral relations and ways to support and enhance them, as well as discussed latest developments in the crisis between India and Pakistan and ways to resolve it through diplomacy.





Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Holds Phone Call with India's External Affairs Minister

Doha | May 07, 2025

HE Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani held a phone call on Wednesday with HE Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of India Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

The two sides discussed bilateral cooperation and ways to strengthen and expand it. They also addressed the latest developments in the ongoing crisis between the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and ways to resolve it through diplomatic means.

During the call, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed the State of Qatar's deep concern over the continued escalation between India and Pakistan, affirming its full support for all regional and international efforts aimed at resolving outstanding issues between the two countries through dialogue and peaceful means.

Media & Communication Department     

Qatar strongly condemns attack in Jammu and Kashmir



Qatar Strongly Condemns Attack in Jammu and Kashmir

Doha | April 23, 2025

The State of Qatar expresses its strong condemnation and denunciation of the attack that took place in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, which resulted in casualties and injuries.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterates the State of Qatar's stance against violence, terrorism, and criminal acts, regardless of their motivations and justifications.

The Ministry extends its condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government and people of the Republic of India, and wishes a swift recovery to the injured.

Media & Communication Department      

**"Celebration of Unity!
Celebration of Freedom!
Celebration of Pride!"**



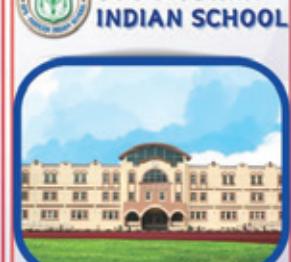
We extend our warmest greetings on the occasion of the

Indian Independence Day

— 15TH AUGUST —

Salute to all the Freedom Fighters

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Visit of Multi Party Delegation to Qatar



A multi-party Indian parliamentary delegation, led by Member of Parliament Supriya Sule, paid an official visit to Qatar. The visit marked the first leg of a four-nation tour undertaken in the wake of the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam and India's subsequent response, Operation Sindoos.

During their two-day visit, the delegation held high-level discussions with senior Qatari officials, including Dr. Mohamed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh Al Khulaifi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs; Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal bin Mohammed Al Thani, Minister of State for Interior Affairs; and Dr. Hamda bint Hassan Al Sulaiti, Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council. The delegation also engaged with members of Qatar's academia and think tanks at the Middle East Council for Global Affairs, interacted with journalists from leading Qatari dailies, and addressed members of the Indian community at a reception held on May 26.

In their meetings, the Indian delegation conveyed New Delhi's zero-tolerance policy towards cross-border terrorism and provided a briefing on recent developments following the Pahalgam attack. They emphasised that Operation Sindoos was a calibrated, targeted and proportionate response, reflecting India's firm resolve to counter terrorism without escalating tensions. The delegation also stressed the need to dismantle cross-border terror infrastructure and to avoid making distinctions between terrorist groups and their backers.

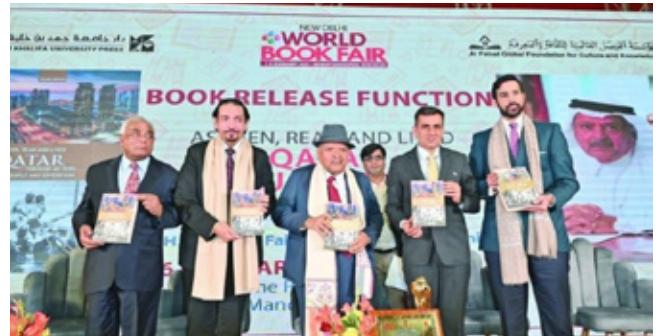


India Energy Week 2025



HE Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs, welcomed at India Energy Week 2025.

Book Release of HE Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani in Delhi



H. E. Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani, founder and chairman of Al Faisal Global Foundation for Culture and Knowledge, launched his book 'As Seen, Read and Lived. Qatar Through my Eyes. History, People, and Sovereigns', in English and Malayalam, at the 2025 New Delhi World Book Fair.

The event was attended by Ambassador of Qatar to India HE Mohammed bin Hassan Jaber Al-Jaber along with a number of ambassadors, heads of diplomatic missions from the Gulf and Arab countries, and a large number of cultural and intellectual figures and exhibition pioneers in India.

Salutations
To the Government and the People of India on the joyous occasion

79th Independence Day
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AUGUST 15
HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

Where words come out from the depth of truth.....
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever - widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.
- Rabindranath Tagore. Gitanjali.

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Key Events

Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025



Students, parents, and teachers from Indian schools in Qatar enthusiastically participated in #ParikshaPeCharcha, seizing the opportunity to gain valuable insights from Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on managing exam stress and more.

Annual Science Gala and Award Function of Science
India Forum



Ambassador HE. Shri Vipul attended the Annual Science Gala and Award Function of Science India Forum. The event celebrated academic excellence and promoted scientific spirit among students.

ICAI Doha Chapter hosted a seminar “Union Budget 2025



“Impact Analysis” at Dusit West Bay. Inaugurated by HE. Mr. Vipul, the event featured Padma Shri TN Manoharan and Mr. Girish Chand as speakers. Over 200 attendees benefited from the discussions.

The image is a promotional card for ABN Corporation. At the top, the company's logo is displayed, followed by the text 'ABN CORPORATION' in large red letters. The left side of the card features a large graphic for 'Independence Day' with the number '79' and the Indian national emblem. The right side contains several images: a large red ship, a modern building, a road with a truck, and a construction site with a crane. Below these images are four smaller logos for 'ABN CORPORATION', 'ALI BIN NASER AL MISHNAQ TRANSPORT & TRADING WLL', 'JALI BIN NASER AL MISHNAQ EQUIPMENT & TRADING WLL', 'ABN MARINE', and 'BHUVAN'S PUBLIC SCHOOL'. The bottom section features the 'Kirloskar' brand logo, information about being an exclusive dealer for Kirloskar power products, and images of their generators. The footer includes the 'Q Services' logo, contact information, and a QR code.

Marking 50 Days to International Day of Yoga 2025



Marking 50 days to the International Day of Yoga 2025, the Embassy of India hosted a yoga session celebrating the spirit of "One Earth, One Health," promoting personal well-being and harmony for all.

Qatar Business Excellence Awards



Ambassador HE Shri Vipul attended the 2nd Qatar Business Excellence Awards, organized by Asianet News, celebrating successful enterprises that triumphed over challenges.



15TH AUGUST
HAPPY 79TH INDEPENDENCE DAY




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THINK SYMPHONY**

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Rang-Tarang 2025 (Labour Day Celebrations)



Ambassador attends Rang-Tarang Labour Day program organized by ICBF-Qatar at Asian Town. Over 15,000 workers and community members joined the celebrations, cultural fiesta and felicitation of workers long-serving in Qatar.

Ambassador's monthly meeting with Indian nationals



Consular and community related issues were addressed during Ambassador's monthly meeting with Indian nationals. Embassy officials and office bearers of ICBF-Qatar provided guidance and support.

ICC Carnival 2025



The Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), under the aegis of the Embassy of India, brought its two-day ICC Carnival 2025 to a glorious conclusion, with a grand finale that blended music, culture, and community spirit into a spectacular evening of celebration. Held at the sprawling ICC Film City set up on the Ideal Indian School Ground, the event attracted more than 12,000 attendees over two days, making it one of the most successful and widely attended cultural events organised by the Indian community in Qatar.

On this auspicious occasion of India's Independence Day, Podar Pearl School extends its warmest greetings. As we hoist the tricolour, we remember the sacrifices of our freedom fighters and reaffirm our unwavering commitment to imparting quality education rooted in integrity, unity, and excellence.



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Events by the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC)

Felicitation of volunteers of Bharat Utsav 2024



Indian Cultural Centre, under the aegis of Embassy of India, felicitated the volunteers of mega-event "Bharat Utsav 2024", in ICC's premises. "Bharat Utsav 2024" was held by ICC in the prestigious QNCC premises and was attended by thousands of expatriates across nationalities in Qatar. More than 500 performers had performed in this event.

Iftar for Her



Indian Cultural Centre along with the ICC Women's Forum, celebrated International Women's Day with an "Iftar for Her" event for underprivileged women, at the ICC Ashoka Hall. Counsellors from the Embassy of India, Dr. Vaibhav Tandale and Mr. Gyanveer Singh, along with their spouses, honoured the occasion with their presence.

Iftar Meet

Indian Cultural Centre, under the aegis of Embassy of India, conducted Iftar at ICC's Ashoka Hall which was decorated and lit to celebrate the holy occasion. HE Shri Vipul, Ambassador of India to Qatar, addressed the gathering, emphasizing the significance of Ramadan and extending his heartfelt wishes for a blessed and peaceful month.

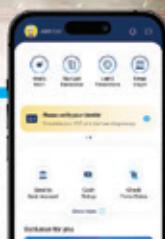


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Events by Indian Community and Benevolent Forum (ICBF)

Pusthakmela Season 8



ICBF joined hands with KWIQ for Pusthakmela Season 8, a platform for donating and exchanging used CBSE academic textbooks, guides, reference books, and storybooks. For the second time, ICBF collaborated with Kerala Women's Initiative Qatar (KWIQ) to support this meaningful initiative, which has been serving the community for the past eight years.

The event was inaugurated by H. E. Mr. Vipul, the Ambassador of India to Qatar, who symbolically handed over donated books to a student and a parent in need, reinforcing the core spirit of sharing and support.

Iftar for Domestic Lady Workers



In a heartfelt initiative, ICBF in collaboration with Telangana Welfare Association (TWA Qatar) organized a special Iftar for domestic lady workers. The event was honored by the presence of Mr. Eish Singhal, First Secretary & ICBF Coordinating Officer at the Indian Embassy, who attended as the Chief Guest and handed over gifts to the attendees, spreading joy and appreciation. With around 85 ladies from different parts of Doha participating, the evening was filled with warmth, gratitude, and a sense of belonging.



Warm felicitations and best wishes to the people and the Government of India on the occasion of

79th INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA

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Green energy transition accelerates with key policy moves

In a virtual address at India Energy Week 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted India's rapid progress in electric mobility and renewable energy while emphasising the need for swift action to meet the demands of a large and growing nation. He stressed that the battery and storage sector presents immense opportunities for both innovation and manufacturing. To accelerate this shift, the government has removed basic customs duties on various EV battery components as part of the Union Budget 2025, aiming to strengthen domestic production and push green energy adoption.

The National Critical Minerals Mission is set to play a crucial role in establishing a robust supply chain for India's battery sector. In addition to lithium-based solutions, the government is actively promoting the development of a non-lithium battery ecosystem to diversify and secure future energy needs.

India's ethanol blending programme has also made significant strides, reaching a 19% blending rate, which has resulted in foreign exchange savings, increased farmer income, and reduced CO₂ emissions. The country

remains ahead of schedule in achieving its 20% ethanol blending mandate, which is now expected before October 2025.

Looking ahead to 2030, India's energy sector presents vast opportunities, including plans to add 500 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity, achieve net-zero carbon emissions for Indian Railways, and produce five million metric tonnes of green hydrogen annually. These initiatives are expected to drive major milestones in the next five years, reinforcing India's role in the global energy transition.

The Prime Minister outlined five key pillars supporting India's energy ambitions – resource harnessing, fostering innovation, maintaining economic strength and political stability, leveraging strategic geography for energy trade, and committing to global sustainability. He also highlighted the growth potential of India's biofuel sector, with 500 million metric tonnes of sustainable feedstock available to further expand renewable energy initiatives.

With strategic investments and policy reforms, India is positioning itself as a global leader in clean energy, fostering innovation while ensuring energy security for the future.



OpenAI sees India as a key AI market

OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT, has identified India as its second-largest market, with user numbers tripling over the past year. During a discussion hosted by OpenAI, CEO Sam Altman highlighted India's importance to the company's growth and the broader AI ecosystem.

Altman, currently on a world tour, arrived in India recently and met IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw alongside leading start-ups and venture capitalists.

"India has made remarkable strides in AI development," Altman observed, encouraging the country to position itself as a leader in the ongoing AI revolution. He praised India's diverse range of technological developments, from chips to AI applications.

Vaishnaw shared India's comprehensive AI strategy, focusing on chip design, building foundational models, and developing AI applications. He expressed confidence in India's ability to achieve cost-effective solutions, similar to the country's success in launching space missions at reduced costs.

Altman's visit coincides with the rising popularity of DeepSeek, a Chinese foundational model developed at a fraction of OpenAI's costs. The model has demonstrated that high-quality AI systems can be built with less investment.

Addressing questions on the cost of AI development, Altman acknowledged advancements in model distillation that reduce training costs, though he maintained that cutting-edge AI would



still require substantial investment.

Vaishnaw drew parallels between India's space programme and AI ambitions, stating, "If we can send a mission to the Moon at a fraction of the cost, we can certainly develop AI models more affordably."

Following the discussion, Vaishnaw announced on X that he had a "super cool discussion" with Altman about India's AI strategy, emphasising collaboration on GPUs, models, and applications.

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Sports Tech Market:

How Technology is Transforming India's Sports Industry

India's sports technology market is poised for significant growth, primarily driven by the rapid expansion of the Fantasy Sports (FS) industry. A recent analysis of the sector illustrated multifaceted trends propelled by advancing technology and shifting viewer interest. Innovations are important for improving fan participation among India's digitally adapted audience, who consume athletic contests through cyber venues and dynamically connect on social media during live sports events. Research suggests that over four-fifths of sports supporters employ secondary screens while watching broadcasts. Beyond streaming and social networks, digital platforms serve to reserve tickets, procure sports merchandise and access stadium amenities. This tendency presents huge profit opportunities for platforms and brands and attracts enthusiasts. Meanwhile, analytics highlight the potential of virtual and augmented reality to heighten fan experience, especially among the youth. Simultaneously, wearable gadgets and specialised apps tailored for sports are augmenting coaching, training and performance analysis.

Technology is now an integral part of modern sports, transforming athlete training, performance enhancement and fan engagement leading to an overall growth of the sports industry. The sports technology market in India is a thriving industry, valued at Rs. 26,700 crore (US\$ 3.07 billion) in FY24. The fan engagement sector leads the market, contributing Rs. 21,400 crore (US\$ 2.46 billion), while the data and analytics segment represent Rs. 5,300 crore (US\$ 610 million).

Adoption and role of digital transformation in sports development

Digital transformation is now a crucial driver for sports development, significantly enhancing fan engagement and operational efficiency. According to a joint report by Google and Deloitte, the Indian sports market is valued at Rs. 4,51,724 crore (US\$ 52 billion) in FY24 and projected to reach Rs. 11,29,310 crore (US\$ 130 billion) by FY30, with digital transformation and multi-sport enthusiasm being key contributors.

Cricket: Smartwatches and heart rate monitors now track the players' physical

conditions during training and matches. These devices provide real-time data on heart rate, speed, and movement, helping coaches make informed decisions. For example, the Catapult vector pro athlete monitor provides real-time data on player movement, workload, and fitness. It works like GPS trackers and sensors embedded in wearable devices, monitoring acceleration, sprinting speeds, and workload distribution. This helps coaches tailor their training routines which helps prevent injuries and optimise training intensity.

- Football:** GPS trackers and motion sensors monitor a player's positioning and workload. These devices reduce injury risks and optimise training programs. Hawk-Eye technology precisely calculates the ball's course, velocity, and rotation using tracking cameras stationed around the field. These high-speed cameras first capture the ball's movement. It then processes the data to calculate the ball's trajectory, speed, and spin, providing accurate real-time information.

- Other Sports:** The rapidly swelling fervour for e-sports in India and worldwide has encouraged the use of AI and machine learning to enhance gamer presentation and supporter inclusion. Analysing information and offering tailored content helps players improve and makes fans feel connected to the sport. Innovations like Google's Jacquard tag in football shoe insoles and AI-powered golf club designs are improving equipment performance and player insights.

Role of digitalisation in sports Fan engagement

Immersive technologies: Augmented reality (AR) and Virtual reality (VR) are revolutionising the fan experience by providing interactive and immersive viewing options. For example, NBA partnered with Second Spectrum, integrating wearable data into fan engagement strategies to boost game-day revenues. The company tracks player movements on the court in real-time and conducts detailed analysis based on this data, providing coaches with insights to improve their in-game performance.

Digital platforms: Social media and

streaming services are making sports more accessible and engaging. Platforms like JioHotstar and Sony Liv offer high-definition broadcasts and personalised content, enhancing the fan experience.

Smart stadiums

Advanced infrastructure: Smart stadiums equipped with Internet of Things (IoT) devices, digital signage, and high-density Wi-Fi are enhancing the live sports experience. These innovations provide real-time updates, interactive features, and seamless connectivity.

Enhanced security: Technology like facial recognition and advanced security systems are improving safety and security in stadiums. For example, AI-driven systems streamline stadium access and enhance crowd management.

The rise of sports startups and investments in India

India's burgeoning sports tech sector is witnessing an outbreak of new startups and rising investments, propelled by creativity and growing marketplace interest. There are currently 2,007 Sports Tech ventures in India, including industry leaders like Dream Sports, Dream11, MPL, Games24x7, and Huddle. Of these, 181 startups have secured funding, with 50 acquiring Series A+ financing rounds and 3 achieving unicorn status.

Capital infusions and investor enthusiasm for sports technology solutions are steadily increasing. Over the past decade, an average of 155 new sports tech startups were launched each year. Both government agencies and private sector participants actively support athletic innovation through initiatives such as the expansive 'Khelo India' program, which aims to evolve athletic infrastructure and nurture talent. Private investors and venture capital companies are also displaying keen interest in these startups.

These startups enhance fan participation through platforms and revolutionise athlete training and performance evaluation using AI and wearable technology. The blended support from government bodies and private investment is cultivating a vibrant ecosystem for sports tech progress within India.

Challenges and opportunities

Data Privacy and Accuracy: The collection of personal sports data raises privacy concerns, and ensuring the accuracy of technology in sports performance analysis is crucial. Convincing traditional sports to fully integrate technology can also be challenging. The integration of sports tech into traditional sports offers immense potential for improving performance and enhancing fan experiences, but it also brings significant challenges related to data privacy and accuracy.

Opportunities

Government support and policy initiatives: The Draft National Sports Policy 2024 aims to strengthen India's sports ecosystem from the grassroots to the national level. Sports technology is expected to play a pivotal role in achieving this vision, offering advanced tools for fan engagement, training analytics, and athlete development. The government's support for sports tech startups and enhanced infrastructure will be crucial for sustained growth.

Enhanced fan engagement and athlete performance: Technology is enhancing fan engagement through platforms like Dream11 and MPL, while improving athlete performance through AI and wearable technology. The integration of technology into sports is shaping the industry, potentially unlocking new levels of athletic excellence and talent identification.

India's sports technology market is projected to reach Rs. 49,500 crore (US\$ 5.70 billion) by FY29, at a CAGR of 13% during FY24-FY29, with fantasy sports being a major driver. The Draft National Sports Policy 2024 aims to bolster the sports ecosystem by leveraging technology for economic development. This policy, combined with AI advancements, data analytics, VR, AR, Blockchain, and IoT, will help India enhance athlete performance, engage fans, and identify talent, supporting the growth of the sports technology market and establishing India as a global sports powerhouse. However, the market's trajectory will depend on how well regulatory support and infrastructure development can keep pace with technological integration.



Digital economy set to overtake agriculture, mfg by 2030: MeitY

India's digital economy is poised to grow nearly twice as fast as the overall economy, contributing nearly one-fifth of the country's national income by 2029-2030, according to a report by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

The report, titled 'Estimation and Measurement of India's Digital Economy', released on January 22, is the first of its kind to quantify the value addition and employment generated by India's burgeoning digital sector.

Highlighting the sector's transformative potential, the report states that the digital economy's share is expected to surpass agriculture and manufacturing in less than six years. "In the short run, the highest growth is likely to come from the growth of digital intermediaries and platforms, followed by higher digital diffusion and digitalisation of the rest of the economy. This will eventually lower the share of digitally enabling ICT industries in the digital economy," the report noted.

Current contribution and projections

As of 2022-23, the digital economy contributed 11.74 per cent of India's national income, equivalent to Rs 28.94 trillion (\$368 billion) in Gross Value Added (GVA) and Rs 31.64 trillion (\$402 billion) in GDP. This share is projected to rise to 13.42 per cent by 2024-25, according to the MeitY report.

The largest contribution—7.83 per cent of the national GVA—comes from sectors such as information and communication services, telecom, and the manufacturing of electronics, computers, and communication equipment. Big Tech players, digital platforms, and intermediaries account for nearly 2 per cent of the GVA, while industries like BFSI (banking, financial services, and insurance), trade, and education add another 2 per cent.



Employment in the digital economy

The report estimates that the digital economy employed 14.67 million workers in 2022-23, accounting for 2.55 per cent of India's total workforce. By comparison, agriculture remained the largest employer, with 263.6 million workers (45.8 per cent of the workforce), while manufacturing employed 65.6 million workers (11.4 per cent).

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Women shaping the future of Indian industries

From Florence Nightingale to Annie Besant; Sarojini Naidu to Rani Rashmoni; Indira Gandhi to Sushma Swaraj, women have long been at the heart of economic progress and not just contributors. Today, they are leaders, innovators and changemakers who drive transformation, lead enterprises and shape the future across industries.

Simply put, if we look at live and more recent examples of Priya Agarwal Hebbar, Arundhati Bhattacharya, Debjani Ghosh, Victoria D'Souza, Gul Panag, Dr Preetha Reddy and Vineeta Singh, these new-age trendsetters are making their presence felt with each and every move they take on the desi and international stages.

From technology to investments, renewable energy to automotive to healthcare, their growing presence in leadership, research and entrepreneurship is accelerating progress, fostering inclusivity and creating a sustainable and prosperous future. Their contributions are not only breaking barriers but also setting new benchmarks for innovation, investment and economic growth.

This article highlights the impact of women across diverse industries, showcasing how they are redefining success and creating opportunities for the next generation.

India's focus sectors

Semiconductor

With semiconductors being one of the emerging growth areas in India, the sector's workforce composition is also undergoing a sea change. Teamlease pegs the tech workforce in India at 5.4 million, with 1.94 million women workers.

In the semiconductor industry, women constitute 25% of the workforce. Leading companies like Micron and NXP are investing significantly in training, supporting and retaining female employees by expanding the talent pool and creating career advancement opportunities.

Through its 'Women in Tech' programme, NXP trained over 100 female engineering students in VLSI design concepts. At Micron, women comprise 28% of its over 4,000 employee pool across groups and functions, with IT having the largest share at 30%. Sharmila Khan, Country Head, People Organisation, Micron, adds that functions like procurement, data science and design engineering also see healthy representation.

Another notable intervention in this sector has been by Foxconn, the contract manufacturer for Apple Inc. in India. The company has invested \$230 million to set up a housing complex for its women employees in Sripurumbudur in Tamil Nadu to accommodate up to 18,720 employees.

According to an Accenture report, the median representation of women in the global semiconductor

industry is between 20% and 29%. Women comprise nearly a fourth of India's chip design and engineering workforce.

This trend is expected to continue, with projections indicating that women's share could rise to ~30% by 2027. Research has shown that increased representation of women in the workforce drives better business outcomes, including improved innovation and decision-making.

Automotive EV

Women are making significant inroads into the automotive and EV sectors. According to the OMI Foundation, whether it is jobs or entrepreneurial ventures, there has been a rise in the number of women occupying critical positions across the spectrum — from shop floors to top floors.

They make up for 11-15% of India's 11 million EV workforce and this strength is projected to rise to 50% by 2030-2033. The demand for women in manufacturing, design and leadership roles in EV firms has significantly increased due to strong EV sales. In CY 2024, India recorded over 1.9 million in EV sales — an increase of 27% over 2023.

As a result, major industry players are increasingly hiring more women in the automotive sector. Ola's future factory in Tamil Nadu's Krishnagiri—slated to be the

Ampere's Ranipet facility in Tamil Nadu, one of the first OEMs founded by a woman in India, has over 70% women in the workforce. Mahindra Logistics has hired women drivers for its cargo service, EDel, which deploys an E3W fleet in Bengaluru.

Renewable energy

In the RE sector, women are making a long-lasting impact by leading initiatives to promote sustainability and environmental stewardship.

One notable name in India's renewable energy sector is Vandana Gombar, a journalist and commentator specialising in energy and environmental issues and a strong advocate for renewable energy and sustainable development.

Another influential leader is Vaishali Nigam Sinha, Director, Chief Sustainability and CSR Officer of ReNew Power, whose leadership has been instrumental in driving the company's growth, establishing it as one of India's largest renewable energy firms.

In partnership with UNDP and IIT Delhi, the company has launched an accelerator programme to support women climate entrepreneurs in tackling key energy challenges. The first cohort of six entrepreneurs focuses on energy



world's largest electric two-wheeler (E2W) manufacturing plant—is fully powered by women.

By 2025, the company plans to have 20,000 women working in the factory, manufacturing E2W and other vehicle categories, batteries for EVs and more.

efficiency, storage, circularity and desalination. The initiative aims to drive women-led climate solutions for India's sustainability goals with plans of annual expansion.

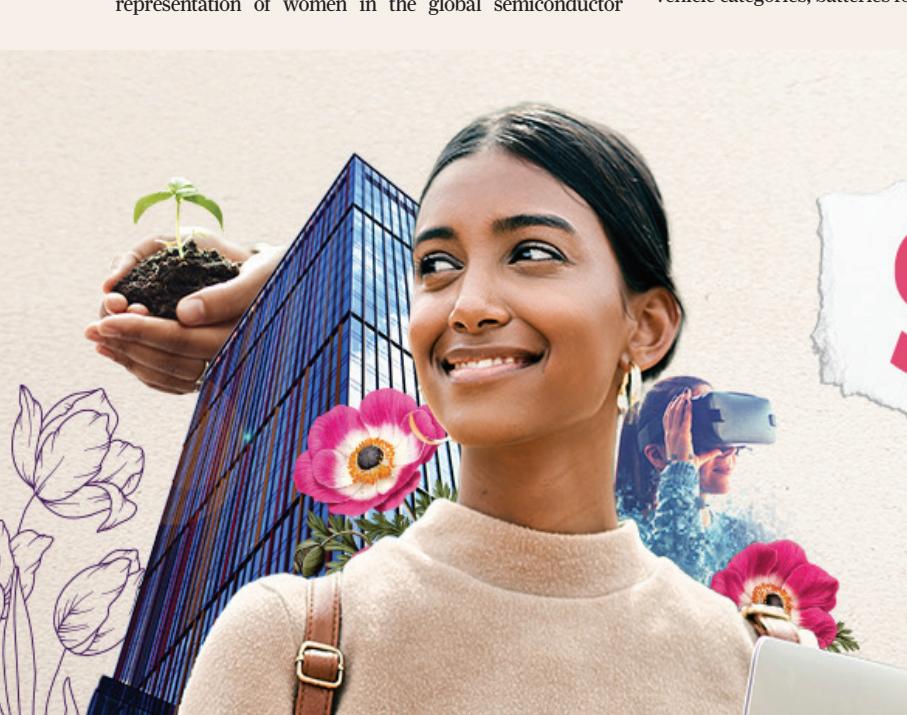
Agro and food processing

Women entrepreneurs have emerged as a force to

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reckon with in the agro and food processing industry. Through innovative farming techniques, sustainable practices and value addition, women are transforming the industry and empowering other women.

The agriculture sector employs 85% of the rural women in India. Women contribute to agriculture through multiple roles as cultivators, entrepreneurs and labourers. About 60–80% of the food produced in India can be attributed to the efforts of rural women.

Women also contribute significantly to the harvesting process. They may be involved in manually harvesting crops, such as rice or wheat or using tools for crops like fruit and vegetables. From farm to table, women are delighting the world with their dedication, determination and entrepreneurial spirit.

Textiles

The textile industry has long been a significant employer of women, but today, women are also leading as designers, entrepreneurs and executives.

Did you know? The sector provides direct employment to over 45 million people, including a large number of women, especially in rural areas. According to the Handloom Census 2019-20, 72% of weavers are women. Women make up ~65% of the workforce in this sector.

Several women have emerged as influential figures in the Indian textile industry, such as fashion designers Masaba Gupta, Anamika Khanna, Ritu Kumar and Anita Dongre, who are championing the revival of traditional handloom crafts.

Several women entrepreneurs, such as Suchi Mukherjee of LimeRoad, Richa Kar of Zivame, Shubhra Chadda of Chumbak, Shehлина Soomro of Saritoria and Neha Celly of Nece Gene, are rewriting the rules of the industry through innovation and unique interventions.

Through its Textile Policy 2024, the government is also ensuring a level playing field for women textile workers. The policy offers wage assistance for women employees ranging from ₹3,000 to ₹5,000 per month, depending on their roles. Overall, the policy aims to promote employment, especially among women and increase competitiveness in the industry.

Another women-centric effort is the 'Shilp Didi' programme, launched to provide online training to 100 women artisans from 72 districts across 23 states to onboard onto e-commerce portals and social media platforms.

Pharma and healthcare

Women have been instrumental in advancing the pharma and healthcare sectors. Their contributions range from groundbreaking medical research to developing healthcare technologies that improve patient outcomes.



Whether building a family business (Sangita Reddy and her sisters at Apollo Hospitals) or creating a leading bio-science business (Kiran Mazumdar Shaw of Biocon), women are at the forefront of the healthcare sector. Women's representation on the board in healthcare and life sciences sector startups is the second highest among the industries in India.

Due to their passion and determination, women have excelled in caregiving roles in the healthcare sector. Young women have outnumbered men in Indian medical schools, a positive sign of change to come. Government schemes like 'Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana' and the 'Maternity Benefit Act' aim to increase the number of women in the healthcare workforce.

Infrastructure

In the infrastructure sector, women are increasingly taking on leadership roles in urban planning, construction and project management. Their involvement ensures that infrastructure projects are more inclusive and address the needs of diverse populations. Women's participation in India's labour force has seen an exponential rise, jumping from ~23% in 2017-18 to ~41% in 2023-24.

Foreign Investments and Trade (FII)

Women are making their mark in foreign investments and trade by leading investment firms, influencing policy and driving international trade negotiations. Prominent figures like Naina Lal Kidwai have paved the way for women in India's financial sector as the first Indian woman to graduate from Harvard Business School and to lead a foreign bank in India, exemplifying the growing influence of women in investment banking.

Kalpana Morparia dedicated nearly 33 years to ICICI, significantly contributing to India's financial sector. Upasana Taku, Co-Founder and COO, MobiKwik, brings over 17 years of expertise in product development, payments and financial services. Her leadership has not only driven innovation in fintech but also paved the way for more women to thrive in the industry. Renu Sud Karnad is another inspiring example and has been instrumental in India's largest mortgage financier HDFC's financial operations, guiding it towards success for 30 years.

The way forward

The impact of women in these key sectors is exemplary. They drive innovation, foster investment and propel economic growth, a testament to their resilience, expertise and visionary leadership. As more women enter and lead these industries, these sheroes bring unique perspectives and solutions that address complex challenges.

The journey doesn't end here. Empowering women through education, mentorship and equal opportunities is crucial to sustaining this momentum.

On this year's International Women's Day, it is essential to recognise and celebrate the achievements of women professionals and entrepreneurs, shaping a more inclusive and prosperous future across all sectors.



Eight strategic sectors open to 100% FDI

India once approached foreign investment in its strategic sectors with marked caution, allowing limited access to safeguard national interests. But that paradigm has shifted. Driven by its position as the world's fastest-growing major economy, India has embraced a more open and future-forward investment regime.

Now ranked as the world's fourth-largest economy¹, India's economic rise calls for a reimagined FDI approach. The government has responded with bold reforms like progressively liberalising FDI norms, including in sectors once considered out of bounds. Today, 100% foreign direct investment is permitted under the automatic route in multiple high-impact sectors, signaling both economic confidence and strategic ambition.

This evolving landscape presents unprecedented opportunities for global investors. Based on our

sectoral insights, we have identified eight industries poised to drive the next wave of FDI-led growth in India.

1. BFSI

India's financial sector sits at the intersection of scale, technology and transformation. With the country's expanding middle class, rapid digital adoption, a robust fintech ecosystem, and a pro-reform regulatory environment, the BFSI sector has evolved into one of the most compelling investment stories in India.

Within the BFSI sector, India's insurance industry is poised to attract more investments from foreign investors in 2025. The reason is twofold. First, the general insurance industry reported a premium collection of over ₹3.07 lakh crore in FY 2024-25.² Second, to sustain and boost the continued

2. Mining and refining

India's mineral wealth is vast yet significantly underutilised. As the global economy accelerates towards advanced manufacturing, India has positioned its mining and refining sector as a strategic engine for both domestic growth and international supply chains.

To promote reforms in the mining sector, the government is establishing a State Mining Index to share best practices.⁴ They have also launched the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) in 2025 to facilitate 1,200 exploration projects from 2024-25 to 2030-31 and enhance the domestic availability of critical minerals within the country.

For investors, it presents an excellent opportunity to participate in building India's critical minerals infrastructure, which will ultimately have downstream integration into refining, processing, and advanced manufacturing.

3. Manufacturing

The National Manufacturing Mission (NMM) was announced in the Budget 2025-26 under the broader ambit of the 'Make in India' programme. The mission aims to leverage advanced technologies to propel India's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector forward.

This initiative comes at an opportune moment, considering recent geopolitical shifts, a robust and maturing labour force, and government PLI schemes, India is swiftly positioning itself as the world's next great factory floor.

Apart from NMM targeted at MSMEs, there is a general focus on leveraging the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme to push the sector. For instance, electronics and EV manufacturing have been allocated over ₹9,000 crore worth of PLIs for FY 2025-26.⁷ The government's goal is to promote FDI in electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing

and build an EV future for India. The country is also developing integrated industrial corridors and ensuring access to both skilled and semi-skilled talent for industries. For an investor, this is a strong indication to invest in the future of the world's next manufacturing powerhouse.

4. Civil aviation

India's aviation sector is soaring higher than most anticipated. Fueled by rising disposable incomes, rapid infrastructure expansion and bold government initiatives, the industry is on a trajectory that may outpace even the most optimistic projections. The number of operational airports and domestic air passengers have in the country have more than doubled since 2014.⁸ Recently, India officially became the third-largest domestic aviation market in the



growth of the insurance sector, the government recently increased the FDI limit from 49% to 74%, positioning the industry as an investment magnet.

However, this is only the beginning. India is experiencing increasing income levels, policy reforms, and a heightened appetite for financial security. When you consider other BFSI avenues such as credit, fintech, and retail banking, India's financial landscape transforms from a mere market into a significant movement.

world with a footfall of 350 million passengers, trailing only the US and China.

Government has undertaken multiple initiatives to ensure growth in this sector. Initiatives including the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024, which seeks to modernise and streamline civil aviation regulation in India, and the Protection of Interest in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025, aimed at lowering aircraft leasing costs and enhancing financial viability for domestic carriers, are working to ensure the sector stays on its high-growth trajectory. The Regional Connectivity Scheme-UDAN is also transforming India's domestic aviation industry by boosting regional connectivity, creating job opportunities and bolstering state economies.

As an investor, it is easy to assume that India's aviation growth is limited to manufacturing or flight operations. However, this view does not represent the complete picture. The sector encompasses a multi-layered ecosystem that includes airport infrastructure, logistics, engineering, and aviation services, all of which are evolving quickly to support the surge in air travel.

5. Telecom

India's telecom sector stands at the heart of its digital transformation, marked by rapid infrastructure expansion, policy reform and record data consumption. India boasts over 1,200 million telephone subscribers with a teledensity of ~85%.

The sector continues to experience unprecedented growth, driven by the government's decision to permit 100% FDI in telecom. With India's planned 5G rollout gaining momentum and telecom infrastructure strengthening, the sector remains in the top five in attracting foreign investment. It received \$746 million in FDI in FY 2024-25, more than double the inflows recorded in FY 2023-24.

To support this momentum, the government has introduced forward-looking policies such as the Telecommunication Act 2023, which consolidates and updates legacy laws, reduce regulatory burden and ensure smoother spectrum management. For investors, India's telecom sector offers sustained growth, backed by structural reforms, rising Average Revenue Per User (ARPU), and a long-

term shift toward next-generation communication technologies.

6. Pharmaceuticals

India has long been recognised as the "pharmacy of the world", playing a critical role in the global pharmaceutical industry. It continues to consolidate that position through scale, innovation and growing global trust. FDI in pharmaceuticals account for nearly 3% of India's total FDI inflow. Around 70% of India's pharmaceutical exports are shipped to highly regulated markets in the US and EU. It reflects the competitive advantage India offers to global pharmaceutical companies.

With an almost \$50 billion valuation, India's pharmaceutical industry has a highly diversified product base covering generic and bulk drugs, over-the-counter drugs, vaccines and more, with a strong global presence. According to National Accounts Statistics 2024, total output for industry was ₹ 4,56,246 crore for FY 2022-23.

India is also poised to become the next hub for biopharma R&D and clinical trials. Leading global companies are driving FDI in pharmaceuticals for joint ventures and innovation centres in India. If you're looking for a sector with scale, resilience, and global demand, India's pharmaceutical industry stands out. For long-term investors, it represents a solid opportunity, positioned at the heart of the future of global healthcare.

7. Infrastructure

India is relentlessly pursuing progress, transforming challenges posed by infrastructure gaps into opportunities for innovative solutions and dynamic growth. The government has allocated over ₹11.21 lakh crore (3.11% of GDP) for infrastructure development in the Budget 2025-26. From roads and highways to ports and shipping, the massive scale of infrastructure development is enhancing private and foreign participation in traditionally public-heavy segments.

To ensure the success of this infrastructure push, the PM Gati Shakti initiative supports infrastructure projects by breaking down silos and accelerating multimodal connectivity, thus making project execution faster and more efficient. Various

other initiatives are a part of the infrastructure push, such as the Smart Cities Mission for improving quality of life,²⁰ the National Green Hydrogen Mission for exploring alternative green fuels and allowing 100% FDI in renewable energy, and more.

Notably, there is a growing shift towards public-private partnerships, viability gap funding and asset monetisation, creating more structured and investor-friendly models across infrastructure projects. This long-term policy visibility, de-risked frameworks, and high-return potential across core sectors underpin India's infrastructure growth, providing peace of mind and Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) for investors.

8. Biotechnology

India's biotechnology sector is advancing beyond traditional pharmaceuticals and vaccines into innovative fields such as genomics, synthetic biology, bio-manufacturing, and precision medicine. The confidence evident in the pharmaceutical industry also applies to biotechnology. The industry, worth \$165.7 billion in 2024 is taking impressive strides forward!

Additionally, the recent BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment, and Employment) Policy is working to build a greener India and accelerate innovation-driven research and entrepreneurship in high-performance biomanufacturing. For investors, biotechnology in India offers the perfect blend of cutting-edge science, supportive policy and scalable innovation. Whether you're eyeing early-stage ventures or looking to back large-scale bio-manufacturing, the opportunity is not just real—it's accelerating.

India presents a promising outlook for global investors. A vision that incorporates scale, stability, and sector-specific policy clarity. The best part? All of it is backed by strong governance and long-term growth fundamentals. Whether you're seeking high-growth opportunities or stable, asset-backed investments, India's evolving landscape presents a compelling case for every investor.

The next step is to explore opportunities, analyse incentives, and find sector-specific entry points. To get started, visit investindia.gov.in





A TAPESTRY OF SUN, SAND, AND STORY

From the pastel-hued lanes of Fontainhas to the palm-fringed shores of Palolem, every corner of Goa tells a story of history, culture, and the laid-back spirit that makes this destination unforgettable

By Amjad Vanimal

There are places that you visit, and there are places that stay with you. Goa, India's smallest state by area yet arguably its most magnetic, belongs to the latter.

With its intoxicating blend of sun, sand, heritage, and spirit, Goa is not just a destination—it is an experience that seeps into your skin, sits quietly in your memory, and calls you back, again and again.

Arriving in Goa feels like stepping into a vibrant postcard that has come to life. The moment you step out of the airport, there's a change in the air—salt-tinged and scented with tropical greenery.

The roads are flanked by coconut palms that sway like carefree dancers, and the houses—painted in cheerful yellows, blues, and pinks—seem to wear their colonial heritage like a proud badge of honour. The laid-back rhythm of life is infectious. Even the honking is less hurried. There's no rush here, only flow.

This is not the India of chaotic cities and frenzied energy. Goa has its own pulse—gentler, mellow, yet somehow profoundly alive.

A deep historical tapestry

To truly understand Goa, one must look beneath the sunny surface. Its history is a rich mosaic of empires, faiths, and voyages. Goa was once a thriving port for ancient Hindu and Buddhist dynasties, including the Kadambas and the Mauryas. But it was the arrival of the Portuguese in 1510 that left the deepest imprint.

The Portuguese ruled Goa for over four and a half centuries, making it the jewel of their Eastern empire. This prolonged occupation gave rise to an Indo-Portuguese cultural identity that remains remarkably visible and audible today—in the churches that dominate the old towns, the Portuguese surnames still borne by many locals, the syncretic traditions of faith, and even the

melodious lilt of Konkani, the local language.

Walking through Old Goa—once known as “Rome of the East”—is like stepping into another continent. The Basilica of Bom Jesus, built in 1605, houses the relics of St. Francis Xavier and continues to attract pilgrims from around the world. Nearby, the Sé Cathedral, with its grand white façade and gilded altars, is one of Asia's largest churches. These aren't just relics—they're living institutions, still vibrant with prayer, music, and celebration.

The geography of paradise

Geographically, Goa is a land of dramatic contrasts and gentle transitions. It hugs the Arabian Sea on its western edge, offering over 100 kilometres of beaches that vary in character from north to south. To the east, it rises into the forested Western Ghats, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the world's eight “hottest hotspots” of biodiversity.

The Goan coast is not uniform, and each beach has its own distinct personality. In North Goa, places like Baga, Calangute, and Anjuna throb with life—beach parties, live music, parasailing, tattoo parlors, and endless markets. Once a haven for 1960s hippies, Anjuna still holds traces of that bohemian soul, especially on Wednesday market days when artisans and wanderers converge to sell everything from Tibetan jewelry to handmade soap.

In contrast, South Goa is quiet, almost poetic. The beaches like Palolem, Agonda, Colva, and Butterfly Beach are less crowded, framed by cliffs and dense palm groves. They offer a slower rhythm: yoga at dawn, hammocks strung between trees, candlelit dinners with the sound of waves as background music. Time seems to pause here, allowing you to reconnect with yourself.

Beyond the beaches

While the coastline is Goa's most famous draw, inland Goa holds its own treasure chest



Portuguese influence is evident in the brightly coloured houses of Goa's Fontainhas neighbourhood.

of experiences. The spice plantations of Ponda offer immersive tours through forests rich with cardamom, black pepper, nutmeg, and cinnamon. These farms, often run by generations of the same family, provide a glimpse into Goa's role in the global spice trade.

Then there's the Dudhsagar Falls, one of India's tallest waterfalls, nestled in the Bhagwan Mahaveer Sanctuary. The name means "Ocean of Milk," and in the monsoon season, when the falls are in full flow, they truly live up to it. Reaching Dudhsagar involves a thrilling off-road jeep ride or a trek along railway tracks—a true adventurer's delight.

In villages like Chorao and Divar, time slows further. You can take a ferry across the river, cycle past old Portuguese mansions, visit the Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, or simply sit on a veranda and watch life unfold—dogs barking at goats, children playing football in churchyards, elders sipping tea and telling stories under banyan trees.

A culinary romance

To taste Goa is to understand it. Its cuisine is a fragrant, spicy love affair between the sea and the spice route, seasoned by centuries of cultural intermingling.

Seafood reigns supreme—fish curry rice is the everyday staple, but you'd be remiss not to try prawn balchão, sorpotel, or spicy crab xec-xec. The flavours are rich and layered—vinegar, coconut, tamarind, garlic, cinnamon—drawing from Portuguese, Konkani, and Saraswat traditions.

The sweet tooth is not neglected either. The iconic bebinca, a multi-layered coconut milk and egg yolk dessert, is a festive indulgence. Wash it all down with sol kadhi, a cooling kokum and coconut drink, or for the bold-hearted, try a shot of feni, a strong local spirit made from cashew or toddy palm.

Every beach shack, roadside joint, and fine-dining restaurant has its own twist on tradition. And in Goa, food isn't just nourishment—it's celebration.

Festivals

Goa's calendar is a colourful collage of festivals. Carnival, introduced by the Portuguese, is the most famous. Held just before Lent, it features grand parades, masked dancers, floats, and music echoing across Panaji and other towns.

Shigmo, the Goan version of Holi, is celebrated with folk dances, drumbeats, and colour-splashed streets. Christmas and

Easter are observed with grace and grandeur, as the entire state—regardless of faith—comes together in festive unity. Temples also host unique feasts and processions year-round, showcasing Goa's deep spiritual harmony.

In every festival, you'll find music. Goa beats to its own soundscape—trance on the beach, jazz in an old villa, Konkani folk in the village square. From the ancient ghumat (a traditional clay percussion instrument) to electronic dance music, Goa knows how to move the soul and the feet.

The Goans

Travel in Goa is made magical not just by its sights, but by its people. The Goans—laid-back, warm, witty—are deeply rooted in their land but open to the world. Conversations here aren't rushed; they unfold with laughter, reflection, and often a shared plate of food.

On my last evening, I found myself on a quiet beach near Betalbatim, chatting with a fisherman who had returned from sea. As we watched the sky bleed orange into the ocean, he shared tales of tides, saints, and songs his grandfather used to sing. He handed me a freshly caught mackerel, smiled, and said, "In

Travel in Goa is made magical not just by its sights, but by its people.

The Goans—laid-back, warm, witty—are deeply rooted in their land but open to the world.

Goa, we take what the sea gives—and give thanks for the rest."

That, perhaps, is the essence of Goa: a place where generosity flows with the tides, where cultures meet with respect, and where every moment, no matter how small, feels like part of a larger, gentler rhythm.

Whether you come seeking silence or sound, history or hedonism, solitude or celebration, Goa has a way of giving you exactly what you didn't know you needed.

And as you leave—with sand in your shoes and serenity in your soul—you know this is not goodbye. It's only until next time.

Heritage Village Goa

A family haven of comfort, culture, and cuisine



During a recent visit to Goa, we had the wonderful opportunity to stay for three nights at the acclaimed Heritage Village Resort & Spa, widely regarded as the top family resort in the region. The experience was nothing short of exceptional — an elegant blend of warm hospitality, engaging activities, authentic flavours, and serene relaxation.

From the moment we arrived, the resort made a lasting impression. We were greeted with refreshing tender coconuts, each artistically engraved with the resort's name, setting an inviting and personal tone. Our accommodation was a spacious Deluxe room, designed thoughtfully to accommodate families, providing both comfort and privacy. The room offered modern amenities and elegant Goan-inspired decor, creating a cozy home away from home.

Fun-filled days

The resort's commitment to family-friendly experiences was evident throughout our stay. Our kids were delighted by the expansive kids' play area, which kept them happily occupied. They participated eagerly in a colouring competition organized by the resort — an activity that fostered creativity and added an element of friendly fun.

In the meantime, we also spent time lounging by the sparkling swimming pool, immersing ourselves in the tranquil ambience that provided the perfect setting for relaxation.

One of the most memorable moments was a thoughtfully

arranged beach picnic at the nearby Arossim Beach. The resort provided us with a beautifully packed hamper filled with gourmet goodies, freshly prepared by their expert culinary team. With our loved ones around us, the gentle sea breeze, and the soothing sound of waves, it was an idyllic evening that epitomized the joyful spirit of Goa.

Adding a unique charm to our experience was the Tuk-Tuk ride offered on the property. For those unfamiliar, a Tuk-Tuk is a three-wheeled motorized vehicle commonly seen in Southeast Asia, known for its compactness and charm. The resort's Tuk-Tuk allowed us to explore the sprawling property in a fun and novel way — an experience both kids and adults enjoyed.

"At Heritage Village Resort & Spa, we believe family holidays should be as much about shared adventures as they are about

cherished downtime — from exciting local excursions to hearty meals that bring everyone to the same table," says Guitry Velho, Director & Vice President, Heritage Village Resorts and Spa, Goa.

A culinary journey

Dining at Heritage Village Resort & Spa is a journey through diverse flavours, anchored by authenticity and creativity. The resort features three distinct restaurants. Chutney is a contemporary multi-cuisine restaurant offering both buffet and à la carte dining. Mama Miso specializes in exquisite Japanese and Pan-Asian cuisine, while Blue Lagoon serves a variety of bar food, North Indian specialties, fast food, and Chinese dishes. Additionally, the Pool Sunken Bar provides a laid-back setting for drinks and snacks beside the pool.

A highlight of our stay was experiencing the passion and insight of Chutney restaurant's

executive chef Gajanan Kalwaghe, who shared his deep connection with Goan cuisine:

"Goan cuisine is a beautiful mosaic of flavours, influenced by its rich history, coastal bounty, and cultural diversity. It combines the freshness of seafood with traditional spices, coconut, and vinegar. Every dish tells a story of Goa's past — from its Portuguese influences to indigenous Konkani roots."

Chef Gajanan also highlighted the balance they strike between authenticity and guest preferences: "We always source fresh local produce and seafood to maintain authenticity. At the same time, we adapt recipes to suit diverse palates without compromising the soul of the dishes. This balance helps guests experience genuine Goan flavours while feeling comfortable."

The dishes we savoured perfectly reflected this philosophy — deeply flavourful, beautifully presented, and evocative of the coastal Goan spirit.

Serenity and healing

After days filled with activity and exploration, the Aruna Spa and Wellness provided the perfect sanctuary for relaxation. Nestled in a tranquil corner of the resort, the spa's ambiance—with its plush interiors, warm lighting, and peaceful setting—felt like a soothing balm for body and mind.

I indulged in a one-hour rejuvenation full-body massage administered by expert therapists trained in Kerala traditions. The treatment blended reflexology, tailored to my needs, and left me feeling completely revitalized.

The spa's commitment to holistic healing shines through its services and atmosphere, making it an essential part of the Heritage Village experience.

In conclusion, Heritage Village Resort & Spa in Goa delivers an exceptional family holiday experience, seamlessly combining comfort, culture, recreation, and wellness. Whether it's the warm personalized welcome, the engaging kids' activities, the unique tuk-tuk rides, the culinary artistry brought alive by Chef Gajanan Kalwaghe, or the rejuvenating spa treatments, every aspect is thoughtfully curated to make guests feel valued and cared for.





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Mr. NAZERATH CHARLES**

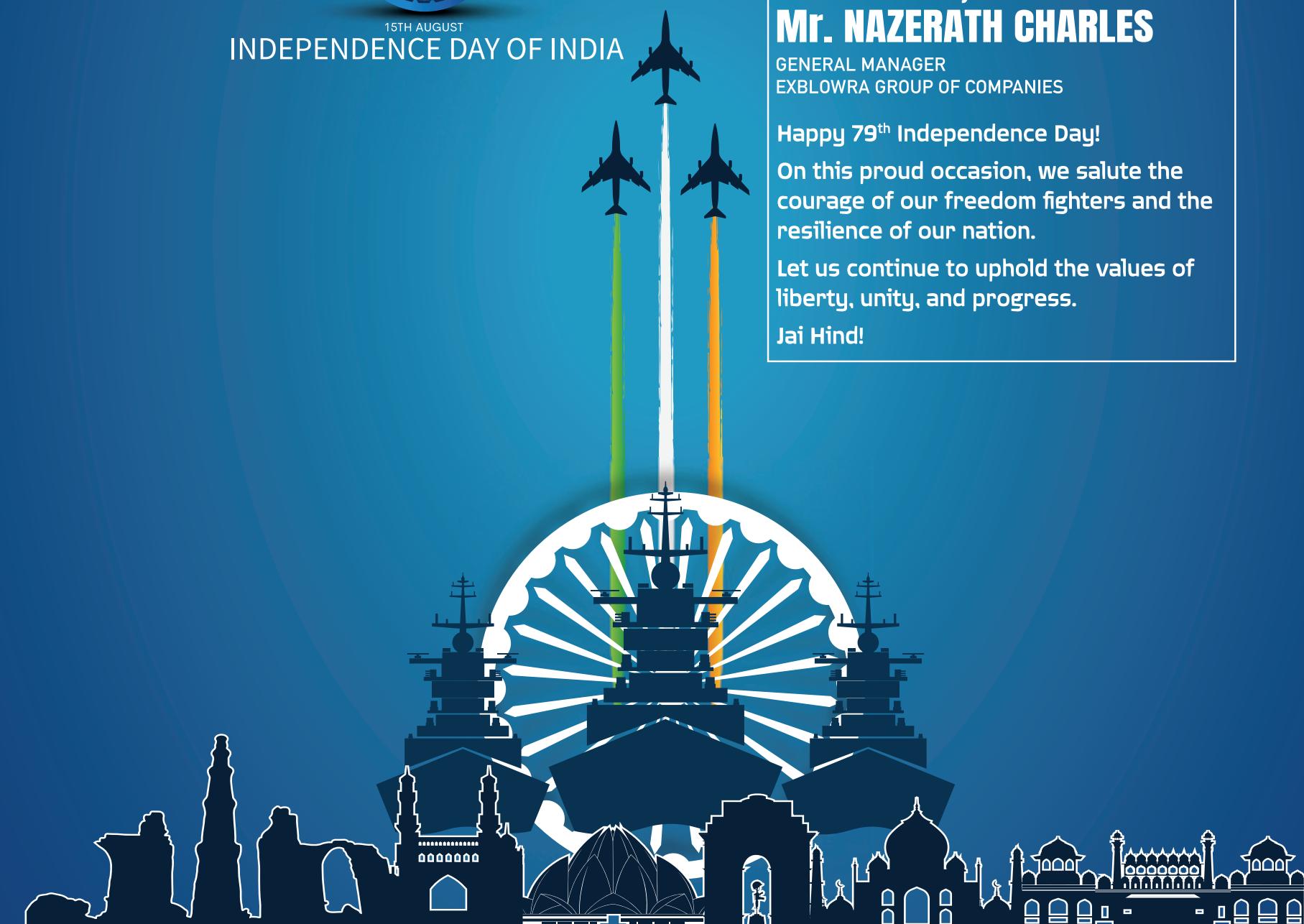
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On this proud occasion, we salute the courage of our freedom fighters and the resilience of our nation.

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Jai Hind!



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EXBLOWRA TRADING & CONTRACTING CO. W.L.L.

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Tel.: 4465 9536, Fax: 4465 4957. PO. Box: 200191, Doha - Qatar
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