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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear AIMA Members,

Warm greetings and congratulations to all of you on the 70th Foundation Day of the All India Management Association (AIMA). It is a matter of pride that AIMA's Foundation Day is observed as National Management Day.

Today, we celebrate seven decades of AIMA's contribution to strengthening India's management capability and reaffirm our commitment to keeping Indian management future ready through intellectual leadership, global engagement, management education, leadership development, and strong partnerships with government and industry.

This is also a moment to thank the many members and leaders, past and present whose time, expertise, and belief have shaped AIMA into the institution it is today. I am deeply grateful to our former presidents, council members, and the secretariat for sustaining AIMA's relevance, energy, and agility over the years.

In a world marked by rapid technological change, trade disruptions, and geopolitical uncertainty, AIMA plays a vital role in enabling Indian management to adapt and lead. Through its engagement with business leaders, policymakers, innovators, and global experts, AIMA ensures that Indian management is equipped not only to compete, but to excel.

AIMA is commemorating its Foundation Day by bringing together some of the most respected minds from India and across the world to deliberate on how our nation can transform and grow with resilience. I am sincerely thankful to our friends and partners who have joined us and, in keeping with AIMA's enduring spirit, have so generously shared their time, insight, and experience. Their presence here is entirely voluntary, a powerful reflection of their commitment to advancing the cause of Indian management.

Celebrating AIMA is about celebrating Indian management, and the day's discussions would be followed by the presentation of AIMA Managing India Awards. Each year, AIMA felicitates extraordinary achievements by individuals and organizations that have made significant contribution to the advancement of Indian economy, technology, and society. We celebrate exemplary veterans, emerging leaders, domestic champions, foreign catalysts, private achievers, and public sector performers. Bringing such exceptional talent together is always inspiring, and the ceremony is a fitting tribute to their contributions.

Thank you for being part of this milestone occasion. I invite you to continue strengthening AIMA and, through it, the vitality, creativity, and resilience of Indian management.



T V Narendran
President, AIMA and
CEO & MD
Tata Steel Ltd

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The All India Management Association (AIMA) is the Voice of India's Leaders and Managers, and the apex body of the management profession in India. AIMA is a not-for-profit, non-lobbying organisation, and works closely with Industry, Government, Academia, and students to further the cause of the management profession in India.

Established in 1957, AIMA has been serving the management community for 70 years, contributing immensely to the enhancement of management capability in the country. AIMA has a membership base of over 38,000 members and close to 6,000 corporate/institutional members, through 68 Local Management Associations affiliated to AIMA. The Association is represented on a number of policymaking bodies of the Government of India and national associations.

AIMA offers various services in the areas of testing, distance education, skill development & training, research, publications, executive education and management development programmes and special Forums for Young Leaders, Vice Chancellors and women leaders and managers.

Over the decades, AIMA has evolved as times have changed and catered to the growing needs of today's management community. Apart from its flagship Post Graduate Diploma in Management, AIMA offers topical and industry-oriented programmes and initiatives to help management professionals and students keep in step with times, while offering state of the art business solutions for organisations and institutions.

As the pioneer of Distance Education, AIMA has always been an early starter, even in the digital space. AIMA was amongst the first organisations to offer Internet Based Remote Proctored Tests on a national level; and among the first to shift its service offerings online. AIMA quickly built digital expertise and now has the capability to offer its management programmes and business solutions in the physical, virtual and hybrid mode, as required.

AIMA also brings to the Indian managers, the best management practices, and techniques through numerous foreign collaborations with professional bodies and institutions. AIMA is an important and long-time member of the Asian Association of Management Organisations (AAMO), which promotes professional management in the Asia Pacific region. In addition, AIMA has developed close associations with several leading international Universities and Institutions including the UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, St Gallen Symposium, Horasis, The World Bank to name a few.

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Mr. Abhishek Raj, CEO of Jenika Ventures, leads with trust, transparency and innovation. His customer-first vision achieved ₹100 crore in first-year sales, building strong partnerships and expanding across India's key real estate markets.

FOUNDATION DAY THEME

TRANSFORMING FOR TOMORROW GROWTH WITH RESILIENCE

While the long term future for India remains very positive, the country needs to navigate successfully thru the geopolitical quagmire that the world has become. Next 5 years will be critical to India's medium term story, and industry will have to strategise as well as execute. The chances of any industry getting disrupted are higher than ever before, not only due to technology but also because of geopolitics. For example, the China + 1 strategy of global organisations, which appeared to favour India's growth aspirations, is now uncertain due to the stance taken by the USA. The most important characteristic any company or country needs to demonstrate over next few years will be Resilience, which also calls for an ability to deeply understand the impact of geopolitics and technology.

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Driven by an unwavering commitment to advancing medicine, Apollo has introduced some of the world's most sophisticated healthcare innovations to India. From Proton Therapy, ZAP-X, and next-generation robotics to advanced cancer care, integrated organ transplants, and AI-powered preventive health checks, Apollo continues to redefine what's possible in healthcare, driving breakthroughs that touch lives across India and around the world.

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Avarna Jain

Vice Chairperson - Saregama India Limited &
Chairperson - RPSG Lifestyle Media

Avarna Jain is Vice Chairperson of Saregama India, India's oldest music and entertainment company and part of the USD 10-billion RPSG Group. Under her leadership, Saregama - a 130-year-old company which owns nearly 50% of all Indian music ever recorded has been reinvented for the digital era. She launched the iconic Carvaan music player, expanded it into every major Indian language, and led Saregama's entry into OTT and entertainment. She was listed as Fortune's 50 Most Powerful Women in India and was on the 40 Under 40 list(2025). She is also on Hurun India U-40 List (2025) for shaping the future of India Inc.

Avarna also helms the luxury lifestyle publishing business of RPSG Group as the Chairperson of RPSG Lifestyle Media. Under her tutelage and innovative vision, the group has brought iconic titles like Esquire, The Hollywood Reporter, and more recently Robb Report into India, in addition to launching the in-house title, Manifest, in the luxury wedding domain. She has been instrumental in defining the luxury narrative in contemporary lifestyle media landscape.

Jain's honours include the Female Entrepreneur of the Year (Indian Council of United Nations), Sanmarg Aparajita Young Achiever Award, India Today's 100 Young Achievers (2021), India Today Top 100 Women Achievers (2023), YFLO Young Achiever Award (2024), and Entrepreneur of the Year (Financial Express Awards, 2024). At 27, she became the youngest-ever Chairperson of YFLO Delhi. She is currently the Chairperson of the BRICS Women's Business Alliance.

She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in Communication.



BVR Subrahmanyam
CEO, NITI Aayog

B.V.R. Subrahmanyam joined as Chief Executive Officer of NITI Aayog in February 2023. B.V.R. Subrahmanyam has been in the Indian Administrative Service since 1987. In a long administrative Career, he has held positions at multiple levels in Manipur in NE India and in Madhya Pradesh. He was on the faculty of LBSNAA, Mussoorie, the civil service college of India. He worked in the Prime Minister's Office between 2004–2008 and 2012–2015, serving under both Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Manmohan Singh. In this period, he was closely involved in shaping India's development journey on the economic, infrastructure and social fronts. In between his PMO stints, he worked on the Board of the World Bank. In 2015, he was sent as Principal Secretary of the Home Department in the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected state of Chhattisgarh. Over 3 years, he was instrumental in controlling LWE activities and violence through a 2-pronged effort on the security and development fronts. In 2018, Subrahmanyam was made the Chief Secretary of Jammu & Kashmir following the collapse of a coalition government. Over 3 years, he saw through the constitutional transformation of J&K, focusing on good governance and delivering development. He worked as Commerce Secretary of India from July 2021 and retired in September 2022. During this tenure, he drove the restructuring of the department; accelerated free trade negotiations with UAE, Australia, UK, EU Canada, Israel and the GCC; rewrote the SEZ law; expanded the impact of trade to all regions of the country; involved academia in data driven policy making; and, prepared the ground work for setting up a Global Trade Promotion body. B.V.R. Subrahmanyam published a book, Conduct in Government on conduct rules for civil servants, and a research paper, "Investment Incentives and Multilateral Disciplines." B.V.R. Subrahmanyam has a Master's in International Law and Economics with Distinction from the World Trade Institute, University of Bern, an MBA with Distinction in Finance from the London Business School, and an engineering degree from the University of Delhi



Karan Adani

Managing Director - Adani Ports & SEZ Ltd and Adani Cement Ltd

Karan Adani is the Managing Director of two of India's largest businesses – Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ), India's leader in ports and logistics, and Adani Cement Ltd (ACL), the second largest cement manufacturer in India. Both APSEZ and ACL are part of the Adani Group, one of the world's fastest-growing energy infrastructure portfolios with 10 listed market-leading companies and a total market capitalization of around \$200 Bn.

Karan's career with the Group began in 2009 at Mundra Port, APSEZ's flagship port, where he gained expertise in core operations. Since 2016, on his watch as CEO and later as MD, APSEZ's portfolio has rapidly expanded from two ports to 15 ports and terminals in India and another two more abroad – in Sri Lanka and Israel. Following a series of strategic expansions and partnerships, APSEZ has become India's largest private sector port developer and operator. Along with its subsidiary, Adani Logistics Ltd, APSEZ is also the largest and most diversified private rail operator in India. After acquiring Ambuja Cements Ltd and ACC Ltd in late 2022, Karan has grown Adani Cement's capacity by a phenomenal 50% to cross 100 MTPA.

An economics graduate from Purdue University, Karan is a technologically savvy, soft-spoken, modern leader who views business growth through a sustainable, stake-holder centric lens. He is conscientious about good corporate governance, and an active proponent of environmental safety and the equitable development of the world he affects. He drives continuous engagement with the community, focusing on education, healthcare and skill development, and seeks to transform lives by creating opportunities for employment and a sustainable livelihood.

Armed with a global perspective, Karan is rigorously driving the beneficial use of technology, not only as an enabler to revamp operations but also as a leader to augment the company's identity around an integrated business model (port operations, logistics and SEZ development). This is transforming APSEZ into a Transport Utility (providing end-to-end logistics solutions and simplifying the supply chain for customers) and creating a sustainable, carbon neutral growth model. Ports are at the heart of a transport utility – and Karan's target for APSEZ is to be the world's largest port company by the end of this decade.

As a second-generation member of the Adani family, Karan has embraced his responsibilities – to uphold the principles, purpose and values that underpin both the family and the business of the Adani Group. He resides in Ahmedabad with his wife Paridhi and their three children.



Laksh Vaaman Sehgal

Vice Chairman
Motherson Group

Laksh Vaaman Sehgal is the Vice Chairman of the Motherson Group, which has a presence in 44 countries across Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa and employs approximately 200,000 people in over 425 facilities. The Group is ranked among the top 15 global automotive suppliers. Motherson Group is a diversified global design, engineering, manufacturing and assembly specialist and one of the world's leading suppliers for automotive OEMs globally. The Group has a market-leading position across geographies for its various product verticals. It is one of the leading suppliers of vision systems globally and the leading supplier of polymer modules in Europe. The group is also a leading supplier of wiring harnesses for heavy-duty commercial vehicles in the American and European markets and has a market-leading position in most of the other product verticals operating in India. He has an MBA degree from Columbia Business School (USA) and holds a degree from Keio University, Tokyo, Japan. He has a rich experience of working with the major companies of the Motherson Group. He has also spent 3 years working with the group's collaborators in Germany and Japan.

Laksh Vaaman led the turnaround of Visiocorp (now known as Samvardhana Motherson Reflectec-SMR) as its first CEO post-acquisition by Motherson. After stabilising the operations of SMR, he moved to a strategic role at the group level. Under his leadership, the group is diversifying and expanding its presence to new industry segments including aerospace, technology, logistics, and health and medical. He is also leading the group's drive towards the development and production of enhanced solutions for the future requirements of the transport industry. He is closely involved in all the new ventures and is a key member of the core strategic team, which is responsible for the overall management of the group. He is deeply involved in the M&A activities and provides invaluable insights to the business teams to help them turn around the companies.

As director on the board of the Motherson group's two publicly listed entities in India, Laksh Vaaman Sehgal is a key member of the executive team which is driving ESG and Sustainability practices at Motherson. He firmly believes that the people are the biggest asset of Motherson.



Mihir Shukla
Chairman & CEO
Automation Anywhere

Mihir Shukla is co-founder, Chairman and CEO of Automation Anywhere, a global leader in Agentic Process Automation and AI solutions for the enterprise.

Mihir co-founded Automation Anywhere in 2003. Through his leadership, the company's vision is to fuel the future of work by unleashing human potential through an Autonomous Enterprise where up to 80% of work is fully automated or AI-assisted, enabling people to focus on what matters most. Alongside rapid growth and profitability, Automation Anywhere has received numerous awards for its groundbreaking technology and customer-first approach, including being named in Forbes as one of the Seven Wonders of AI; frequent market leadership positions from top analysts such as Gartner and Forrester; annual listings on the Forbes Cloud 100 list; and numerous accolades for Automation Anywhere's positive culture, including being recognised as a Great Place to Work and featured in Newsweek's America's Top 200 Most Loved Workplaces.

Mihir is a highly-regarded speaker, thought leader and advisor to hundreds of boards, CEOs and heads of state around AI and digital transformation initiatives. He is a firm believer that technology must serve the greater good of humanity. As such, Automation Anywhere has impacted over 500K lives through training, re-skilling and nonprofit collaboration. Mihir is a close partner of the World Economic Forum and plays a key leadership role in the ICT Governors community, the Centre for AI Excellence and the Centre for New Economy and Society.

As an advocate for lifelong learning, Mihir is sponsor of the Shukla Centre for Future Studies in India, which is dedicated to advancing knowledge and skills for middle-grade students in cutting-edge fields such as AI, automation and robotics. In addition, Mihir is a member of the Advisory Board of the Institute for Digital Innovation & AI (IDIA) at Melbourne Business School and a frequent guest presenter at Stanford's Graduate School of Business.



Mohit Suri
Film Director

An outstanding filmmaker with an already impressive track record of successful films, Mohit Suri has yet again delivered a musical romantic blockbuster with Saiyaara, winning both popular and critical acclaim. The film is a haunting and emotionally resonant drama of love, tragedy, and redemption, brought to life through powerful storytelling, evocative music, and remarkable performances from a debutant cast.

A director from the renowned Bhatt school of filmmaking and a member of the Bhatt family, Mohit is celebrated for his mastery of emotion-driven romantic thrillers. His films often explore complex protagonists navigating intense relationships and challenging circumstances, with music playing a central role in amplifying emotion and advancing the narrative.

Mohit made his directorial debut in 2005 with Zeher and has since delivered several popular and critically appreciated entertainers, including Murder 2, Aashiqui 2, and Awarapan. With Saiyaara, he has reached a new pinnacle of cinematic excellence, creating his highest-grossing film to date and reaffirming his stature as one of India's leading directors.



Navika Kumar
Group Editor-in-Chief
Times Now and Times Now Navbharat

A versatile and transformative news personality with over three decades of experience, Navika Kumar is a name to reckon with in journalism in India. Navika leads the editorial mandate of Times Now & Times Now Navbharat. Navika Kumar spent 15 years of her journalistic career in the Print Media at The Economic Times & The Indian Express. She switched to Television in 2005 and was part of the Founding Team at Times Now - today India's No. 1 English News Channel. In 2021, Navika oversaw the launch of Times Now Navbharat and is currently the first woman in India to head two news channels as Editor-in-Chief.

With stellar credentials, Navika Kumar is amongst the few journalists who have left their imprint in both political as well as in business reporting. At ease with both Hindi and English, and acutely aware of the sensibilities and nuances of news audiences across the country, she has helmed coverage with a truly pan-Indian reach that has expanded the viewership base of Times Network.

A firebrand news anchor with extensive knowledge of current affairs, politics and business, Navika is credited for investigating and breaking high impact stories including 'Office for Profit' story that led to the resignation Congress leader Sonia Gandhi as an MP, the Commonwealth Games scam that led to the exit of the then Sports Minister Suresh Kalmadi, the VVIP Chopper scam and Aircel Maxis deal, Sheeshmahal among several others.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Navika was mandated to launch a Hindi news channel under the Times Network brand. Under her leadership, Times Now Navbharat has built a strong affinity with the viewers and advertisers alike. In her role as the Group Editor-in-Chief of Times Now & Times Now Navbharat, Navika drives the Editorial strategy for the Network's news brands, besides leading the content direction of all Political & Policy led IPs of the Network. An integral part of the Network's flagship brand, TIMES NOW since inception, Navika anchors the primetime show 'The Newshour' @ 9 pm & the popular interview format show 'Frankly Speaking with Navika Kumar' on Times Now & 'Sawal Public Ka' on Times Now Navbharat @ 8 pm every weeknight. Navika has interviewed some of the biggest names in the world of politics, business, entertainment and sports. These include Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the Co-chair Designate of the Department of Government Efficiency in the United States Vivek Ramaswamy, Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Bill Gates among others.

Navika has been recognised with Prem Bhatia Memorial Trust award in 2006 for her exemplary political reportage and ENBA, NT, ITA awards for Best Anchor and Society Achievers Awards for remarkable achievements & outstanding contribution in Indian Media & Television News Journalism.



Nikhil Sawhney
Vice Chairman & MD
Triveni Turbine Ltd

Nikhil Sawhney is the Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Triveni Turbine Limited and a Director with Triveni Engineering and Industries Limited in Noida, India.

The Companies occupy leadership positions in their respective businesses of sugar manufacturing, the distillation of alcohol, renewable energy generation, industrial turbines and gears, and water and waste water treatment solutions with 23 manufacturing facilities predominantly in India.

Triveni Turbines is one of the largest global manufacturers of industrial steam turbines as well as the global leader for renewable energy-based applications. The Company has over 6000 installations in over 80 countries. The Company is leading the Energy Transition with the development of several innovation products and solutions, especially utilizing CO₂ as a working fluid. The Company has developed globally leading heat pumps and long duration energy storage products using CO₂ in a subcritical, transcritical and supercritical form.

Nikhil has helped found the CII-Triveni Water Institute and is an active trustee of the Tirath Ram Shah Charitable Hospital and the Ananta Aspen Institute. Nikhil has also helped found the Asia Leaders Fellowship, under the International House of Japan. Nikhil has Chaired the Northern Region and Delhi State for CII. He has also recently stepped down from the Presidentship of the All India Management Association as well as a Governor on the Board of the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta. He has a BA and an MA from Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge, and an MBA from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.



Pranjal Sharma
Economic Analyst
Advisor and Author

Pranjal Sharma is an economic analyst, advisor and author who focuses on technology, globalisation and media. He serves on boards of enterprises and non-profit entities which are leveraging emerging technologies for sustainable, equitable growth. Pranjal leads public discourse at global and national platforms including World Economic Forum, St Gallen Symposium, Horasis Global Meeting and AIMA.

He served as a member of the Global Agenda Council at the WEF for eight years. He is a member of its expert network and a regular speaker at Davos. He is also a member of The Outstanding Speakers Bureau. Pranjal also guides projects on economic forecasting, business intelligence & public diplomacy to interpret policy impact on industry and society. He has written and edited several reports and papers on economic development. Pranjal is a columnist with Business Standard newspaper and BusinessWorld magazine among other publications. His new book is India Automated: How the Fourth Industrial Revolution Transforming India. His previous book Kranti Nation: India and The Fourth Industrial Revolution, published in 2017 was the first to chronicle the impact of emerging technologies in India.

Pranjal was also the co-author of The Z Factor. He has served as Advisor Strategy to India's public service broadcaster Prasar Bharati, where he helped bring in industry best practices and enabled creation of digital media teams. Previously, he spent more than two decades in print, internet and TV media, mostly in leadership roles with focus on India's economic engagement with the world. As Founding Executive Editor at Bloomberg UTV, he helped launch and run the channel. At TV Today Network, his team pioneered business news content for non- English audiences. Pranjal received the News Television Award for best business show in 2007.



Raj Chengappa
Group Editorial
Director (Publishing)
The India Today Group

Raj Chengappa is a veteran journalist of over 40 years' standing. He is currently the Group Editorial Director (Publishing) of India Today and Editor, India Today magazine from 2015 onwards. Prior to his current assignment, Raj was Editor-in-Chief of The Tribune Group of Newspapers, one of India's oldest and most respected newspaper groups. Raj has varied interests and is a specialist in political analysis, foreign affairs, security, nuclear weapons, the environment and development. He chronicled India's nuclear weapons history in his best-selling book 'Weapons of Peace, The Secret Story of India's quest to be a Nuclear Power.' He also does a popular weekly podcast and YouTube show for India Today called Nothing But The Truth.

Raj has covered major international events and wars and interviewed prominent domestic and international leaders. He has thrice interviewed Prime Minister Narendra Modi since he took charge in May 2014. He had also interviewed Dr Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister soon after he concluded the Indo-US nuclear deal. Among the international leaders he has interviewed are Russian President Vladimir Putin, French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Afghan President Mr Hamid Karzai and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

An award-winning journalist, Raj was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University in 1991-92, a Stimson Centre Fellow on Security Affairs in Washington DC in 1995, Harry Brittain Fellow (partly at London and Oxford University) in 1985. Among the awards for print journalism that he has won are the Ramnath Goenka for Excellence in Journalism for Best Feature Writing 2022, the Haldi Ghati Award for Outstanding Journalism 2020, National Award for Excellence in Rural Journalism, 2019 and the Prem Bhatia Award for Political Analysis 1998. Among the awards he has won for video and audio journalism for his programme, Nothing But The Truth are: the ENBA Award for Best Video Podcast Host in English 2024 and the India Audio Awards for Best Show Host for Nothing But The Truth in 2022, 2023 and 2024.



Rekha Sethi
Director General
All India Management Association

Rekha Sethi is the Director General of the All India Management Association (AIMA), the apex body for management in India.

AIMA is the Voice of India's Leaders and Managers, and the apex body of the management profession in India. It is a non-lobbying, not for-profit organization working closely with Industry, Government, Academia and students to further the cause of the management profession in India. AIMA makes a salutary contribution to management learning and practice in the country by offering various services in the areas of testing, distance education, research, publications and management development.

Rekha took charge of AIMA in June 2008. She has since established AIMA as the preferred platform for discussions and debate on management and has deepened AIMA's relationship with the Government of India and India Inc. AIMA now attracts India's top industry leaders and policy makers on its platform.

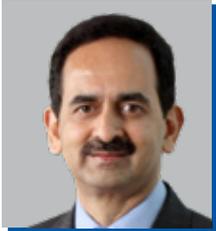
Rekha is a Member of the Academic Advisory Committee of the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and also a member of All India Board of Management Studies constituted by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

Rekha is also on the Boards of some leading Indian companies as an Independent Director including SAMIL - Samvardhana Motherson International Ltd – a diversified global manufacturing specialist and one of the world's largest and fastest growing automotive supplier for OEMs, with over 400 facilities in 44 countries; Spencer's Retail Ltd – one of India's leading retailers; Supervisory Board of SMP, Germany; Kirloskar Brothers Limited - one of India's largest centrifugal pump manufactures; Hero Steels Limited – manufacturing rolling strips and ERW tube mills and also First source Solutions Limited - a digitalforward, people-first business process solutions company.

She has earlier served on the Board of Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd, world's 4th largest generic pharma company and India's top pharmaceutical company and also on the Boards of Sun Pharma Laboratories Ltd, Sun Pharma Distributors Ltd and CESC, one of India's foremost Power generation and distribution companies and the flagship company in the RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group.

Prior to joining AIMA, Rekha worked with India's premier industry organization, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for over 17 years. There she led the initiative to create high-profile international events to promote India's economic interests. She started her career with the Center for Development of Telematics (C-DoT).

Rekha is an alumna of St Stephens College, Delhi University. In 2025, she was inducted into the Order of Illustrious Stephanians by the St Stephen's College, an honour conferred on a select few distinguished alumni.



Sanjay Kirloskar
Chairman & Managing Director
Kirloskar Brothers Ltd

Sanjay C. Kirloskar is the Chairman and Managing Director of Kirloskar Brothers Limited (KBL), India's largest pump manufacturer and exporter. A Mechanical Engineering graduate from the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, he has led the company since 1985, transforming it into an international frontrunner with 17 manufacturing facilities in India and abroad.

Under his stewardship, KBL has advanced sustainable innovation through additive manufacturing (3D printing), Artificial Intelligence and AR/VR-enabled operations. The company's achievements include contributing to one of India's largest water resource projects, the Sardar Sarovar Project in Gujarat and playing a vital role in the Thailand cave rescue operation (2018).

Sanjay has fostered a culture of ethical and inclusive growth, founding the Vikas Charitable Trust and establishing the world's only all-women pump manufacturing facility in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. A Fellow of the Indian National Academy of Engineering, he currently serves as President of the Mahratta Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA) and holds key positions across academic and industry bodies.



Shereen Bhan
Managing Editor
CNBC-TV18

Shereen Bhan is the Managing Editor of CNBC-TV18 with over two decades of experience in the field of Television Broadcast, tracking corporate, policy news and events that defined the business landscape in India. For more than a decade now, Shereen has been not only producing and anchoring flagship, award winning shows like 'India Business Hour' and 'Young Turks', she has also been hands-on in guiding and moulding young business journalists. She has been responsible for breaking a range of news stories that have redefined the Indian economic landscape in recent times and has also interviewed some of the biggest names in business and politics, both domestic and global.

Shereen is also the Anchor & Editor of the award-winning show 'Young Turks', one of India's longest running shows on entrepreneurship – a series that over the last 20 years has successfully built a niche category in business news programming.

Shereen is also the Author of Young Turks, a book published by Random House India.

Shereen has interviewed some of the biggest names in Business from legendary investor Warren Buffet to Bill Gates, Satya Nadella, Richard Branson, Sheryl Sandberg, Indra Nooyi to name just a few. She has also spent several years tracking the political- economy and has interviewed several Finance Ministers and other Cabinet Ministers over the years.

Over the course of her 24-year tryst with business journalism, Shereen has been the recipient of the 'Best Business Talk Show' award at the News Television awards for several years. She also won the 'FICCI Woman of the Year' award for her contribution to media, and was named a 'Young Global Leader' by the World Economic Forum. She also won the 'Best Business Anchor Award', the 'Best English News Anchor Award' and the Managing Editor of the year awards over the last few years.

More notably, Shereen has been ranked no. 1 in IMPACT's '50 Most Influential Women In Indian Media, Marketing & Advertising List for 2022, and has been consistently featured on the list from 2018, 2019 and 2020.

At the prestigious ENBA 2019 Awards, she won the News Television Editor-in-Chief of the year in the English category and the Best Anchor, English and continued her winning streak at the 2020 edition of ENBA Awards as well by bagging the Managing Editor of the Year – English and Best Anchor – English awards. Her other notable awards include the prestigious Bharat Asmita National Award 2022 for excellence in Business journalism; India's Most Trusted Business News Anchor award by IDEASFEST 2022, as well as the Outstanding Contribution to Media award by the esteemed AIMA's 12th Managing India Awards 2022. Shereen has also been featured consecutively for two years in "THE LIST" series published by Jombay's 1000 Women Leaders Program for 2023 and 2024

Under her leadership, CNBC-TV18 has established its dominance as the leader in Business News, with over 90% share of the Business News Genre.



Smriti Zubin Irani

Former Union Cabinet Minister
Government of India and Young Global Leader, World Economic Forum

Smriti Irani served as a Cabinet Minister in the Government of India from 2014 to 2024, holding key portfolios including Women and Child Development, Minority Affairs, Textiles, Education, and Information and Broadcasting. A Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum, she has over 25 years of experience in governance and public policy.

As Minister for Women and Child Development (2019–2024), she implemented the POSHAN Tracker, a large-scale digital governance platform delivering nutritional benefits to nearly 100 million women and children across 1.4 million centres supported by a 2.2 million frontline workforce. The initiative received the National Award for e-Governance 2024 (Gold). She strengthened the juvenile justice framework, established over 700 One-Stop Crisis Centres for survivors of violence, and supported fast-track courts to improve access to justice.

In Minority Affairs (2022–2024), she enabled participation of over 4,000 women under the 'Lady Without Mahram' category for the Haj pilgrimage and introduced the Haj Suvidha App to streamline visa processing and logistics.

As Minister of Textiles (2016–2021), she oversaw indigenous PPE manufacturing during COVID-19, positioning India as the world's second-largest producer within four months. She secured HSN Code recognition for over 300 technical textiles and expanded the toy sector, increasing exports by 239 per cent while doubling manufacturing units.

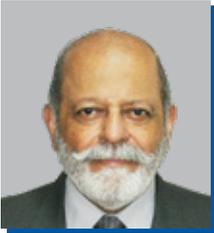
During her tenure in Education (2014–2016), she led the consultative process for the National Education Policy after 34 years and oversaw the launch of SWAYAM, India's first MOOC platform serving over 11 million learners. She introduced the National Institutional Ranking Framework, National Digital Library, GIAN, and IMPRINT to strengthen research and academic benchmarking.

As Minister for Information and Broadcasting (2017–2018), she implemented operational reforms at Doordarshan, resulting in 30 per cent revenue growth within one financial year.

Within the Bharatiya Janata Party, she has served as National Vice President, National Secretary (two terms), National President of the Women's Wing, and National Executive Member for five terms.

Beyond government, she founded the Alliance for Global Good – Gender Equity and Equality, aligned with BIMSTEC and G20. She serves as Strategic Advisor to the Confederation of All India Traders, representing 80 million traders, and as Advisory Board Member of the Women's Collective Forum and Vice-President of The Loomba Foundation. She represented the Asia-Pacific region at the 126th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly and serves as Adjunct Faculty at the Indian Institutes of Management Udaipur and Bodhgaya.

She holds certifications from the University of Cambridge (2022) and the University of California, Berkeley (2021). She advocated for Permanent Commission for Women in the Indian Army and launched Saksham in 2011 to mainstream differently-abled citizens. A published author, she is fluent in eight languages.



Sujan Chinoy

Director General

Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA) and
Former Indian Ambassador to Japan and Mexico

A polyglot and fluent Mandarin speaker, Amb Sujan Chinoy is Director General of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses with 45 years of professional experience in diplomacy, politico-military and security issues. A career diplomat from 1981-2018 and specialist on China, he headed the Indian side in the India-China Diplomatic and Military Expert Group dealing with CBMs, Line of Actual Control (LAC) and boundary-related issues. He was Ambassador to Japan and Mexico and Consul General of India in Shanghai and Sydney, besides being deputy chief of mission in Riyadh. As Chair of the Think-20 engagement group for India's G20 Presidency, he steered global consultations among think-tanks. He is a member of the Executive Council of the Society of the Prime Ministers Museum and Library (PMML) and Member, Governing Council, ICWA. He was a Member of the All-Party MPs Delegation to the UAE and West Africa during OPERATION SINDOOR and Member of the DRDO Review Committee. Amb Chinoy has authored "World Upside Down: India Recalibrates Its Geopolitics" (HarperCollins) and "Global Tumult: India as a Pole Star" (Rupa Publications), besides editing several books on defence, security and international relations.



Sunil Kant Munjal

Chairman
Hero Enterprise

Sunil Kant Munjal is a second-generation member of the family that founded the Hero Group, India's premier automotive manufacturing group that has evolved from being the world's largest bicycle-maker to the largest two-wheeler maker. He is now the Chairman of Hero Enterprise, with interests in insurance distribution, steel-making, real estate, and an active Investment Office. The Investment Office has made strategic investments in several areas ranging from e-commerce to hospitality. He also supports start-ups and mature businesses in digital learning, transportation, healthcare, women empowerment, education, financial services, consumer facing businesses, etc. The Investment Office runs a portfolio of structured debt, public market investments and private equity investments in India and for global markets.

He sits on the boards of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A), Indian School of Business (ISB) which is a leading Business School in India, Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC), India's leading College for Commerce and also University of Tokyo. He is also on the board of trustees of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He has co-founded BML Munjal University (BMU) and is President of Dayanand Medical College and Hospital, Ludhiana. He has also served as President of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), All India Management Association (AIMA) and has headed the Doon School governing body for five years; been a member of Prime Minister's Council on Trade & Industry and was on government taskforces that prepared the ground for India's banking, financial services and taxation reforms. He was also part of the Labour Reforms Commission and has Chaired the Report for Skills, Training & Workers Education and a few others.

Munjal has set up the Serendipity Arts Foundation which aims to revive patronage in the arts and make all art-forms accessible to people through a large multi-disciplinary Arts Festival and various other means. He is also the President of the Ludhiana Sanskritik Samagam which supports performing arts across North India. He has also chronicled the incredible saga of Hero's founders in a book - The Making of Hero, which featured amongst India's prominent bestsellers for several months and recently won the Business Book of the Year Award at Tata Literature Live! Festival 2020. In 2025, he was honoured with an honorary doctorate degree from Birmingham City University, UK. In the same year, the Government of France conferred upon him the insignia of Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Mérite (Knight of the National Order of Merit).



T V Narendran

President, AIMA and CEO & Managing Director
Tata Steel Ltd

T V Narendran is the CEO & Managing Director of Tata Steel Limited. As the CEO & MD, he has overseen the organic and inorganic growth of Tata Steel over the last decade. He has over 37 years of experience in the Mining and Metals industry.

He is currently on the Boards of Tata Steel Limited and Tata International Limited and he is the Chairman of Tata Steel Europe. He is serving as the President of All India Management Association (AIMA). He chairs the Boards of Governors of Xavier School of Management (XLRI) and Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. He is also a member of the Council of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. He has served as the Chairman of the World Steel Association from 2024-25 and as the President of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) from 2021-22. He has also served as the President of the Indian Institute of Metals from 2021-22. He was the co-chair of the Mining & Metals Governors Council of the World Economic Forum from 2016-18.

He is a Mechanical Engineer from the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Trichy and did his MBA from the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Calcutta. He is a recipient of Distinguished Alumnus Awards from both NIT Trichy and IIM Calcutta. He is a fellow of the Indian National Academy of Engineers. He is a Chevening Scholar and has also attended the Advanced Management Programme at INSEAD, France.



Vineet Agarwal

Vice President, AIMA and Managing Director
Transport Corporation of India Ltd

Vineet Agarwal is the Managing Director of Transport Corporation of India Ltd. He also serves on the boards of several leading organizations, including SRF Ltd., Somany Ceramics Ltd., and the Indian Institute of Health and Management Research (IIHMR).

He is a trusted advisor for policies in India, contributing significantly to the sectoral growth and modernization. Over the years, he has held many key responsibilities in the industry, like serving as the President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), Founding National President of the Young Leaders Council (YLC) at All India Management Association (AIMA), Director on the global board of Young President Organization (YPO), Board member of National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC), Member of the National Start-up Advisory Council, among others.

Through TCI Foundation, he supports initiatives in healthcare, education, skill development, sports, and community welfare, reflecting his commitment to social responsibility and sustainability.

He holds a Bachelor of Science from Carnegie Mellon University and has completed the OPM Program at Harvard Business School.



Vishal Kampani

Sr. Vice President, AIMA and Vice Chairman & Managing Director
JM Financial Ltd

Vishal Kampani joined the JM Financial Group in 1997 in investment Banking and subsequently worked with Morgan Stanley in New York. Upon his return to India in the year 2000, Mr Kampani joined JM Morgan Stanley (Joint Venture between JM Financial Group and Morgan Stanley) and pivoted Corporate Finance within the Investment Bank. He went on to head the Corporate Finance Division.

Post 2008, he played an instrumental role in identifying new growth opportunities and further diversifying the business of the JM Financial Group, including private credit business, private equity business and expansion of the capital markets business.

Vishal Kampani was appointed as Managing Director of JM Financial Limited in 2016 and was subsequently appointed as non-executive Vice Chairman in 2021.

He also strategised JM Financial Group's foray into the housing finance business through JM Financial Home Loans Limited in 2017. Under his leadership, JM Financial Limited successfully raised equity funds in 2018 and 2020 from marquee domestic and global investors.

In a career spanning over two and a half decades, Vishal Kampani has played a defining role in ideating and consummating several landmark and transformational M&A, fund raising and restructuring transactions. In addition, he has strategized JM Financial Group's expansion across the spectrum of financial services.

Vishal Kampani has been working extensively with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in several roles in the BFSI Sector.

He is a member of Primary Market Advisory Committee, SEBI.

Vishal Kampani was awarded The Economic Times "40 under 40" in 2016. Vishal Kampani has completed his MS (Finance) from London Business School, University of London.



Vishal Sikka

Founder and CEO
Vianai Systems and Former, CEO & MD
Infosys

Dr. Vishal Sikka is the Founder and CEO of Vianai Systems, a Human-Centered AI platform and products company launched in 2019 to address the unfulfilled promise of enterprise AI. Based in Palo Alto, California, the company is backed by many of the most influential investors in the industry, has a rapidly growing customer base and includes a leadership team with unmatched expertise in building breakthrough products and delivering customer success.

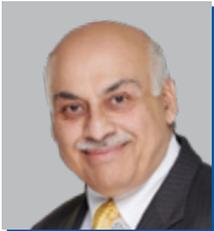
Dr. Sikka serves on the Supervisory Board of the BMW Group, the GlaxoSmithKline Board of Directors, and the Advisory Council for Stanford University's Institute for Human-centered AI (HAI). Dr. Sikka is widely considered one of the world's leading experts in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, and frequently advises C-suites of the largest and most respected companies in the world on AI strategies to transform their businesses.

From 2014 to 2017, Dr. Sikka was the CEO and Managing Director of Infosys, a \$10B+ revenue global technology services company. As the first non-founder CEO of Infosys, he led the company through a generational shift in a time of significant changes in the services industry, changes brought on by cost pressures and the rapid advancements in technology. He implemented a "Renew + New" strategy that helped clients renew their existing IT landscapes to drive down costs using automation, while simultaneously bringing breakthrough innovation using design thinking and next-generation technologies like artificial intelligence to transform their customer experiences.



Vishnu Som
Senior Managing Editor
NDTV

Vishnu Som is Senior Managing Editor at NDTV with three decades of award-winning journalism. He has conducted landmark interviews with world leaders including Vladimir Putin, Shinzo Abe, Liz Truss, John Kerry, and Henry Kissinger. He has reported extensively from conflict zones such as Kargil, Afghanistan, and Ukraine, anchored sessions at the World Economic Forum, and produced more than 50 documentaries. His work has been recognised with the Ramnath Goenka Award, the Commonwealth Broadcast Award and the Global Investigative Journalism network.



Vivek Chaand Sehgal

Chairman
Motherson Group

V. C. Sehgal, Chairman of Motherson Group, established Motherson in 1975 along with his mother. In 1977, he entered the field of manufacturing with a cable and wire manufacturing unit. Today, Motherson employs approx. 200,000 people in over 425 facilities spread across 44 countries.

The Group has a diversified product range covering wiring harnesses, rearview mirrors, integrated plastic modules, lighting systems and a wide range of modules and components.

The Group today is one of the leading suppliers of rearview mirrors globally & the leading supplier of polymer modules in Europe. The group is a leading supplier of wiring harnesses for heavy-duty commercial vehicles in the American & European markets, with market-leading positions in most other product verticals operating in India.

Under the leadership of Mr. Sehgal, Motherson has evolved as a leading full system solutions provider to the global automotive industry. The Group is ranked among the top 15 global automotive suppliers.

Vivek's visionary ability to see opportunities for the benefit of the Group, be it in the form of joint ventures or acquisitions, is legendary. Today, the Group has multiple partners for its various product ranges and has made 50 successful acquisitions to date.

Recently, he was inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame (AHF) for 2024. Some of his other accolades include Ernst & Young's 'Entrepreneur of the Year Award for Manufacturing' in 2012, 'Best CEO, 2013 for Auto Ancillaries' by Business Today Magazine in India and 'CEO of the Year 2015' by Business Standard. He has also received the 'Best CEO Award' in the 2016 and 2018 All Asia Executive Team Rankings for the Autos and Auto Parts sector by Institutional Investor Magazine and 'Entrepreneur of the Year 2016, India' by Ernst & Young. Vivek was also awarded the ETAuto Global Indian of the Year Award at the ETAuto Global Auto Business Summit 2018 and Entrepreneur of the Year 2018 by Forbes India and Best CEO 2024 by Fortune India.

Vivek's clear vision to establish Motherson as a full system solutions provider and a preferred supplier to all customers has propelled the expansion of the Group in new business areas. Firmly believing that "We are a NOT YET company", Vivek is always open to new ideas and has successfully spread this philosophy of openness down the line in Motherson.



Yezdi Nagporewalla
Chief Executive Officer
KPMG in India

Yezdi is an accomplished and visionary leader, serving as the Chief Executive Officer at KPMG in India. He has an illustrious career spanning close three and a half decades, out of which he has dedicated two and a half decades to KPMG in India.

Over the years, Yezdi has garnered expertise in diverse areas, including client relations, market expansion, strategy, business improvement, transformation, and governance and regulatory matters.

At KPMG in India, Yezdi continues to provide visionary leadership, guiding the firm through dynamic market shifts and technological advancements. His strategic foresight, combined with a focus on talent development and diversity, has fostered a culture of innovation and excellence within the organisation. He spends a significant proportion of his time on ESG activities at KPMG in India and is an advocate of ESG for KPMG in India's clientele.

Yezdi's influence extends beyond the executive suite in India, and he holds key board level positions both globally and regionally within the KPMG network, where his strategic insights and global perspective are appreciated.

In addition to his internal leadership roles, Yezdi serves as a board member of the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), a prestigious organisation fostering economic ties between the United States and India. His strategic vision and global business acumen make him a valuable contributor to this influential platform.

Yezdi is actively engaged in fostering corporate governance standards. He is a member of the Corporate Governance Council of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), where he contributes to the development and promotion of sound corporate governance practices within the Indian business landscape.

He also serves as a council member of the All-India Management Association (AIMA), which is a significant body playing a crucial role in shaping the policies, strategies, and activities at the country level for the advancement of management practices.

Yezdi serves on the Board of Advisors for AIESEC in India, where he mentors young minds to respond to the dynamic challenges and opportunities.

Yezdi exemplifies leadership in the global consulting landscape and is committed to client success, operational excellence, ethical business practices, and active participation in global and local platforms. His enduring legacy reflects a remarkable journey of continuous growth, adaptability, and achievement, both within and beyond the corporate boardroom.

The background features a series of parallel, diagonal stripes in various shades of light blue, creating a sense of depth and movement. Scattered throughout the scene are numerous small, glowing light spots in white and pale blue, resembling stars or particles. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and futuristic.

ARTICLES

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RESHAPING THE EQUATION: INDIA'S ROLE IN THE FUTURE WORLD ORDER

As 2026 gets underway, the world economy remains unsettled by geopolitical rifts, supply-chain realignments, and uneven recovery cycles. Amid this international turbulence, India stands out as a country deliberately shaping its long-term economic direction. The Union Budget 2026 reflects this intentionality—rather than merely responding to global disturbances, India is laying down policies designed to safeguard growth and expand future opportunities. While several major economies are grappling with stagnation or unpredictable swings, India's steady trajectory underscores its ability to remain an anchor in a volatile global environment. This outlook is reinforced by a diversified economic base that blends traditional strengths with rising innovation-driven sectors.

Consistent fiscal discipline in India's macroeconomic framework, measured monetary policy, and prudent growth strategies have created a buffer that is expected to shield the economy from external shocks. The country's appeal to both global investors and domestic savers remains strong, supported by growing foreign direct investment, rising household savings, and large-scale public investments in infrastructure and connectivity.

A key factor behind India's momentum is the country's purposeful policymaking. Economic reforms serve as tools for expanding India's influence and enhancing its strategic room to maneuver. The government has focused on next generation sectors such as semiconductor manufacturing, artificial intelligence, green mobility, and renewable energy. Targeted incentives, improved regulatory systems, and a more transparent business environment have contributed to a climate conducive for

global companies and homegrown enterprises alike. These reforms have also led to better performance on international competitiveness and ease of doing business indicators.

Initiatives such as the India Semiconductor Mission, National Critical Mineral Mission are strengthening strategic capacity building in high value manufacturing sectors. Meanwhile, India's expanding startup ecosystem, coupled with rising R&D investment, is yielding breakthroughs in areas ranging from quantum technology to biotechnology. The spread of innovation hubs and incubators across major cities has further supported this transformation.

Progress in resolving tariff-related issues with the United States indicates a shift toward a deeper, more structured economic partnership. Discussions around supply-chain integration, dispute resolution, and reciprocal market access signal maturity in bilateral relations. A stable tariff settlement would significantly enhance trade flows and reinforce confidence in the India-US economic corridor. Alongside this, collaboration in space, cybersecurity, defense technology, and advanced manufacturing is broadening the strategic canvas. Academic and research collaborations are also facilitating knowledge exchange, fostering innovation, and supporting human capital development.

India is increasingly moving from participating in global frameworks to shaping them. Recent trade frameworks with the UK, Oman, New Zealand, the EU, and the interim trade framework with US illustrate India's ability to build bridges across varied political and economic alignments. This strategic flexibility positions India to influence global norms on sustainable development,

digital governance, and fair trade. India now plays a more assertive role, advocating issues that matter for emerging economies, from equitable technology access to climate financing.

The KPMG 2025 India CEO Outlook reveals that domestic leadership remains upbeat. For many corporate leaders, global disruptions are challenges that can be managed rather than existential risks. Confidence in India's consumption base, regulatory clarity, and investment climate remains high. Companies are accelerating digital adoption, automation, and workforce skilling to remain competitive. This confidence is mirrored in the growth of India's tech economy, the rise of unicorns, and increasing global interest in Indian digital services.

India's foreign policy distinguishes itself through its multi-engagement approach. Rather than taking sides in a polarized global landscape, India continues to maintain productive relations with Western nations, the Global South, and Indo-Pacific partners simultaneously. This strategic balancing makes India a central node in a world where geopolitical interests increasingly diverge. It allows the country to help shape emerging rules around technology, sustainability, and global commerce.

India's development blueprint integrates trade expansion, technology investment, and climate stewardship. The country's export performance, advancing renewable-energy capacity, growing manufacturing ecosystem, and world recognized digital public infrastructure reflect a nation undergoing purposeful transformation. India's digital public infrastructure—UPI, Aadhaar, and digital health platforms—continues to draw global recognition by combining scale, accessibility, and innovation. These systems are improving everyday life while attracting multinational enterprises eager to leverage India's digital capabilities.

Policy initiatives continue to stimulate private-sector growth. The datacenter tax holiday till 2047, announced in the 2026 Union Budget

can potentially accelerate expansion in cloud, AI, and data-oriented services. Incentives for electric mobility, battery production, and solar infrastructure are propelling India's transition toward green industries. Large-scale infrastructure projects—from digital highways to urban modernization—are reducing costs and improving business efficiency. Together, these developments are strengthening India's position as a global production and innovation hub.

Technology has become central to India's growth paradigm. The adoption of AI is revamping sectors like health, agriculture, and logistics, enabling smarter decision-making and more efficient service delivery. By focusing on responsible AI, data protection, and ethical standards, India is aiming to harness technological progress while addressing concerns over privacy, employment, and social equity.

Simultaneously, the expansion of advanced manufacturing is enhancing export capabilities and reducing external dependencies. Partnerships with global research institutions are accelerating progress in future technologies, positioning India as a strong contender in high-tech value chains.

Clearer trade frameworks and reduced tariff uncertainty are encouraging long-term investment commitments from global businesses. Greater alignment with international standards is improving India's attractiveness for multinational firms and strengthening its role in global supply networks.

Looking ahead, India's challenge will be to convert its ambitions into measurable outcomes. Sustaining reform momentum, deepening global integration, and mobilizing capital, technology, and skilled talent will be critical. Strengthening manufacturing share in the GDP and expanding participation in global value chains will determine India's ability to navigate a fragmented world order.

India's advancement—from an emerging player

to an influential global force—is driven by adaptability, strategic foresight, and an inclusive growth model. As global systems become more fractured, India’s balanced diplomacy, commitment to sustainability, and long-term economic planning position it as a vital

contributor to global stability. With continued reform, clearer trade architecture, and deeper ties with international partners, India is poised to not only sustain its trajectory but also shape the contours of the future global economy.

About Author

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A BALANCING ACT

No matter your role—senior leader, manager, or newcomer—your voice matters; so share your insights and spark change.

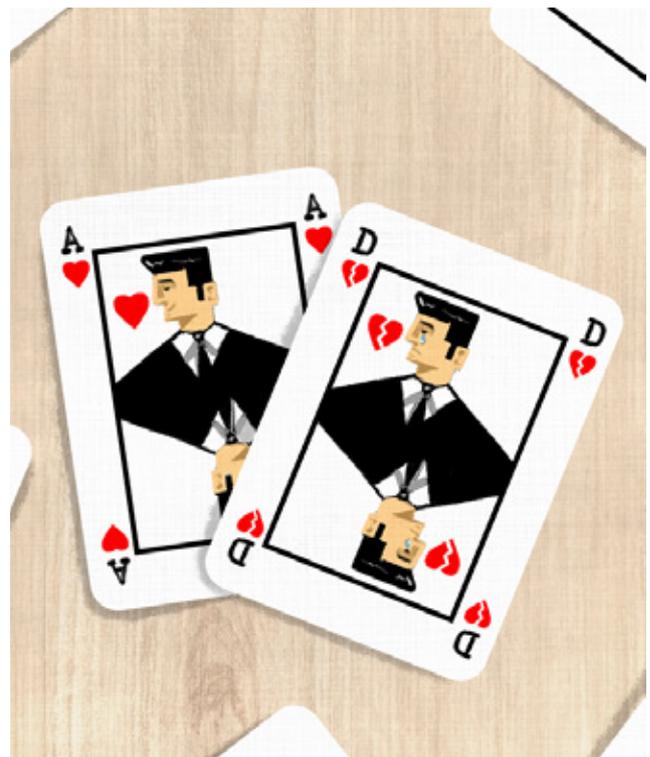
RAJEEV KUMAR MEHAJAN PHD, TIET INDIA

The inspiration to write this article came from a recent interaction with the top leader of an organisation—that has always drawn my attention towards its core values and employee friendly environment. The conversation, though a bit discouraging, shed light on the stark realities of organisational dynamics and decision-making. It left me pondering the deep-rooted patterns of denial and avoidance that often obstruct progress. This reflection drives the insights, for the organisations to not only have a vision for laying down the requisite plans, programmes and processes, but fostering a culture of acceptance and agility to adapt in organisational ecosystem.

Acceptance versus denial

As leaders, we have all encountered challenges that test our resolve and decision-making. But what happens when the challenge isn't external, but deeply internal—a fundamental issue undermining the health of our organisation? Over the past 40 years, serving across a dozen organisations, I've seen a recurring pattern: Leadership often faces harsh realities but chooses denial over action. Warning signs are act ignored, severity is downplayed, and blame is shifted. There is a tendency to scapegoat the system itself, dismissing issues as 'organisational behaviour' and rationalising it with clichés like "यहां तो ऐसा ही चलता है". (That's just how things are around here)

But here's the truth: Denial only delays the inevitable. Left unchecked, these issues fester and evolve into formidable roadblocks to growth. Acceptance, while difficult, is the cornerstone of transformation. Prof. Nair, Director, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, quotes, "An organisation cannot afford to do the same



things repeatedly and expect different results."

Ayn Rand, the legend and my enduring muse for "integrity" since college, captures powerfully: "You can ignore reality, but you cannot ignore the consequences of ignoring reality."

Call to mid-segment managers

While leaders at the top often set the tone for organisational culture, you are the bridge between vision and execution, and play a pivotal role in shaping the daily experiences of employees. Yet, often you mirror the denial culture by senior leadership, either out of fear or convenience.

Why focus on Gen Z managers?

This is particularly crucial for Gen Z, who are stepping into managerial roles with fresh energy

and perspectives. As digital natives, you have the tools and insights to challenge traditional and advocate for transparency and innovation. Nevertheless, you also face the risk of inheriting outdated mind-sets that prioritise comfort over progress. Though, you have distinct advantages:

Eagerness for change: Generally, Gen Z is more open to innovation and disrupting the status quo, which aligns well with the article's emphasis on breaking cycles of denial.

Tech-savvy and data-driven: Adept at leveraging technology and data to identify inefficiencies and propose solutions, as natural champions of transparency and accountability.

Diverse perspectives: Having grown up in a more connected and inclusive world, tend to value meritocracy and diverse viewpoints over proximity bias or hierarchical traditions.

What is your leadership style?

Irrespective of your seniority, fundamentally, the need is to do an introspection and reflect:

A. Are you the leader who steps up, grabs the metaphorical mic, and drops truth bombs that echo through boardrooms and beyond, igniting real conversations?

B. Or do you lean towards denial, prefer 'Yes Men' around your impressive executive table and let proximity bias promote mediocrity over merit in making choices?

If the latter resonates, it is time for a paradigm shift to break the cycle of denial.

Building a culture of acceptance

Here is how managers can contribute to the cultural shift for a healthy organisational behaviour-

Promote accountability: Own up mistakes and recognise the initiative to address issues.

Value feedback: Dismiss the 'Yes Man' mentality and reward those who challenge ideas.

Model Integrity: Be the example of the transparency you wish to see.

You must resist the temptation to play along, and instead, drive change from within by questioning inefficiencies and pushing for accountability. Embrace the power of vulnerability. Foster a culture where transparency, accountability, and open communication are the norm.

The balancing act

Before concluding, let me assert that leadership is rarely about extremes—being either a 'truth bomb-dropper' or 'in denial'. As my colleague Dr Alberto Troccoli, Managing Director, World Energy and Meteorology Council, aptly states: "Leadership is like steering a boat through open seas under changing weather conditions—it requires constant adjustments."

Adaptability is the cornerstone of effective leadership. It is about knowing when to confront hard truths and when to recalibrate subtly. While assertiveness and acceptance should remain at the core, a balanced approach can add value. For instance, a 'Yes Man' may sometimes provide critical grapevine insights, while a well-timed 'truth bomb' can bring hidden issues to light. The key is to maintain balance without ever compromising integrity through denial.

A new resolve for 2025

Organisational behaviour comprises 'people', 'structure', 'environment', and 'technology', and describes how people interact with one another inside an organisation. These interactions in turn influence how the organisation itself performs. As we step into 2025, let us make a collective commitment to prioritise the health of our organisations through our system's behaviour, creating an environment where truth is valued over denial, and progress over stagnation. Especially, in the Indian context of rich cultural

tapestry, the ethos of 'satyam' (truth) has long been revered. Yet, phrases like "यहां तो ऐसा ही चलता है" reveal a lingering acceptance of mediocrity that stifles innovation. To unlock India's true potential as a global leader, we must challenge this mind-set, inspire accountability, and foster a culture of adaptability.

Whether you are a senior leader, a mid-level manager, or just starting your journey, your voice matters. Let us spark a dialogue and share your thoughts, experiences, or insights. Your perspective could be the catalyst for change. Join hands to amplify this resolve!

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Disclaimer:

The article was first published in Indian Management Journal (Issue 3 Volume 64) an AIMA & Spenta Multimedia publication

A TRUE SENSEI

A sensei teaches you about more than just information, surpassing other teachers.

SANJEEV BAITMANGALKAR, STRATMANN CONSULTING

The word 'sensei' is often translated simply as 'teacher'. But does this definition fully capture what a sensei truly represents? In the context of Lean transformation and organisational excellence, the term goes far beyond its literal translation. To better understand the depth and diversity of a true teacher's role, we can look to ancient Sanskrit classifications, which offer nuanced distinctions between different kinds and levels of educators.

Lessons from the Toyota Production System

The Toyota Production System (TPS) is a prime example of a company's relentless pursuit of improvement. Over the decades, Toyota has refined its processes to better meet customer needs, tackling countless challenges along the way. While many consultants and coaches achieve incremental improvements using 'Lean Principles', their results rarely match the transformative outcomes that Toyota has consistently demonstrated—both in operational efficiency and financial performance.

Why is that? Because true Lean transformation requires more than tools and techniques. It demands deep, practical insight and the kind of hands-on guidance that only a seasoned sensei can offer.

Beyond tools and templates

Organisations often engage trainers, consultants, or teachers to guide them on their Lean journey. However, the impact of these efforts is directly tied to the capability and experience of the guide. You cannot simply replicate Toyota's success by

copying its methods—every business operates in a unique context. Customer expectations, regulatory environments, geographical and political conditions, internal culture, talent availability, and leadership mindset all vary significantly.

This is why templated approaches and tool-based modules typically deliver limited results. A successful Lean journey must be tailored to the specific challenges and opportunities of the



organisation. It takes a true sensei—someone who has led real transformation from within—to

navigate this complexity.

The Sanskrit lens: Types of teachers

The richness of the Sanskrit tradition offers a powerful framework for understanding the different roles a teacher can play:

1. Adhyapak: The one who provides information.

2. Upadhyaya: The one who imparts knowledge, integrating information meaningfully.

3. Acharya: The one who teaches skills and practical application.

4. Pandit: The one who offers deep insights into a subject.

5. Dhrishta: The one with a visionary perspective who teaches others to think critically and creatively.

6. Guru: The one who awakens inner wisdom

and leads the learner from ignorance to understanding.

A true sensei in the Lean context often embodies several, if not all, of these roles. They are not just educators—they are visionaries, mentors, and change agents.

The rare quality of a true sensei

The most impactful sensei is the one who has personally led transformations—preferably from the CEO's chair or another high-impact operational role. This hands-on experience at the helm of a conventional company undergoing Lean transformation offers a depth of understanding that cannot be replicated by theoretical knowledge alone.

Such individuals are rare, but they possess a unique blend of experience and wisdom. They are not just instructors—they are acharyas, pandits, dhrishtas, and gurus, all in one.

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Disclaimer:

The article was first published in Indian Management Journal (Issue 7 Volume 64) an AIMA & Spenta Multimedia publication

BOLD BRAINY BOTS

Empowering India's Managers to Move from Decision-Makers to Destiny-Shapers through Autonomous, Adaptive Intelligence.

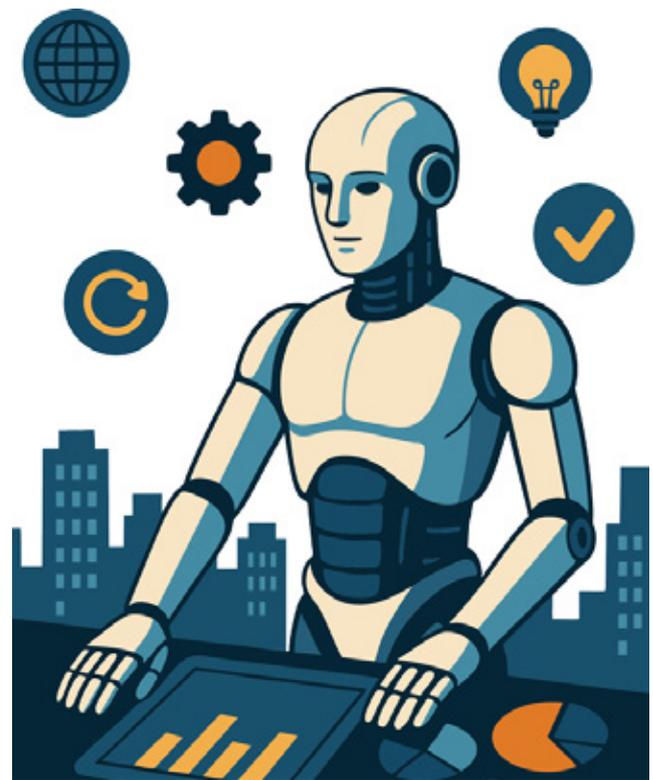
ULLHAS PAGEY, AUTHOR

In the vibrant vortex of India's corporate cosmos, where ambition aligns with ancestral acumen and innovation ignites incessant ascent, Agentic Artificial Intelligence emerges as the indispensable dynamo, the sine qua non reshaping managerial mastery across every functional frontier. Envision autonomous algorithms, not passive processors but proactive protagonists that perceive, plan, and perform with precision, propelling leaders from reactive responders to visionary victors. In a nation where economic engines hum from coastal commerce hubs to silicon strongholds, embracing Agentic Artificial Intelligence is not a luxurious leap; it is the critical cornerstone for sustaining supremacy in a global gauntlet of relentless flux. These intelligent agents, fusing large language models with reinforcement learning architectures, orchestrate operations with elegance akin to a festival of lights, dynamic, dazzling, and decisively deft. Managers navigating India's intricate corporate corridors, weighed by bureaucratic bulk and burgeoning demands, find in Agentic Artificial Intelligence a liberating lifeline, automating arduous audits, forecasting

futures, and harmonising human hierarchies with seamless synergy across marketing, operations, human resources, finance, and strategic spheres. This integration allows for a holistic transformation, where each domain benefits equally from the proactive capabilities

of these systems, ensuring that no single area lags behind in the pursuit of efficiency and excellence.

Technically, Agentic Artificial Intelligence weaves a sophisticated tapestry: systems grounded in multi-agent reinforcement learning and transformer-based neural networks exhibit



emergent behaviours mirroring managerial intuition. Perception modules ingest voluminous data via convolutional neural networks or recurrent variants like long short-term memory networks, planning engines leverage Monte Carlo Tree Search for probabilistic projections, and execution arms employ actor-critic methods for real-time adaptation.

Across functional domains, these agents deliver disciplined dynamism, enabling managers to address complex challenges with unprecedented accuracy. In marketing, they dissect consumer currents, deploying sentiment analysis through bidirectional encoder representations from transformers embeddings to sift social streams, crafting personalised pitches via recommender systems like collaborative filtering, and visualising viral vectors with variational autoencoders.

This empowers marketing teams to transform transient trends into targeted triumphs, predicting customer behaviours with granular precision and optimising campaigns to resonate across India's diverse cultural and regional landscapes, where preferences vary from urban sophistication to rural simplicity. Operations benefit from robotic process automation bots bolstered by computer vision for inventory inspections, predictive maintenance powered by autoregressive integrated moving average augmented time-series forecasting, and supply chain simulations scripted in Python frameworks. Here, managers can streamline sprawling systems into synchronised successes, minimising downtime in manufacturing lines and enhancing logistics efficiency in a country with vast geographical spreads and infrastructural variabilities.

Human resources harness natural language processing to parse talent profiles, predict performance with propensity score matching, and foster fair frameworks through adversarial training to curb bias, shaping scattered skills into cohesive collectives. In this domain, Agentic Artificial Intelligence facilitates the identification of high-potential employees, designs customised training programs based on individual learning curves, and monitors workforce engagement metrics to pre-empt burnout or dissatisfaction, all while adhering to India's labour laws and promoting diversity in a multicultural workforce.

Finance leverages fraud detection via anomaly-spotting autoencoders, portfolio optimisation through convex solvers, and compliance checks using knowledge graphs to map regulatory mazes, fortifying fiscal foundations against fluctuating forces. Financial managers gain the ability to conduct realtime risk assessments, automate budgeting processes with predictive algorithms that account for market volatilities, and ensure seamless reporting that complies with stringent guidelines from financial authorities, thereby safeguarding assets in an economy prone to inflationary pressures and

currency shifts. Strategic planning employs agent based modeling to simulate scenarios, with deep Q-networks distilling data into decisive directives, empowering executives to pivot from peril to prosperity and sculpt short-term steps into sustainable sagas that align with long-term national growth objectives.

In India's multifaceted mosaic, where supply chains span subcontinental sprawl and regulatory rigours demand diligent documentation, Agentic Artificial Intelligence ensures synchronised success across domains, adapting to the unique blend of tradition and modernity that defines the corporate environment. Marketing managers, navigating nuanced consumer caprices across diverse demographics, wield Artificial Intelligence to architect adroit campaigns, predicting preferences with precision and amplifying reach with algorithmic artistry that considers linguistic diversities and regional festivities.

For instance, agents can analyse social media interactions to tailor promotions during festivals like Diwali or Eid, ensuring cultural sensitivity and maximising engagement rates. Operations leaders, tasked with lean logistics in latency-laced landscapes, deploy agents for unmanned utopias, optimising workflows with edge computing to reduce delays and quantum-inspired algorithms to quicken computational quests, thus handling the complexities of just-in-time deliveries across monsoon-affected routes or congested urban arteries. Human resources, bridging generational gaps from youthful zealots to seasoned specialists, rely on Artificial Intelligence to cultivate competence, curbing churn through predictive analytics that forecast retention risks and fostering inclusive cultures via fairness-aware machine learning that evaluates candidates based on merit rather than background. This approach helps in building resilient teams capable of thriving in India's competitive job market, where talent mobility is high and skill gaps are prevalent.

Financial stewards, steering through currency currents and compliance complexities, employ agents to thwart threats with anomaly detection, streamline audits with automated reconciliation processes, and optimise capital allocation with mathematical might that incorporates economic indicators like gross domestic product growth rates or interest rate fluctuations. In strategy, executives harness Artificial Intelligence to chart course corrections, simulating scenarios with agent-based modelling and leveraging explainable Artificial Intelligence techniques like Shapley Additive Explanations values to ensure transparent, trust-building decisions that can be justified to stakeholders.

These techniques demystify the inner workings of models, allowing managers to understand why certain strategic paths are recommended, such as entering new markets or diversifying product lines in response to global trade dynamics. The technical triumphs are tangible: from monolithic mainframes to microservices meshed with message queues, agents communicate in constellations, enabling scalability that supports India's burgeoning

startup ecosystem and established enterprises alike. Edge computing empowers endpoints, reducing latency in remote operations, while federated learning fortifies cybersecurity against digital dangers, protecting sensitive data in an era of increasing cyber threats.

Yet, India's unique tapestry demands tailored touches to fully harness Agentic Artificial Intelligence. Multilingual marvels, fine-tuned on diverse linguistic datasets encompassing Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, and other regional languages, ensure equitable engagement across dialects, preventing exclusion in a linguistically rich nation. Regulatory realms require ethical Artificial Intelligence governance, embedding explainable Artificial Intelligence to demystify decisions and align with stringent mandates from bodies overseeing data privacy and financial transparency. In a digital dynamo where unified

payment systems and biometric authentication accelerate adoption, managers ignoring Agentic Artificial Intelligence risk obsolescence, outpaced by agile adversaries wielding serverless scalability that allows for rapid deployment and cost-effective computing. The expansion of broadband and mobile penetration further amplifies this, making Artificial Intelligence accessible even

in tier-two and tier-three cities, democratising advanced tools for smaller enterprises.

Challenges persist and must be addressed proactively: cybersecurity specters necessitate neural network hardening through distributed training methods that preserve privacy, data disparities across urban and rural regions demand transfer learning to bridge informational gaps, and ethical enigmas call for equity-focused frameworks that prevent discriminatory outcomes. For example, in human resources, ensuring that algorithms do not perpetuate gender or regional biases requires continuous auditing and refinement. Yet, the payoff pulses across domains, with productivity peaks as repetitive tasks are automated, innovation ignites through data-driven insights that spark new ideas, and competitive edges endure in a global marketplace where India aims to lead in sectors like information technology and pharmaceuticals. Marketing sees soaring sales through Conversational Artificial Intelligence chatbots using retrieval-augmented generation to provide instant, context-aware responses to customer queries.

Operations achieve optimised outputs with Artificial Intelligence-driven logistics that predict disruptions from weather patterns or traffic congestions. Human resources fosters flourishing workforces with bias-free hiring processes that leverage machine learning to match skills with roles accurately. Finance secures stability through predictive prowess that anticipates market downturns and adjusts portfolios dynamically. Strategy transforms

through data-driven decisions, melding manmachine synergies via human-in-the-loop hybrids that allow managers to intervene and refine Artificial Intelligence outputs, ensuring augmentation enhances rather than replaces human judgment.

The three-letter triumph of Agile, Adaptive, Autonomous defines this evolution, elevating managers from mere monitors to masterful maestros conducting corporate symphonies with silicon sidekicks that amplify their capabilities. Across India's corporate canvas, Agentic Artificial Intelligence's role resonates equally in every domain, creating a balanced ecosystem where marketing innovates customer connections, operations refines resource utilisation, human resources nurtures talent ecosystems, finance safeguards economic vitality, and strategy envisions future pathways. Managers, steeped in a legacy of self-reliance drawn from historical narratives of independence and entrepreneurial spirit, recognise Artificial Intelligence as the modern mantra for managerial might, transcending mundane tasks to transform organisational trajectories into tales of triumph. The swagger lies in synergy: Artificial Intelligence augments without alienating, amplifying human ingenuity with algorithmic acumen that respects cultural contexts and ethical boundaries.

As India's gross domestic product gallops toward global grandeur, propelled by initiatives in digital transformation and sustainable development, managerial roles without Agentic Artificial Intelligence resemble relics in a renaissance of robotic brilliance, unfit for a future where hyperconnected horizons demand dynamic dexterity and resilient adaptability. The clarion call is clear: integrate or stagnate in the face of evolving challenges. Agentic Artificial Intelligence, with its autonomous allure and adaptive artistry, stands as the sine qua non across marketing, operations, human resources, finance, and strategy, sculpting managers into sovereign strategists unbound by banal burdens and empowered to lead with foresight. In this vibrant vista, victory belongs to those wielding Artificial Intelligence as a warp drive, warping workflows into wonders across every corporate corner, fostering an era of unprecedented growth and global influence.

"In the intricate interplay of India's industrial ascent, Agentic Artificial Intelligence isn't merely a tool—it's the transformative tide that elevates every executive from executor to epoch-maker, ensuring our enterprises endure and excel in eternity's embrace." - Chairman Emeritus, s leading Indian conglomerate

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Disclaimer:

The article was first published in Indian Management Journal (Issue 11 Volume 64) an AIMA & Spenta Multimedia publication

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE IN THE AI AGE

Advancements in AI and the capabilities of large language models are revolutionising the applications and business use cases across industries.

DR ABHISHEK N SINGH
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Across the globe, not only businesses but also governments have recently increased their spending on artificial intelligence (AI). This is primarily to drive efficiency and replace humans with sophisticated machines for doing mundane and repetitive tasks. The move is welcomed by businesses and governments alike due to its cost advantages and promises of improved efficiency. The most recent example of the same is from the USA, where the newly elected government has created DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) to cut down unnecessary government expenses and drive efficiency in government departments. And who better than Elon Musk—than the person who best understands technology and its application to derive growth and business—to lead such an initiative?

If we look at some current statistics, according to a recent report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), AI could contribute USD 15.7 trillion to the global economy, which is more than the present combined output of India and China put together. The European Union has recently announced an AI Innovation Strategy that includes public as well as private AI investment to the tune of 4 billion Euros, emphasising the focus on generative AI. As per a report by Wired.com, the UAE has committed to spending a significant pie of USD 1.5 trillion sovereign wealth fund to transform Abu Dhabi into a leading AI hub in the Middle East. As far as India is concerned, in the Union Budget of 2025, India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a new Centre of Excellence (CoE) in AI being set up with a capital of R500 crore. This is in tune with the Government of India's IndiaAI Mission to give a boost to the nation's AI ecosystem which is seeing an investment of USD 1.25 billion to promote advanced computing infrastructure and also to finance startups in the AI space. And a similar trend is followed elsewhere around the



globe including South Korea, Japan, China, and other countries.

Let us look at several advantages and benefits of digital governance that AI can augment:

- 1. Enhanced efficiency and transparency:** Automation and digital-powered decision making can streamline bureaucratic processes by significantly reducing delays and inefficiencies in process flow and government operations. On the other hand, digital systems can enable real-time monitoring and access to open government data, which has the potential to improve transparency in government functioning.
- 2. Improved public service delivery:** E-governance platforms have the capability to improve public service delivery through automation and reduced need to visit government offices to avail various government

schemes and services. We have seen some excellent examples in the Indian context, such as Passport Seva, DigiLocker, FASTag, DigiYatra, and many more. AI-powered chatbots are the recent additions in this context.

3. Interoperability, integration, & cost reduction: By its very nature, digital technologies enable interoperability among various systems and processes, if designed carefully. Data sharing and coordination among different government departments and agencies becomes easier with the adoption of technology in governance. This, in turn, improves the overall functioning of the government, making it cost-effective and efficient in its operations.

4. Citizen engagement and participation: Digital technologies and channels provide an alternate and easily accessible medium for citizens as well as governments to connect and communicate with each other. Now the popularity of elected representatives is also measured by looking at the follower counts on their social media platforms. Digital presence provides easy and direct access to connect and communicate that enables citizen engagement and participation in the process of governance.

5. Innovation and environmental benefits: Use of digital technologies by governments promotes innovation that also leads to unique and out-of-the-box solutions by startups and businesses. Such public-private partnerships promote cooperation and coordination among various stakeholders that drive the overall innovation ecosystem in any economy. AI-enabled automation and technological innovations lead to sustainable solutions development.

The evolving AI landscape also poses various concerns and challenges for governments across the globe. This is primarily because technological advancements often outpace legislative policies and regulatory frameworks. This is also due to the lack of global consensus regarding different nations' AI policies, which creates inconsistencies and adds to the complexity to digital global governance issues. There is also a need to

balance the pace of innovation with the evolving regulatory environment. Over-regulation may choke AI progress (developments), while underregulation may lead to unauthorised access or misuse of users' data. Training AI models involves complex data sovereignty issues, such as data governance, regulations pertaining to crossborder data flow, conflicting global trade policies, to name a few. Biases and ethical concerns add to these growing challenges. Rapid AI advancements and their applications pose a challenge for industry standards and regulatory frameworks.

Following are some suggested strategies for effective digital governance in the AI age:

- **Public private partnership:** Digital governance in AI age requires collaboration between governments, technology companies, academia and civil society. Such collaboration and partnerships are needed not only at national-level, but at a global scale, which will facilitate global knowledge exchange and transfer (and use) of best practices.

- **Developing global (and national-level) AI ethics and auditing mechanisms:** Independent AI ethics bodies, having diverse representation from tech companies, governments, academia and civil society, to oversee development, deployment, and ensure compliance with local as well as global laws, regulations and standards. Such bodies can prepare auditing mechanisms to detect biases, security vulnerabilities, and unethical practices in AI development and implementation.

- **International cooperation & standardisation:** Digital and AI governance in the current connected world is not limited to the geographical boundaries of nations. Given the global impact of AI capabilities, international cooperation is essential to build harmonised AI and digital governance frameworks that are acceptable to all.

- **Legislative & regulatory frameworks:** Governments worldwide recognise the

challenges posed by the AI capabilities if not used in a sensible manner. AI regulations and legislative policies are needed at the national level which will provide a fertile ground for AI development (and deployment) and also controls it against any unethical usage. The European Union's AI Act published in the year 2024 is one such example for others to follow.

• **Digital literacy & citizen participation:** Public involvement in digital governance is pivotal for its success. Digital literacy initiatives with AI capabilities, such as digital content in vernacular languages, real-time speech recognition and translation, automated chatbots in native languages are excellent examples that can bridge the digital literacy gap and enable enhanced citizen participation in governance.

From ChatGPT to DeepSeek, AI advancements and capabilities of large language models are revolutionising the applications and business use cases across industries. Most of us have experienced some common examples of automated chatbots, graphic media and content creation, messaging apps, etc., in this regard. Highlighting a recent example, Satya Nadela, the CEO of Microsoft, shared a story (on X) of a small-town sugarcane farmer from Baramati co-operative from Maharashtra (India) who could enhance crop yields, reduce chemical usage and optimise water consumption due to integration of AI technology in agriculture. To this, the tech billionaire, Elon Musk commented, "AI will improve everything." As we see, AI applications in digital governance have a huge scope, and experts believe that this is just the beginning

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Disclaimer:

The article was first published in Indian Management Journal (Issue 4 Volume 64) an AIMA & Spenta Multimedia publication

ET TU BRUTUS?

The true test of leadership is not in holding power, but in letting go with purpose

DR VIVEK MEHRA, VIKRAMSHILA RESEARCH PVT LTD

There are stages in one's career when this feeling crosses one's mind, especially if you are in management. The feeling is just that; a feeling. The reality is perhaps different from what one perceives. It all begins with becoming a leader, be it as a team member, a team leader, or a manager, at any level. For most, this level comes with a bunch of insecurities. "That person in my team is out to get my job..." is a constant recurring theme, mentally. The higher you climb up the corporate ladder, the more others will want to be you.

So why the anxiety?

The answer lies more in the way we are genetically programmed; it is nothing but our self-preservation instinct at work. We want to preserve the salary, the perks, the respect, and the social position that our job brings us. And that is exactly what everyone in the team is aspiring.

The insecure CEO will surround herself with individuals she feels superior to or feels she can control. This is nothing but the self-preservation instinct kicking in. In the group, though, there will be one renegade or black hat; someone who appears to be the CEO's chosen one but acts in opposition when the CEO isn't looking. The opposition isn't about the CEO directly; the behaviour is modified to work against pieces of the larger puzzle. Open dissent about decision or the decision-making process is a common trait. Trying to build a contrarian culture is another common feature of dissent.

There are many ways to address this sort of dissent and insecurity. The most basic strategy is self-confidence. I recall my own stint in the CEO's chair where I openly stated that the respect and so-called love I received was entirely directed



at the chair and not the individual. There were many who swore this wasn't true for them, but in the end, I was proven right. This set of values about individuals made my transition from CEO to non-CEO relatively painless.

The second strategy is to have purpose that remains in the future. There will always be people in one's team that will work silently on contrary agendas; they may dissent with one's style of functioning and more importantly might even be active participants against you when the opportunity arises. In real-life these situations appear alarming and perhaps undesirable. But in reality, this is exactly how management functions and thrives. The counter to the pain is to think about a purpose beyond the current organization while one is working (in the current one). There is a clear logic to this. No matter which

organization one belongs to and no matter how long one has worked, there will come a time when one needs to step down. The reasons could be many, the result though, is the same. When it is time to step down, a thought through purpose helps one let go relatively easily.

The counter to this situation is rather painful. When one is forced to leave and when there isn't a defined purpose already in the future, the pain is real. This pain is triggered more with accepting uncertainty than with any cataclysmic reality. If one has planned for the future, when the future arrives one is prepared.

The third strategy to pursue is to know your team, to know their strengths, their weakness and their shortcomings. One might say this is devious on the part of a manager, the truth is this knowledge helps assess outcomes better. There are many visible clues that individuals give out; this isn't a note in psychology nor do I claim to be a trained psychologist. But having trained my mind to evaluate team members I was able to safely predict many negative outcomes. I must confess though that I overestimated the positive ones. In other words, the negative outcomes of team management I budgeted and planned for to some extent, but I overestimated the positive impact team members would have in their workspace.

There are two other aspects of team behaviour that are important to understand transitions. The first one is about the way a manager is removed from office. There are many books written about practices, culture, and even on legal aspects of removing an employee. Very little is actually focused on the individual in question. Organizations tend to forget that people are not programmable like machines; culturally individuals have different needs to help them leave their jobs without anxiety. Culture differs globally and organizations tend to think more in terms of legal compliance than on human needs. The net result is that leaving an organization can be a celebration or one's worst nightmare. In either case, organisations don't really care. They are engineered to be entities that are driven

by materialistic objectives where trampling on feelings is treated as a necessary evil. One has to simply look at global organisations to see the difference in handling redundancy.

Tech giants with close to Trillion US dollar valuations have one thing in common; their approach to redundancy is different across geographical locations. The most care is taken in the company's home office (HQ) and the least care is taken where the centre is in the 'low risk category of offices/employees'. Even within important offices, HQ is treated most fairly, kindly and aligned with their local culture. The rest follow based on the rung of the ladder they are positioned on. This is a reality of organizations that one doesn't really talk about. Organizations hide under the 'company culture' umbrella and honestly this term only refers to what the HQ dictates. I remember an amusing incident of 'culture' that I encountered once. I was tasked with enforcing rules that HQ wanted implemented. One of them had to do with acceptable clothing at work. One particular statement caught my eye. The policy stated that clothing that exposed the midriff of any individual was prohibited. If I implemented this in the local office I would have to go against the culture of the region and ban sarees that are considered culturally formal wear!

The second aspect of transitioning out of a role to bear in mind, is the aftermath of when one is gone. Sadly, organizations tend to think in terms of 'new approach', 'new thoughts' and 'changes' when a CEO or a manager is moved out. It is important the incumbent understands what was done and why it was done. In the haste to 'prove I am right' newly appointed managers enter into a phase of dramatic changes. Organisations are the real losers if this is handled poorly. The manager who has transitioned needs to be focused on, not by the organisation directly but perhaps by mentors or management thinkers. The individual who has been transitioned is already at a loss of many aspects that defined his personality. After all, a job has been the key driver for decades. The sudden movement out of one is already traumatic. There will be follow up conversations from ex-colleagues about how the new manager

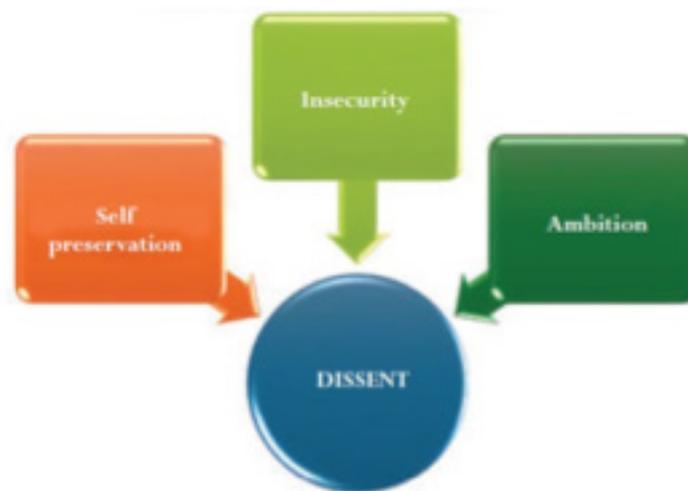
is 'doing thing differently'. An immature and insecure manager will cast doubts on the exiting managers efficacy. There is nothing surprising about this behaviour. The problem though lies in the confusion that is created across the ranks. If the previous manager was ineffective how come things worked? What is the guarantee that the

new approach will work? Will the new way keep jobs, create new ones or lose many existing ones? These are common questions that do the rounds but don't get directly answered.

Insecure managers talk about 'a better future' without detailing plans. In organisations where the HQ is located in a different country this ambiguity is even more. Over the last decade or so multinational corporations (MNCs) have become more centralized in their business approach; local needs and opportunities are often ignored or relegated to the backburner. This

creates a level of uncertainty that is unhealthy for organisations.

here are no direct solutions to the conundrum that managers encounter when being moved out. There are no recipes that work for all. My research has uncovered that where senior management has the will and individuals in position take a more culturally sensitive stance, the outcomes reduce the pain of exiting. As the world moves towards Artificial Intelligence, many types of traditional positions will be closed. We are at an interesting crossroad where technology will ease a lot of processes and yet could cause a lot of pain to affected individuals. Management didn't think about the culture of exiting people, perhaps AI will now force them to re-evaluate current practices. This is the space I recommend one watches keenly. The future of human emotions has never been as blurred as it is today.



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Disclaimer:

The article was first published in Indian Management Journal (Issue 7 Volume 64) an AIMA & Spenta Multimedia publication

LEADING THE LEAP

The future is a crucible, demanding not mere existence, but the honed capability and competency to shape its very form.

ULLHAS PAGEY, AUTHOR

As India sets its sights on becoming a \$5 trillion economy, the nation stands at an inflection point where leadership competencies will determine the trajectory of growth. The interplay of strategic vision, digital transformation, entrepreneurial dynamism, and global collaboration will be instrumental in propelling India towards economic pre-eminence. Leadership in this era must be visionary, agile, and deeply rooted in inclusive and sustainable development principles, ensuring that growth benefits every sector and segment of society.

A transformative economic vision is the bedrock of national progress. The ability to position India in the global economic hierarchy demands leaders who can synthesise macroeconomic trends with microeconomic reforms. The ambition is not merely to attain a numerical GDP target but to structurally evolve into one of the world's top three economies. This requires a convergence of strategic policy, investment in frontier technologies, and a commitment to enhancing competitiveness. Aligning individual, corporate, and national aspirations within a unified economic framework would ensure momentum in the right direction.

The foundation of a thriving economy is its innovation ecosystem. Research and development must transcend traditional silos and permeate every industry, from manufacturing to services, biotechnology to artificial intelligence. India must cultivate an ecosystem where startups, academia, and enterprises collaborate to fuel indigenous innovation. Government initiatives such as 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' should not only focus on self-reliance but also on technological supremacy in fields like semiconductors, AI, and quantum computing and upcoming 6 G technology . An economy



that thrives on knowledge creation rather than mere consumption will sustain long-term economic leadership.

At the heart of this transformation is digital leadership. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has underscored the power of AI, automation, and blockchain in redefining industries. Indian leadership must steer digital inclusion initiatives, ensuring that cutting-edge technologies reach every corner of society. The AI revolution in India should be driven by scalable solutions in governance, finance, healthcare, and agriculture, harnessing the power of big data for precision decision making. Digital transformation is not just about technology adoption but about embedding data-driven strategies into policy frameworks and corporate strategies.

Agility and adaptability are indispensable in

an era of economic flux. Leaders must embrace lifelong learning to navigate evolving business landscapes. The ability to pivot swiftly in response to global economic shifts ensures resilience. Organisational learning cultures must be fostered, where continuous skill development is the norm rather than an exception. In a rapidly shifting geopolitical and economic environment, only those who internalise adaptability as a core leadership trait will thrive.

A \$5 trillion economy must be inclusive, ensuring that the dividends of growth reach all. Equitable wealth distribution, employment generation, and rural upliftment should not be peripheral concerns but central tenets of economic planning. The focus must be on empowering MSMEs, fostering skill development, and bridging the urban-rural divide. Digital banking, fintech solutions, and microfinance play a crucial role in ensuring financial inclusion, making capital accessible to small entrepreneurs and rural enterprises. The democratisation of economic opportunities is the surest path to sustainable prosperity.

Global leadership is no longer an option but a necessity. India must strategically build international partnerships, leveraging cross-cultural leadership skills to integrate into global value chains. The ability to negotiate trade pacts, attract FDI, and enhance ease of doing business will determine India's competitive edge. Economic diplomacy should be at the forefront, with a focus on increasing India's share in global exports and attracting high-value foreign investments. The synergy between domestic growth strategies and global economic positioning will dictate long-term success.

A sustainable future necessitates responsible leadership. Economic expansion cannot come at the cost of environmental degradation. Green energy, circular economies, and carbon neutral strategies must be embedded within the broader economic vision. Initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance and Net-Zero commitments are steps in the right direction, but they must be backed by scalable green infrastructure, incentives for sustainable enterprises, and regulatory mechanisms that

encourage environmental stewardship without stifling innovation.

An entrepreneurial mindset must be deeply embedded in India's economic DNA. Risk taking should be celebrated, and failure viewed as a stepping stone rather than a setback. A culture that fosters calculated risks, resilience, and rapid scalability is crucial for transforming startups into global enterprises. India's unicorn ecosystem has showcased immense potential, but the next phase of growth must focus on sustainable scaling rather than valuation bubbles. Policy frameworks should ensure that regulatory complexities do not stifle innovation but rather enable a thriving startup culture.

Strategic thinking and meticulous economic planning are indispensable for actualising the \$5 trillion dream. Leaders must develop robust economic frameworks that balance short-term imperatives with long-term objectives. The role of data-driven decision making in shaping policies, business strategies, and national economic direction cannot be overstated. From GST reforms to Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, economic structuring must ensure efficiency, predictability, and competitiveness. The ease of doing business must be continuously improved, minimising bureaucratic friction and maximising investment potential.

Resilience must be a core national competency. Economic uncertainties and global disruptions from financial crises to pandemics are inevitable. The ability to preempt, mitigate, and rebound from crises differentiates robust economies from fragile ones. Building resilient financial systems, diversifying economic dependencies, and fostering adaptive regulatory policies ensure that external shocks do not derail progress. National resilience is an interplay of strong institutions, forward-thinking leadership, and an economy that can self-correct in the face of disruptions.

A sustainable and inclusive economic model is not merely an ethical imperative but a strategic necessity. The challenge lies in balancing high growth with environmental and social sustainability. Circular economies, renewable

energy investments, and sustainable industrial practices must become mainstream. Green finance, carbon credits, and incentivisation of sustainable businesses should form the crux of India’s economic transition. The alignment of economic ambition with environmental responsibility will define the sustainability of India’s growth trajectory.

Enhancing India’s global competitiveness is paramount. The nation must position itself as a preferred investment destination by simplifying regulatory processes and ensuring policy stability. Foreign Direct Investment must be strategically channelled into high-value industries that enhance India’s technological and industrial base. Exports should be bolstered through targeted incentives, ensuring that Indian enterprises integrate seamlessly into global supply chains. National branding must be reinforced, projecting India as a hub of innovation, quality manufacturing, and service excellence.

Access to capital is the fuel for economic acceleration. Financial inclusion must be deepened, ensuring that startups, MSMEs, and rural enterprises have seamless access to credit. Digital banking and fintech innovations have already made significant strides, but further simplification of regulatory frameworks is needed to attract global capital inflows. Initiatives such as new labour codes, GST reforms, and PLI schemes are steps towards fostering an investor-friendly environment. Economic leadership requires ensuring that financial systems facilitate rather than hinder entrepreneurial ambitions.

As India marches towards its \$5 trillion goal, leadership will define the pace and permanence of this progress. A visionary economic blueprint, fused with digital prowess, sustainability,

inclusive growth, will determine whether India can transcend its aspirations and cement its place among the top three global economies. The interplay of strategic foresight, entrepreneurial agility, and global collaboration will shape the nation’s economic destiny.

The transition to \$5 trillion economy cannot be achieved through incremental improvements alone. It requires what economist Joseph Schumpeter termed ‘creative destruction’—the continuous cycle of innovation that renders old industries obsolete while creating new ones. India’s innovation ecosystem, while showing promising growth, needs to fill critical gaps in research commercialisation and deep tech development.

In an era marked by rapid geopolitical realignments and technological disruptions, our leadership class must cultivate “telescopic economic vision”; the ability to simultaneously track global macroeconomic trends while maintaining focus on grassroots development.

The loom of tomorrow weaves no tapestry for the passive. To inherit its vibrant threads, one must forge their own shuttle, sharpen their individual skill to a keen edge. The future, as Toffler foretold, yields only to the adept, the nimble, the relentlessly selfcultivated. No inherited fortune of knowledge suffices; each soul must excavate their potential, polish their talents until they gleam, ready to meet the swift currents of change. For, “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” The future is a crucible, demanding not mere existence, but the honed capability and competency to shape its very form.

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Disclaimer:

The article was first published in Indian Management Journal (Issue 5 Volume 64) an AIMA & Spenta Multimedia publication

MOVING' INDIA FORWARD

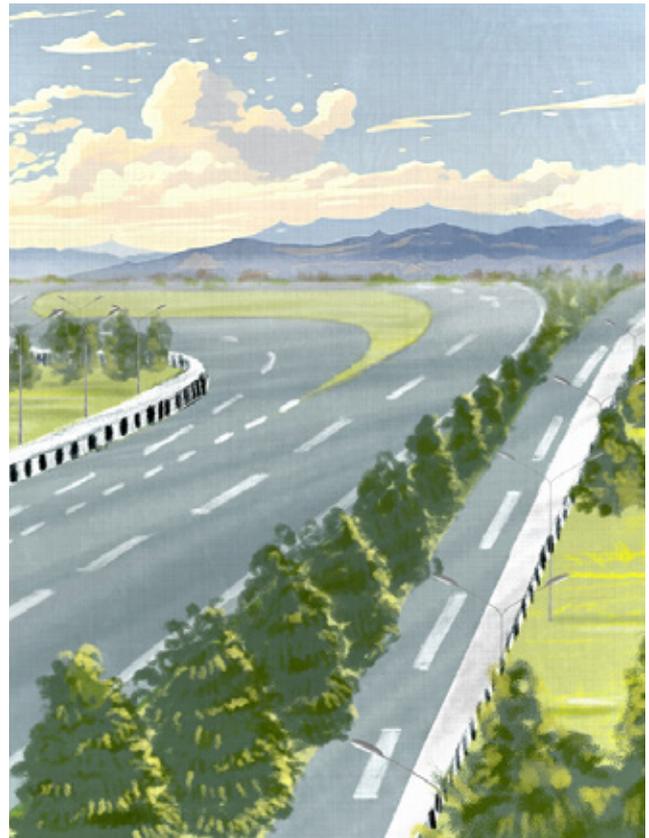
As the Government of India's ambitious Bharatmala project advances, its successful completion is set to leave a lasting impact on the country's infrastructure and development

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RAJA PAUL, THE BHAWANIPUR EDUCATION SOCIETY COLLEGE, KOLKATA

The Bharatmala project focuses on enhancing connectivity, reducing travel times, and integrating remote areas into the economy through new corridor construction and road upgrades. Despite challenges like land acquisition and funding, it progressed with streamlined approvals, community engagement, innovative financing, and advanced technologies. By mid-2024, significant milestones were achieved, marking a crucial step towards India's sustainable economic growth and improved quality of life.

Introduction

The Bharatmala project, launched by the Central Government in October 2017 under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, is a monumental effort aimed at reshaping India's road infrastructure landscape. It aims to develop 83,677 km of highways and roads with an investment of approximately R7 lakh crore. Designed to meet the demands of a rapidly expanding economy, Bharatmala is a strategic endeavour to modernise and expand the country's extensive road and highway network. It recognises the critical need for efficient transportation systems that can support growing trade volumes, facilitate smooth movement of goods and people, and integrate remote regions into the national economy. The implementing agencies of this project are (i) National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), (ii) National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), and (iii) State Public Works Department. The goals of Bharatmala are multifaceted, aiming to optimise the efficiency of goods and people movement across the country. It plans to achieve this by constructing 50 new national corridors



and connecting 550 districts through national highways (NH) linkages. This ambitious initiative seeks to transform India's road connectivity and contribute significantly to its economic development.

Background and objectives

The primary objectives of the Bharatmala project are multifaceted and strategic which include:

1. Improving connectivity & accessibility: Central to Bharatmala's vision is the enhancement of connectivity between major urban centres, industrial hubs, ports, and economic corridors across the length and

breadth of India to facilitate seamless movement of goods and passengers. By constructing new roads and upgrading existing highways, the project aims to reduce travel times, lower logistics costs, and streamline the movement of goods and passengers. This strategic connectivity boost is expected to catalyse economic activities in previously underserved regions, fostering regional development and economic integration.

2. Boosting economic Growth: The project's overarching goal is to stimulate economic growth by optimising transportation efficiencies. Improved road infrastructure not only accelerates the pace of commerce but also attracts investments, spurs industrial growth, and enhances overall productivity. By creating smoother logistics networks, Bharatmala aims to strengthen India's position as a global trade hub and facilitate seamless movement of goods within the country.

3. Safety and efficiency enhancements: Bharatmala prioritises the upgrade of highways to meet contemporary standards of safety and efficiency. By widening roads, implementing modern traffic management systems, and enhancing road signage and lighting, the project aims to reduce accidents and enhance overall road safety. Moreover, improved infrastructure will accommodate the increasing volume of traffic, ensuring smoother and safer journeys for commuters and cargo alike

4. Environmental & social considerations: Amidst its ambitious development goals, Bharatmala is also committed to sustainable practices and minimising environmental impact. The project includes provisions for environmental assessments and mitigation measures to ensure that road construction and expansion are carried out responsibly. Furthermore, the project aims to create employment opportunities both directly through construction activities and indirectly through boosted economic activities, thereby contributing to social welfare and inclusive growth.

Key features and components

1. Development of economic corridors:

Construction of new greenfield express ways and economic corridors spanning thousands of kilometres to connect major industrial hubs, agricultural centres, and ports across the country is an integral part of the Bharatmala project. These corridors are designed to reduce travel time and costs significantly.

2. Strengthening border and coastal roads:

Strengthening road infrastructure along India's borders and coastlines to improve connectivity in remote and strategic areas is also a vital component of the Bharatmala project. This component aims to enhance national security while facilitating smoother trade and travel.

3. Upgradation of national highways:

Upgrading and widening existing national highways to reduce congestion, improve road safety, and lower transportation costs for freight and passenger vehicles is another crucial component of the Bharatmala project.

4. Integration with international trade routes:

Another key component of the Bharatmala project includes creating robust road networks that seamlessly integrate with ports and border crossings to facilitate efficient movement of goods for international trade. This integration aims to reduce transit times and costs, thereby boosting India's trade competitiveness globally.

Implementation challenges

1. Land acquisition issues: One of the foremost challenges faced by the Bharatmala project is acquiring land for constructing new roads and widening existing highways. Land acquisition in India is governed by various laws and regulations, which often lead to delays and disputes. The process involves negotiations with landowners, compensation settlements, and sometimes faces resistance from local communities concerned about displacement and loss of livelihoods.

2. Environmental concerns: Building

new roads and highways under the Bharatmala project necessitates careful environmental assessments and compliance with environmental regulations. This initiative can potentially impact biodiversity, water resources, and ecosystems. To mitigate these impacts, it is essential to carry out comprehensive environmental impact assessments, put in place mitigation measures, and secure the required approvals from environmental authorities, though this process can be quite time-consuming.

3. Funding constraints: The scale and scope of Bharatmala require substantial financial resources. While the Indian government has allocated significant funds for the project, funding constraints remain a challenge. Innovative financing models such as public-private partnerships, infrastructure bonds, and international loans are being explored to bridge the funding gap. However, securing adequate and timely funding remains crucial to maintaining project momentum and meeting completion targets.

4. Technical complexities: The technical complexities associated with road construction and modernization are another challenge for Bharatmala. Building new express ways, upgrading existing highways, implementing advanced traffic management systems, and ensuring road safety require specialized engineering expertise and advanced technologies. Adapting to diverse geographical terrains and environmental conditions across different regions of India adds further complexity to project planning and execution.

5. Regulatory & administrative hurdles: Navigating through regulatory frameworks, obtaining necessary permits, and adhering to bureaucratic procedures can pose significant hurdles for Bharatmala. Delays in obtaining approvals and clearances from multiple government agencies can slow down project timelines and escalate costs.

6. Socio-economic impacts: Road

construction projects under Bharatmala may also have socio-economic implications. Displacement of communities, disruptions to local economies, and changes in land use patterns are some of the socioeconomic issues that need to be addressed sensitively. Engaging with local stakeholders, conducting social impact assessments, and implementing resettlement and rehabilitation measures are essential for minimizing negative impacts and promoting inclusive development.

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6. Socio-economic impacts: Road construction projects under Bharatmala may also have socio-economic implications. Displacement of communities, disruptions to local economies, and changes in land use patterns are some of the socioeconomic issues that need to be addressed sensitively. Engaging with local stakeholders, conducting social impact assessments, and implementing resettlement and rehabilitation measures are essential for minimizing negative impacts and promoting inclusive development. Additionally, the use of technology aids in optimizing resource allocation, improving construction quality, and enhancing overall project efficiency.

5. Environmental sustainability:

Environmental sustainability is a key priority embedded within Bharatmala's framework. The project adheres to stringent environmental norms and conducts rigorous Environmental Impact Assessments for each phase of construction. Mitigation measures are implemented to minimise ecological footprint, protect biodiversity, and mitigate adverse environmental impacts. This commitment to sustainable practices ensures that infrastructure development under Bharatmala is harmonised with environmental conservation goals.

Conclusion

As of mid-2024, Bharatmala has made significant progress despite facing challenges. Several new highway stretches have been completed, improving connectivity and reducing travel times, thereby enhancing citizens' quality of life. By December 2023, contracts for 26,418 km (76 per cent of 34,800 km) had been awarded, with approximately 15,549 km completed. Ongoing projects across various states are advancing, bolstering infrastructure and economic opportunities in underserved regions. However, an audit report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), released on August 10, 2023, highlighted shortcomings in the project's implementation. The report highlighted the lack of a systematic prioritisation method and ambiguous completion time lines. By March 2023, contracts had not been awarded for 46 per cent of the length of 11 high-priority corridors. Additionally, the report noted rising sanctioned costs and substantial revisions in cost estimates. As of March 2023, 76 per cent of the projects sanctioned by the Cabinet Committee on

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Economic Affairs (CCEA) had secured contracts, exceeding the allocated CCEA funds by 158%. Furthermore, the CAG report revealed that a substantial number of Bharatmala projects initiated tender notices without appraisal by the Project Appraisal and Technical Scrutiny Committee. Despite these challenges, the project has already improved road safety standards and transportation efficiency for goods and passengers. Looking ahead, Bharatmala remains a crucial initiative in India's infrastructure development strategy, aligned with the nation's goal of sustainable economic growth and improved quality of life. Continued focus on mitigation strategies, technological advancements, and community engagement will be essential to overcome remaining challenges and fully realize Bharatmala's potential as a catalyst for national development. As the project advances, its successful completion is set to leave a lasting impact on India's 21st-century development, establishing new benchmarks in infrastructure excellence and economic integration.

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The article was first published in Indian Management Journal (Issue 2 Volume 64) an AIMA & Spenta Multimedia publication

OPTIMISING THE WORKPLACE

A POSITIVE, SUPPORTIVE, AND INCLUSIVE WORK ATMOSPHERE FOSTERS GREATER ENGAGEMENT, CREATIVITY, AND PERFORMANCE.

SANJAY KOUL , AUTHOR, HAPPINESS: ILLUSION OR REALITY

Work environment plays a crucial role in influencing employee wellbeing, productivity, and job satisfaction. A positive, supportive, and inclusive work atmosphere fosters greater engagement, creativity, and performance, while a toxic or inefficient environment can lead to burnout, disengagement, and high turnover. This article examines key areas that impact the work environment, such as physical workspace, leadership, employee engagement, health and safety, and work-life balance. It also explores practical strategies and factors that can improve these areas, including ergonomic designs, transparent leadership, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and flexible working arrangements. The goal is to offer insights into creating an environment where employees thrive, contributing to the overall success of the organisation.

The quality of the work environment is one of the most significant factors determining employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity. A positive work environment not only boosts morale but also fosters creativity, collaboration, and efficiency. On the other hand, a negative work environment can lead to disengagement, increased stress, and poor performance. By understanding the various aspects that affect the work environment and applying strategies to improve them, organisations can create a more conducive atmosphere for both individual and collective growth.

This article discusses the key areas that impact the work environment and offers suggestions on how organisations can improve these areas to enhance employee well-being, job satisfaction, and overall organisational success.

1. Physical workspace and ergonomics

Impact on work environment:



- **Poor design and comfort:** A workspace with uncomfortable chairs, improper desk height, bad lighting, and inefficient layout can cause physical strain, discomfort, and mental fatigue, leading to reduced productivity and employee dissatisfaction.
- **Health issues:** Poor ergonomics may result in long-term physical issues like back pain, eye strain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and headaches. These not only affect work performance but also contribute to absenteeism.

Improvement factors:

- **Ergonomic workspace design:** Providing ergonomic chairs, desks that are adjustable for sitting and standing, and keyboards that align with body posture can prevent physical strain. Adjustable lighting or daylight exposure also

helps reduce eye strain and improves mood.

- **Well-planned layout:** Creating open spaces for collaboration while maintaining quiet zones for focused work ensures a balance between teamwork and individual productivity.
- **Personalisation:** Allowing employees to decorate or personalise their workspace makes them feel more connected and comfortable, fostering a sense of ownership.

2. Health and safety

Impact on work environment:

- **Unsafe conditions:** If a workplace is not equipped with necessary safety equipment, emergency protocols, or clear health guidelines, it leads to increased risk of accidents, injuries, and health issues.
- **Stress and fatigue:** Constant exposure to poor air quality, noise, or overcrowding can result in stress, fatigue, and general dissatisfaction, affecting productivity and employee engagement.

Improvement factors:

- **Health and safety protocols:** Ensuring the workplace complies with safety standards and regulations (fire safety, electrical hazards, etc.) is essential. Regular safety drills and clear emergency exits help employees feel safe.
- **Air quality and environmental controls:** Installing air purifiers, ensuring adequate ventilation, and incorporating plants to improve air quality help maintain a healthy and pleasant environment.
- **Wellness programs:** Providing programs like fitness challenges, mental health days, or counselling services can promote physical and mental health, leading to a happier and healthier workforce.

3. Leadership and management style

Impact on work environment:

- **Poor leadership:** Inconsistent, micromanaging, or distant leadership often leads to employee frustration, burnout, and a lack of trust. Poor communication from leadership also contributes to confusion and dissatisfaction.

- **Lack of direction:** When managers don't provide clear direction or goals, employees may feel lost or unsure of their role, leading to a lack of focus and engagement.

Improvement factors:

- **Supportive leadership:** Leaders should exhibit empathy, provide guidance, listen actively, and show a genuine interest in employee well-being. An open-door policy encourages better communication.
- **Transparency and communication:** Regular updates on company goals, changes, and challenges help employees feel informed and included in decision making processes, fostering trust.
- **Recognition:** Publicly recognising achievements and showing appreciation can motivate employees, making them feel valued and supported.

4. Employee engagement and motivation

Impact on work environment:

- **Low engagement:** Lack of motivation or enthusiasm from employees can lead to low productivity, high turnover rates, and a toxic work culture. Employees may feel like they are just going through the motions without a sense of purpose.
- **Disengagement:** When employees feel disconnected from the company's goals, they may not contribute fully, leading to a decrease in creativity and innovation.

Improvement factors:

- **Growth opportunities:** Offering training, mentorship, and skill development ensures that employees feel like they can grow in their roles and contribute more to the organization.
- **Autonomy and empowerment:** Giving employees the freedom to make decisions in their roles increases their sense of responsibility, control, and job satisfaction.
- **Regular feedback:** A two-way feedback system where employees receive constructive input and also have a platform to voice their opinions leads to more informed decision-making and greater engagement.

5. Work-life balance

Impact on work environment:

- **Burnout:** Excessive work demands without proper time for rest or personal activities can cause burnout, leading to physical exhaustion, emotional fatigue, and disengagement.
- **Stress and decreased productivity:** Without work-life balance, employees may experience stress that affects both their personal life and work performance, reducing overall productivity.

Improvement factors:

- **Flexible working hours:** Allowing employees to have flexible schedules or offering compressed work weeks helps them balance personal responsibilities, reducing stress.
- **Remote work:** Providing the option to work from home or other remote locations increases flexibility and can help employees achieve better work-life integration.
- **Paid time off and mental health days:** Encouraging employees to take vacation days or mental health breaks helps recharge their energy and reduces stress, leading to increased overall productivity.

6. Teamwork and collaboration

Impact on work environment:

- **Poor collaboration:** Lack of communication and cooperation between team members can result in inefficiency, missed deadlines, and a fragmented work culture.
- **Isolation:** When employees are not encouraged to work together, it can lead to a sense of isolation and disconnection from the team, reducing morale and engagement.

Improvement factors:

- **Team-building activities:** Organising team-building exercises, group activities, or collaborative projects fosters trust and strengthens relationships between employees.
- **Encouraging inclusivity:** Making sure everyone has a voice and ensuring diversity within teams leads to a more

cohesive and productive team dynamic.

- **Conflict resolution:** Training employees on conflict management and providing avenues for conflict resolution helps keep team relationships healthy.

7. Clarity of roles and expectations

Impact on work environment:

- **Ambiguity:** When roles and expectations are unclear, employees may feel uncertain, leading to mistakes, inefficiency, and frustration.
- **Overwork or underwork:** Lack of clear delegation of tasks can lead to employees taking on too much or not enough work, both of which can negatively affect performance.

Improvement factors:

- **Clear job roles:** Clearly defining each employee's role, responsibilities, and goals ensures everyone knows what is expected of them.
- **Setting milestones:** Regularly setting and reviewing goals helps employees understand their progress and adjust their efforts accordingly.
- **Performance reviews:** Regular evaluations provide a platform to discuss expectations, set new goals, and provide constructive feedback.

8. Recognition and rewards

Impact on work environment:

- **Lack of motivation:** If employees' hard work goes unnoticed or unrewarded, they may feel unappreciated, leading to low morale and disengagement.
- **Unfair reward systems:** An imbalanced reward system can lead to resentment among employees, especially if they feel their contributions are not fairly recognised.

Improvement factors:

- **Reward programs:** Offering monetary or non-monetary rewards (e.g., bonuses, extra time off, gift cards) for exceptional performance boosts morale.
- **Employee of the month programs:** Public recognition through monthly

awards acknowledges employees' efforts and motivates them to perform better.

- **Peer recognition:** Encouraging employees to recognise their peers creates a supportive and appreciative environment.

9. Diversity and inclusion

Impact on work environment:

- **Exclusion:** A lack of diversity or inclusivity can lead to feelings of alienation, inequality, and discrimination among employees, reducing morale and increasing turnover.
- **Homogeneous culture:** A lack of diversity can also lead to groupthink, where creativity and innovation are stifled.

Improvement factors:

- **Inclusive policies:** Implementing policies that promote equality, non discrimination, and respect for diverse backgrounds ensures all employees feel valued.
- **Cultural sensitivity training:** Providing workshops on cultural awareness and sensitivity promotes understanding and helps prevent conflicts.
- **Equal opportunities:** Ensuring equal opportunities for career advancement and promotions for all employees enhances the work environment by fostering fairness.

10. Workplace flexibility

Impact on work environment:

- **Rigidity:** A rigid, one-size-fits-all approach to work

can reduce employee satisfaction and hinder their ability to balance work and life responsibilities.

- **Micromanagement:** Lack of flexibility in work hours or location can lead to feelings of being controlled, resulting in decreased motivation.

Improvement factors:

- **Remote work:** Offering remote or hybrid work options increases flexibility and helps employees manage their personal and professional commitments more effectively.
- **Flexible hours:** Allowing employees to adjust their hours to suit personal needs improves their work-life balance and reduces stress.
- **Technology for collaboration:** Tools like video conferencing and collaboration platforms (Slack, Teams) enable effective communication and collaboration, even in remote settings.

Conclusion

A thriving work environment is essential for the success of any organization. By addressing the factors that influence the work environment—such as physical workspace design, leadership styles, employee engagement, and work-life balance—organisations can create a supportive atmosphere that fosters productivity, creativity, and well-being. Implementing strategies such as ergonomic workstations, transparent leadership, flexible work schedules, and diversity initiatives can significantly improve the work environment. Ultimately, when employees feel valued, supported, and engaged, they are more likely to contribute positively to the organisation's goals and success

About the Author



Sanjay Koul

Engineer, researcher, and writer.

Sanjay is also author, Happiness: Illusion or Reality

Disclaimer:

The article was first published in Indian Management Journal (Issue 9 Volume 64) an AIMA & Spenta Multimedia publication

THE MINDFUL OFFICE

Effective leadership in the digital age hinges on recognising attention as the most valuable resource.

MENKA SANGHVI, CO-AUTHOR, YOUR BEST DIGITAL LIFE

In a world where the average office worker checks their email 74 times daily (and their phone nearly twice that), our relationship with technology has become less of a romance and more of a hostage situation. As someone who has spent the better part of a decade studying digital habits, I can confirm what you likely already suspect: we are not handling this relationship particularly well.

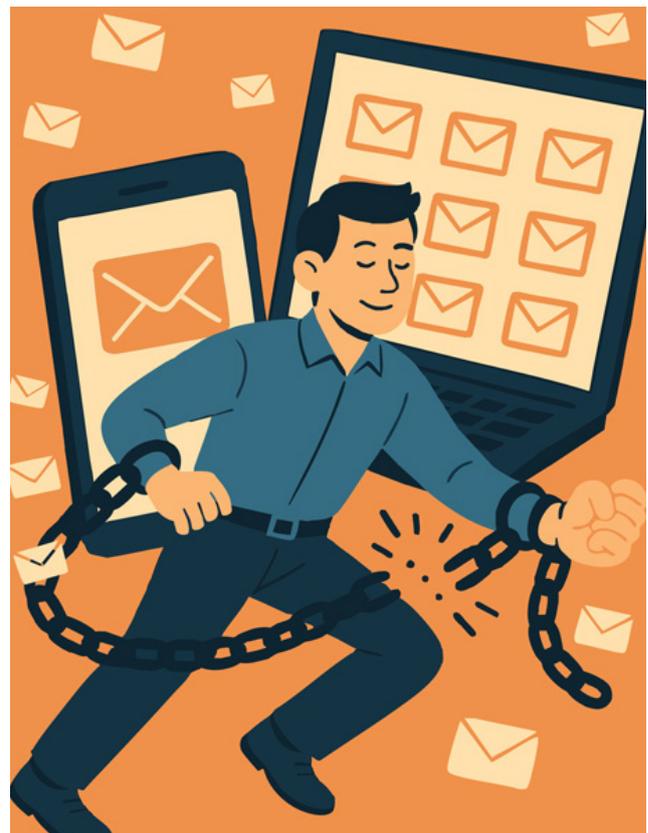
But here is the good news—you don't need to build a Faraday cage around your office or institute mandatory flip phone Fridays to make meaningful change. Small, deliberate shifts can dramatically alter how technology serves your team rather than subjugates it.

The starting point is truly understanding the challenge. As we all know, most apps are designed to grab our attention and keep it for as long as possible—it is simply their business model, and the AI-enabled algorithms are becoming more powerful at achieving this every day.

But the problem is not just hours withered away; it is more fundamental. Our attention is how we experience our lives, so getting stuck in digital spaces that don't serve us well impacts everything: from productivity, self-esteem and mood to sleep quality and relationships.

A 2023 Microsoft Workplace Insights study found that the average knowledge worker is interrupted every six minutes, with recovery time from each interruption taking an additional 23 minutes. This means many of us spend our entire workday in a state of perpetual recovery, never quite reaching that elusive flow state where our best work happens.

As one executive recently confided to me, "I bought a safe with a timer just to lock my phone away when I need to focus." When imprisonment of our devices becomes a reasonable solution,



something has clearly gone amiss.

The trouble with most 'digital wellbeing' solutions is they rely heavily on willpower. But as we all know from both research and personal experience, willpower is about as reliable as 'estimated arrival time' during rush hour traffic! The part of our brain responsible for executive functions such as self-control and focus accounts for only 4 per cent of our body mass but consumes a whopping 25 per cent of our energy. No wonder it fatigues quickly. Which is why we really need other strategies.

The power of intentional digital habits

The best (and worst!) characteristic of habits is that they are automatic. They do not require much conscious input, the body and mind just

know exactly what to do. So the lowest effort and most sustainable way to change our behaviour is to build new habits. In my new book *Your Best Digital Life: Use Your Mind to Tame Your Tech* written with coauthor Jonathan Garner, we explore exactly how to do this and offer the M.O.R.E. Method for cultivating intentional habits, which I'll summarise briefly for you here:

Mobilize: Connect with your purpose, values and your personal 'why' for wanting to change your digital habits. Without this clarity, new habits won't stick.

Observe: Get into a scientific mindset and watch your own tech habits with a deep curiosity, but without jumping to conclusions. Notice how you check your phone for the time, fall into an Instagram wormhole, then put it down – still not knowing what time it is.

Reflect: Schedule a weekly tech check in with yourself. Consider what you have observed: Is responding to emails at 2 AM helping your career or just giving you anxiety about it? Are your habits serving your own goals or just serving Meta's advertising algorithm?

Experiment: Create micro-adjustments based on the insights you have gained. Small changes practiced regularly beat grand aspirations that collapse by Tuesday.

The leadership challenge: Shifting the norm

Here is an uncomfortable truth: your team is watching how you use technology, not listening to what you say about it. If you are responding to Slack messages at 11 PM while preaching work-life boundaries, your actions speak louder than words.

Research from Harvard Business School shows that leaders who model digital boundaries see 34 per cent higher adoption of similar behaviours among their teams. So when you finally silence your phone during meetings, you're not just preserving your attention—you're issuing a permission slip for everyone else to do the same.

As a leader, it is your job not just to set an example

but to shape a healthy digital culture. Instead of vague calls to "prioritise digital wellbeing" consider these evidence-backed approaches instead:

Deep work slots: Reserve 2–3-hour chunks on team calendars where meetings are forbidden and communication tools are paused. The University of California found that employees need at least 23 minutes of uninterrupted time to reach meaningful engagement with complex tasks.

Task batching distractions: Every time we switch contexts there is a substantial cognitive cost. Minimise this by batching together similar asks, even the 'distractions'. Consider a phone break mid-way through a meeting to prevent constant second screening.

Turn your volume up in meetings: Give permission for those expecting messages to turn up their volume. This may sound counterintuitive, but it reduces the number of times people check their devices when they don't need to, and encourages engagement.

Notification audits: Hold quarterly 'notification audits' where team members review and justify each app that can interrupt them. Think of it as Marie Kondo for your digital life!

Measuring what really matters

When it comes to shaping culture, it is easy for managers and organisations to inadvertently reward digital presenteeism through metrics focused on responsiveness rather than results. Consider instead:

Impact-focused metrics: Shift performance indicators from quantity of communication to impact of contributions.

Connection ratios: Track the ratio of face-to-face interactions to digital ones, aiming for healthy balance rather than elimination of either.

Focus time accounting: Measure periods of uninterrupted work as a valuable corporate asset, not just a personal preference.

Physical space supports boundaries

Your office design silently communicates expectations about technology use. Research from Cornell University demonstrates that physical spaces significantly influence digital behaviour patterns, a phenomenon known as choice architecture. Here are two examples:

Give tech a home: Install physical phone storage on desks or in meeting rooms. One company created a playful 'phone hotel' outside of meeting rooms where devices 'check in' for meetings, complete with tiny room numbers and 'Do not disturb' signs!

Low-tech zones: Designate areas where laptops and phones simply don't belong. These can become sanctuaries for conversation and thinking, or simply taking a break, not just "another place to sit with my laptop."

Be bold in your experiments

When speaking to businesses about the mindful use of technology, I often encounter resistance rooted in fear: "But we'll fall behind if we're not always connected!" While many professions and situations require intense periods of time in the digital trenches, the mistake is assuming that

this default setting is always the best one for the whole organisation and at all times.

This is the spirit with which I wrote *Your Best Digital Life*—"best" necessarily looks different for every person, team and organisation, and the only way to find out is through experimentation. My book contains sixty experiments to try out, but more importantly, it sets out a framework for

creating to your own approaches, because no expert can tell you what's right for your organisation.

What starts as a productivity hustle can soon lead to profound cultural shifts. One CEO told me: "By running these experiments together people started talking about their digital habits more openly... without the usual shame and blame."

Ultimately, having a better relationship with our technology is about exercising choice, and building up the inner freedom we have as humans in this digital age. By reclaiming control of our attention we can double down on what matters most to us in each moment. So when we create workplaces that honour attention as our most precious resource, we don't just work better—we live better.

About the Author



Menka Sanghvi

Co-author, *Your Best Digital Life: Use Your Mind to Tame Your Tech*

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The article was first published in *Indian Management Journal* (Issue 6 Volume 64) an AIMA & Spenta Multimedia publication

COMPANY PROFILES

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Tata Steel is one of the world's most diversified integrated steel producers, with a capacity of 35 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) across India, the Netherlands, the UK, and Thailand. The World Economic Forum has recognised our Jamshedpur, Kalinganagar and IJmuiden plants as Manufacturing Lighthouses. With over 76,000 employees worldwide, Tata Steel is a Great Place to Work[®]-certified organisation. The Company recorded a consolidated turnover of approximately US\$26 billion in the financial year ending March 31, 2025. In India, Tata Steel operates in Jamshedpur and Gamharia in Jharkhand, and in Kalinganagar (including Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited) and Meramandali in Odisha, with an overall capacity of 26.6 MTPA. The Company has captive mining operations in India, including collieries in Jharia and West Bokaro, and iron ore mines in Noamundi, Katamati, Joda East, Khondbond, Vijaya II, and Koida. It also operates iron ore assets in Labrador and Northern Quebec, Canada. The Company aims to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2045. The upcoming 0.75 MTPA electric arc furnace-based steelmaking facility in Ludhiana is the Company's first low-emission plant in India. In the UK, Tata Steel is transitioning to a 3.2 MTPA EAF-based steelmaking route, following the decommissioning of its heavy-end assets in 2024. In 2025, the Government of the Netherlands and Tata Steel signed a non-binding Joint Letter of Intent for the first phase of the transition to low-emission steel production at IJmuiden. Focused on sustainability, innovation, agility, and fostering deep relationships with customers and communities, Tata Steel aspires to become the most respected and valuable metals and mining company globally.



Jindal Steel Limited is one of India's foremost integrated steel producers, renowned for its scale, efficiency, and commitment to excellence. Operating on a robust mine-to-metal model, the Company leverages captive iron ore and coal resources, advanced manufacturing capabilities, and a global distribution network to deliver high-performance steel solutions. With an installed steelmaking capacity of 12.6 MTPA and a planned expansion of 3 MTPA, Jindal Steel is well positioned to support India's growing infrastructure and industrial needs.

With an investment footprint exceeding USD 12 billion, Jindal Steel operates state-of-the-art facilities in Angul, Raigarh, and Patratu, and maintains strategic operations across India and Africa. Its captive mining portfolio includes iron ore capacity of 13.6 MTPA and coal capacity of 22 MTPA, reinforcing supply security and cost efficiency. A diversified and future-ready product portfolio underpins core sectors such as infrastructure, construction, and manufacturing, powering progress through strength and sustainability.



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Indian subsidiaries and joint ventures

- Kirloskar Ebara Pumps Limited (KEPL) manufactures API, Non-API pumps, and steam turbines.
- Kirloskar Corrocoat Private Limited (KCPL) is the leading solution provider in long-term corrosion protection and energy conversion.
- Karad Projects and Motors Limited (KPML) is a motor manufacturing company with expertise in the manufacture of stampings, stators, rotors, AC rotating machines, aluminium die-cast connecting rods and pump assemblies. It also houses a notable foundry facility specialising in the manufacture of a wide range of carbon steel, alloy steel, stainless steel and cast iron castings for industries such as pumps, valves, turbines, shipping, heavy engineering applications and more.

International, subsidiaries and joint ventures

- SPP Pumps Limited, United Kingdom is a 140-year-old leading pumps manufacturer of centrifugal pumps and associated systems, a global principal in the design, supply and servicing of pumps, renowned fire pump packages and high-quality equipment for a wide range of applications and industry sectors. It is the largest pump manufacturer in the United Kingdom.
- SyncroFlo, Inc., United States of America manufactures pre-assembled pumping systems and provides solutions for HVAC systems, fire protection and turf irrigation.

- Rodelta Pumps International is a Dutch pump manufacturing company that offers products for flood control, irrigation, drinking water, wastewater, pulp & paper, power, chemical, oil & gas and general industries.
- Kirloskar Brothers Thailand Limited (KBTL), Bangkok is the Thailand Board of Investment (BOI) promoted headquarters and assembly plant of the KBL Group companies for the ASEAN and East Asia regions.
- Braybar Pumps (Pty) Limited, Republic of South Africa is engaged in the manufacturing and sales of high-head multi-stage pumps, rubber-lined slurry pumps and metal-lined bearings.

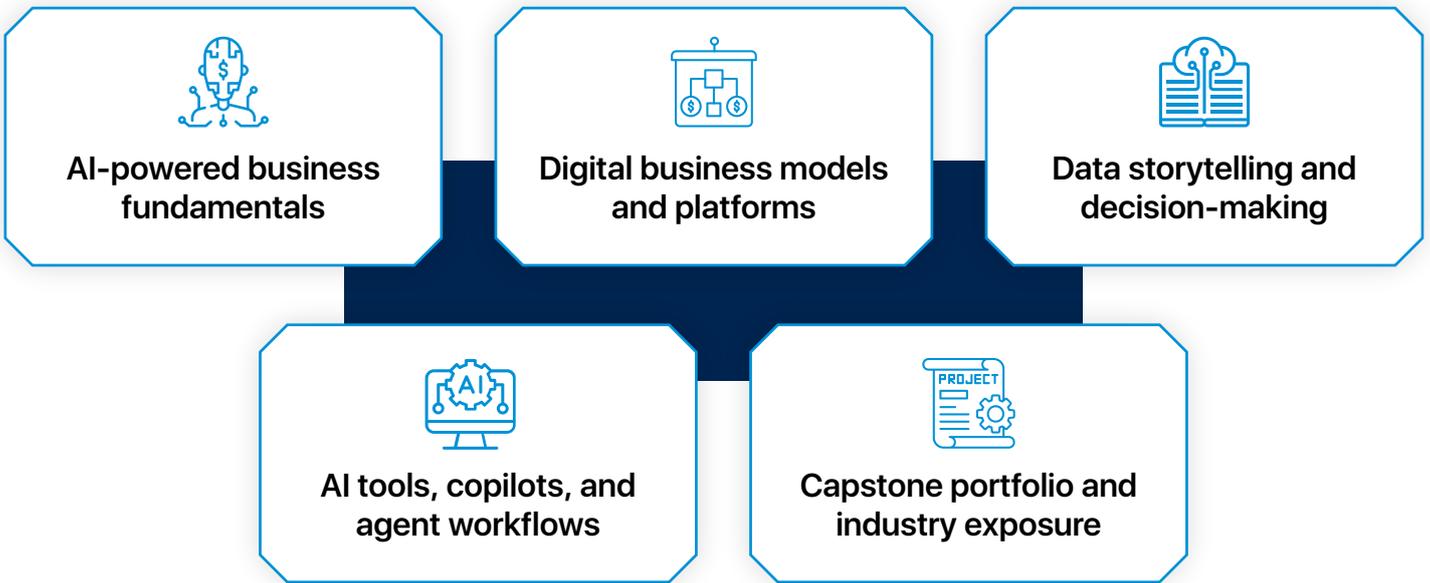
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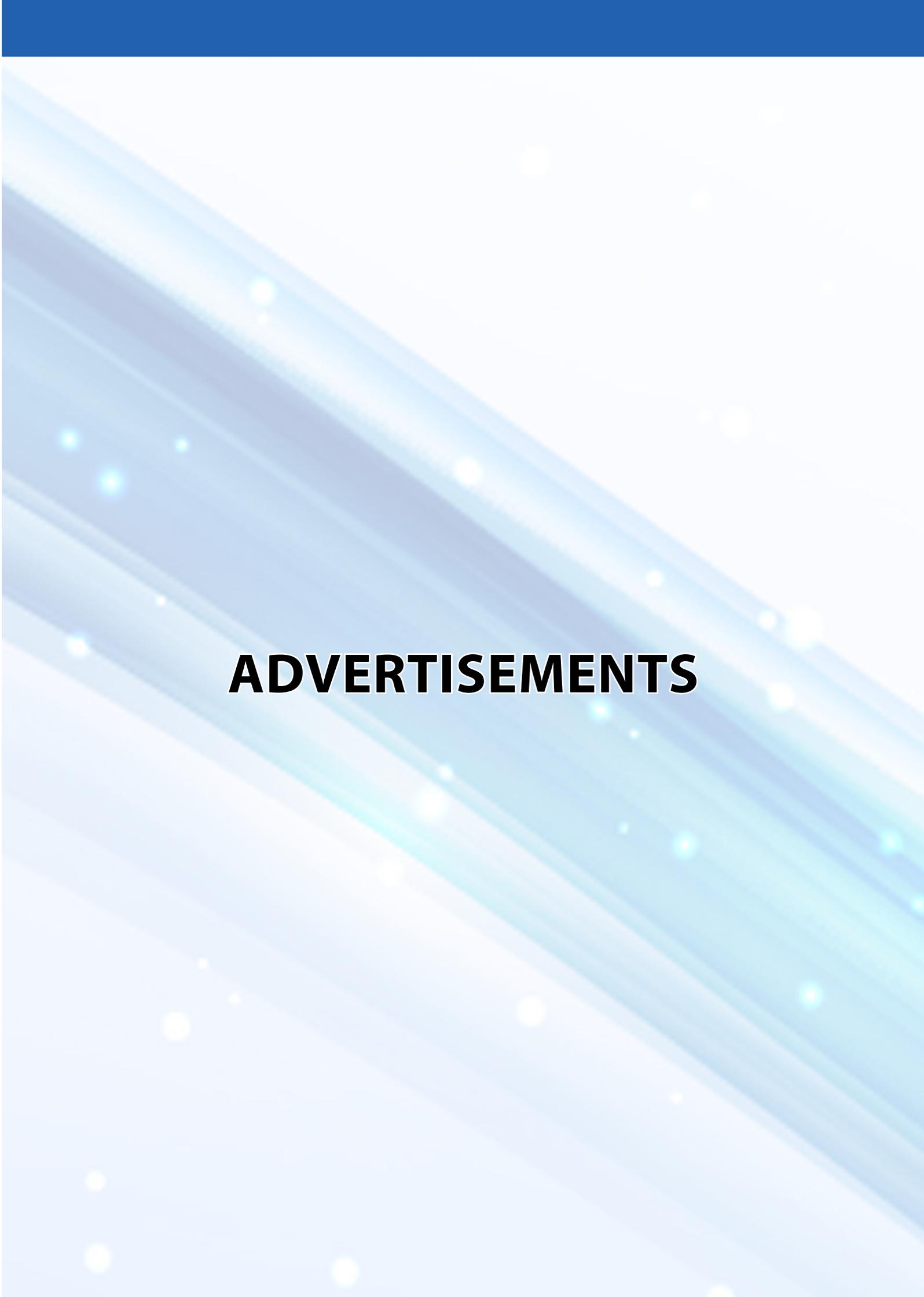
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AIMA Events Calendar

Event	Programme Chairman/Key Speaker	Venue	Date
AIMA's Platinum Jubilee (70th) Foundation Day & 20th National Management Day		New Delhi	21 February 2026
16th Managing India Awards		New Delhi	21 February 2026
Special Session on 'From Efficiency to Flourishing: How Leaders Can Leverage AI to Help People Thrive'	Prof. Roshni Raveendhran Assistant Professor Business Administration University of Virginia's Daren School of Business	Online	24 February 2026
Pragati – Programme and National Quiz for Women Executives		New Delhi	March 2026
8th Leadership Development Programme		Darjeeling	7- 9 March 2026
Book Launch : CHANAKYA AND SUN TZU: A Business Lens on Trade, Thought, and Travel	Mr R Gopalakrishnan Author, Corporate Advisor, The Mindworks and Past President, AIMA	New Delhi	11 March 2026
AIMA YLC Session on 'Public Policy & Nation-Building: Why Young Leaders Must Engage'	Dr Shubhashis Gangopadhyay Research Director of India Development Foundation	Online	13 March 2026
National Leadership Conclave		New Delhi	09 April 2026
Global Advanced Management Programme (GAMP)		Europe - Geneva & Munich	14 - 20 June 2026
Global Advanced Management Programme (GAMP)		Silicon Valley, US	12- 18 July 2026
Global Advanced Management Programme (GAMP)		China	23 - 29 August 2026

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Programme Background

The rapid pace of change in the global economy continues to redefine business leadership. Organisations are facing growing demands to align with digital transformation, sustainability goals, dynamic customer behaviours, and ever-evolving regulatory frameworks. Leaders are expected to drive innovation while balancing resilience, agility, and growth in increasingly competitive and interconnected markets.

AIMA's Global Advanced Management Programme (GAMP) is tailored to equip business leaders with insights into emerging trends and strategies to address these challenges effectively.

Programme Objectives

- Identify opportunities for profitable growth.
- Respond and adapt to the challenges in the changing landscape due to rapid global economic trends.
- Examine the latest concepts, ideas and tools to help them align their business practices with global economic developments and conditions.
- Learn to build sustainable and innovative business models.

Programme Framework

- Class Room Lectures and Interactions
- Keynotes by Silicon Valley Startups and CEOs
- Visits to and interaction with the top management teams of some of the iconic and innovative companies like Nvidia, Cisco, IBM Research, Wells Fargo Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, PayPal, Fujitsu Open Innovation Gateway, Chevron Corporation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Calpine Corporation, Dupont Innovation Centre, UC Berkeley Campus amongst others.

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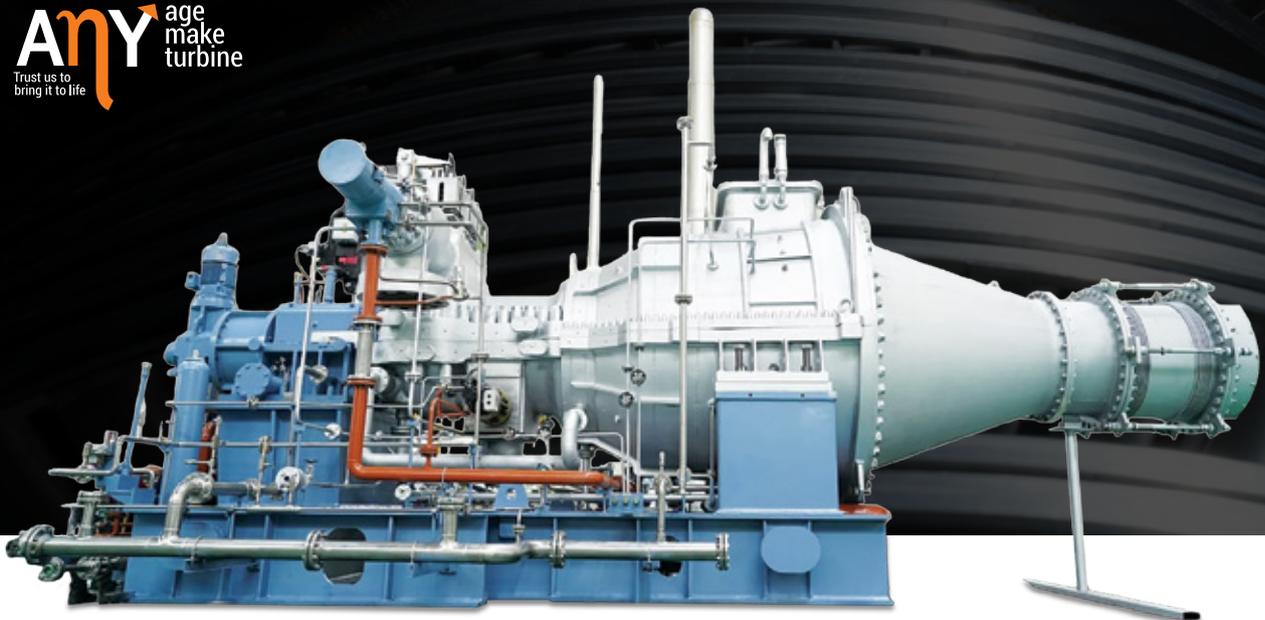


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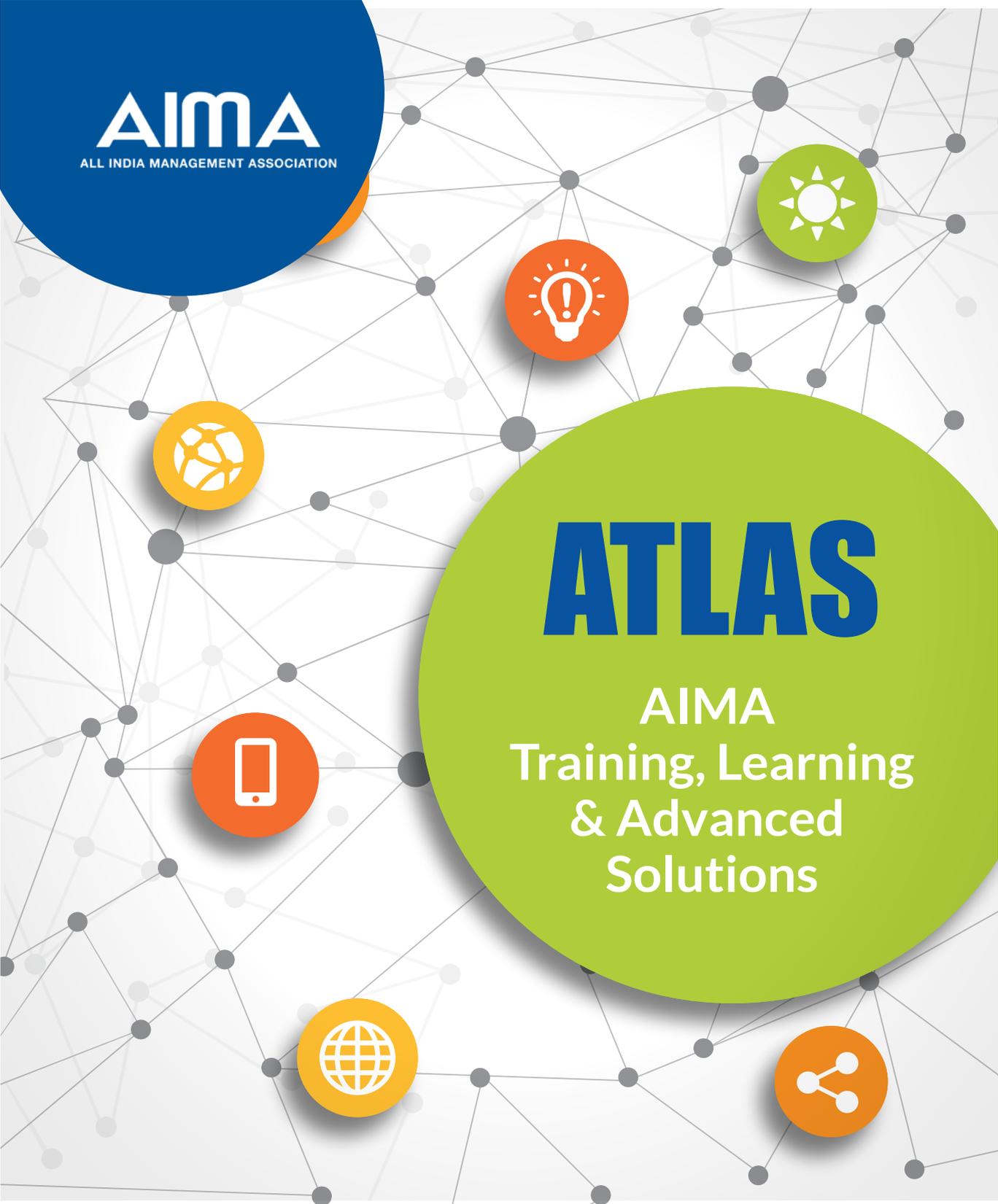


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The background of the entire page is a light gray network diagram consisting of numerous small gray dots connected by thin gray lines, creating a web-like structure. In the top left corner, there is a dark blue rounded rectangle containing the AIMA logo. The logo features the word "AIMA" in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font, with "ALL INDIA MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font directly below it. To the right of the AIMA logo, there are several circular icons: a green circle with a white sun-like symbol, an orange circle with a white lightbulb icon, a yellow circle with a white globe icon, an orange circle with a white smartphone icon, a yellow circle with a white globe icon, and an orange circle with a white share icon. A large green circle is positioned in the lower right quadrant, containing the text "ATLAS" in a large, bold, blue, sans-serif font, and "AIMA Training, Learning & Advanced Solutions" in a white, sans-serif font below it.

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For further details, please contact:
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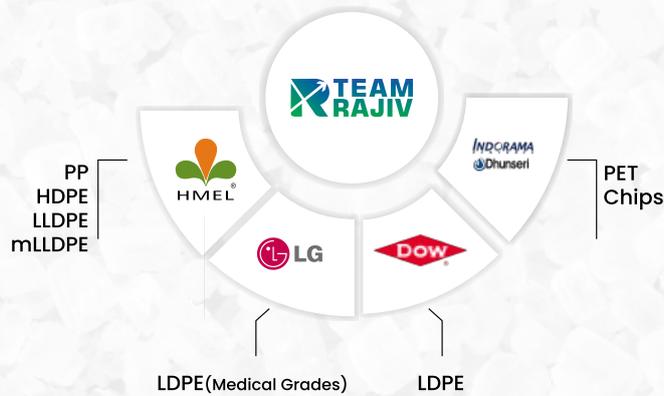
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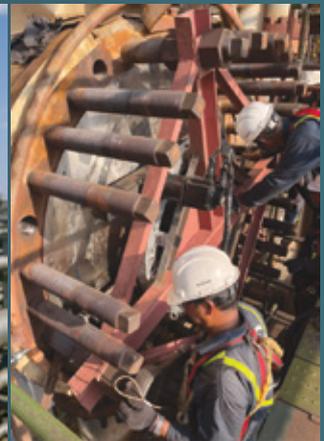
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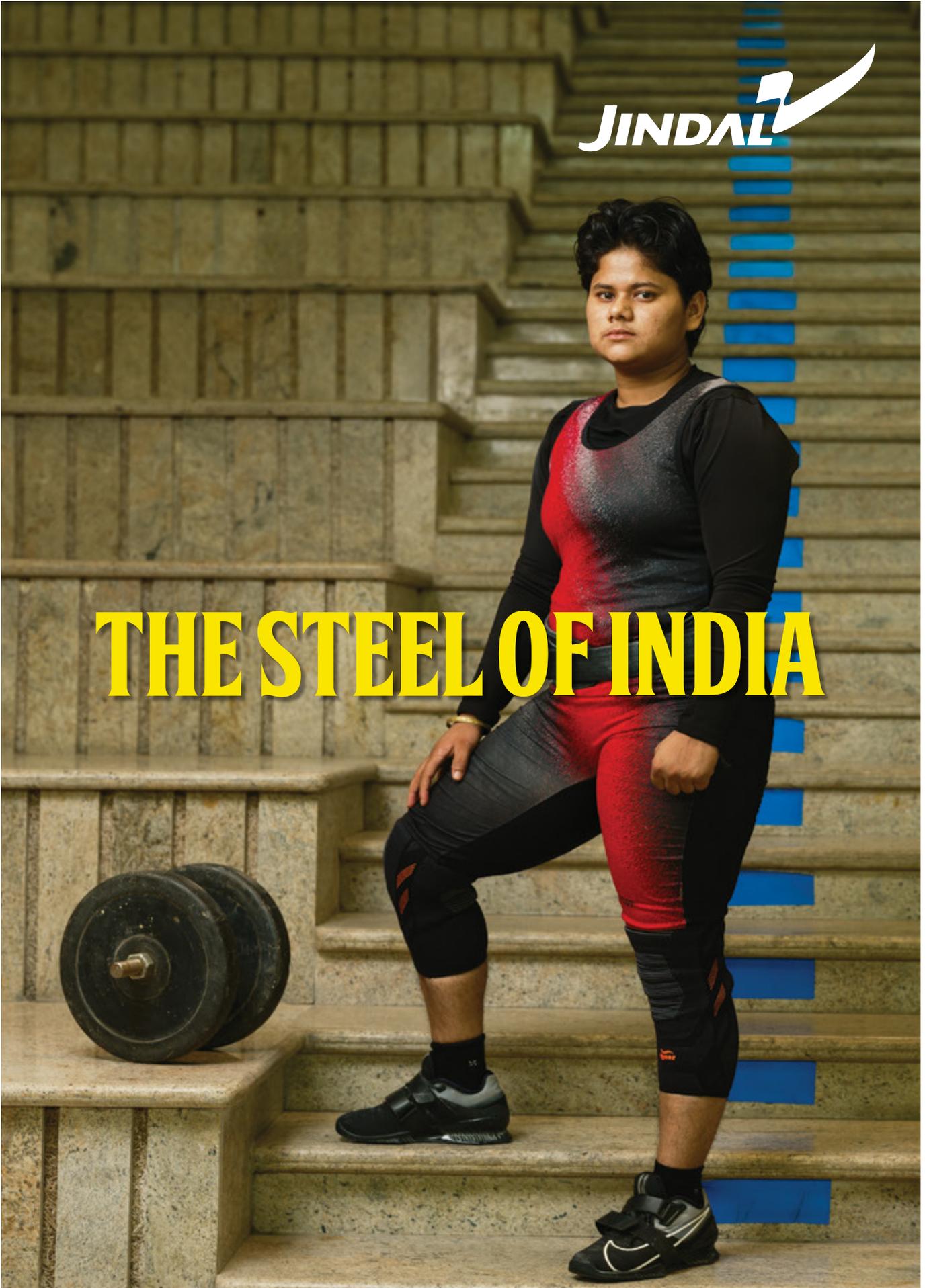


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हर स्वाद के पीछे एक यात्रा होती है...

किमान के खेत से लेकर आपके रसोई घर तक-
सृष्टिपूर्ति सिर्फ मसाले नहीं लाता
वो लाता है मेहनत, परंपरा और भरोसे की खुशबू।

हर दाना चुना जाता है,
हर मसाला शुद्धता से पीसा जाता है,
ताकि हर व्यंजन में वही स्वाद रहे जो आपकी यादों से जुड़ा है।
सृष्टिपूर्ति- शुद्धता का वादा, स्वाद का विश्वास

गुणवत्ता जो दिखाई नहीं देती, सिर्फ महसूस होती है

जब मसाले मिलावट से नहीं,
मेहनत से बनते हैं—
तो स्वाद खुद बोलने लगता है।

सृष्टिपूर्ति में
चुनी हुई कच्ची सामग्री
नियंत्रित प्रोसेस
बिना समझौते की शुद्धता

क्योंकि आपके परिवार के लिए हम वही बनाते हैं, जो हम खुद खाते हैं।



दालें | साबुत मसाले | पिसे मसाले | मिक्स मसाले | बेसन | सूजी | मैदा | सेंधा नमक