

# India Ahead Towards a Viksit Bharat

SUMMIT 2025 • 17 DECEMBER 2025 • MUMBAI



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# —Thought Leaders’ Perspective on Holistic Leadership for an Inclusive World

**Speakers:** Piruz Khambatta, Past Chairman, CII Western Region; Chairman, Rasna Pvt. Ltd; Rajan Navani, Chairman, CII Council on India@100 and Chairman & Managing Director, Jet-Synthesys; Ashish Kumar Chauhan, Managing Director & CEO, NSE India; Jayant Acharya, Joint Managing Director & CEO, JSW Steel; Vir S. Advani, Deputy Chairman, CII Western Region & Chairman and Managing Director, BlueStar Ltd; Rishi Kumar Bagla, Chairman, CII Western Region, Chairman and Managing Director, BG Electronic India Ltd.

The “India Ahead” summit brought together visionary leaders from diverse sectors to collectively envision India’s journey toward becoming a developed nation by 2047. The dialogue and discourse that ensued, painted a compelling picture of a Viksit Bharat.

## **Address by Piruz Khambatta, Past Chairman, CII Western Region; Chairman, Rasna Pvt. Ltd**

The summit commenced with an inspiring welcome address by Piruz Khambatta, who set the tone for the day’s profound discussions. Mr Khambatta emphasised the remarkable diversity of the panel assembled for the occasion, noting that the gathering represented India’s diverse economy and society. The panels at the India Ahead 2025 comprised distinguished leaders from government bodies, electronics manufacturing, stock exchanges, service industries, music and arts, social sector organizations, news and media, health and wellness, and various other domains. This convergence of minds from such varied backgrounds, he pointed out, reflected the collaborative spirit essential to achieving the dream of Viksit Bharat.

Speaking with evident passion about the India dream, Mr Khambatta articulated that envisioning India as the largest economy in the world and achieving the five trillion dollar milestone were indeed significant goals. However, he was quick to emphasize that the biggest and most meaningful goal remained the eradication of poverty. The true measure of development, he suggested, would be visible in bridging the gap between the top income groups, middle income segments, and those living below the poverty line.



India’s development story, in his view, must fundamentally include ending poverty, ensuring food security for every citizen, and achieving a universal minimum income that provides dignity to all.

Mr Khambatta painted a holistic vision that extended beyond mere economic indicators. He spoke eloquently about the importance of yoga and healthcare, education and skilling initiatives, access to clean water and proper sanitation, water conservation efforts, and the development of sustainable cities. These elements, he emphasized, formed the building blocks of a truly developed nation. Furthermore, he highlighted the concept of Atmanirbhar Bharat, stressing the importance of making India self-reliant across various sectors.

The summit itself, he noted with pride, had been designed to cover India’s rich cultural diversity, the strengthening of institutions, the spirit of tolerance, the development of world-class infrastructure, and the critical sectors of farming and agriculture. At its heart, he said, the summit embodied a love for the country and a nation-first approach that transcended individual or sectoral interests.

Concluding his welcome remarks, Mr Khambatta shared his pride in the Confederation of Indian Industry’s role in this journey. He emphasized that CII had taken upon itself the unique and ambitious task of ensuring India becomes a developed nation. CII, he clarified, was not merely functioning as an industry association but was actively engaged in meaningful work across all the sectors mentioned, truly living up to its commitment to national development.

## **Address by Rajan Navani, Chairman CII Council on India@100 and Chairman & Managing Director, JetSynthesys**

Rajan Navani took the stage to offer his perspective on the institutional approach required for achieving Viksit Bharat. He began by tracing the genesis of this initiative, noting that the starting point of this remarkable journey was when K.V. Kamath assumed the presidency of CII. That moment, he suggested, marked the beginning of a more structured and strategic approach to national building.

Mr Navani emphasized the critical importance of making institutional approaches central to national building efforts. He spoke about creating a stakeholder-inclusive world where every voice matters and every participant has a role to play. CII as an institution, he noted, had been instrumental in shaping this initiative and giving it the form it has today. He referenced the large-scale exercise undertaken for India at 75, which was subsequently taken forward by Prime Minister Modi, and how it had begun to bear fruit in tangible ways.

Drawing attention to the multifaceted nature of development, Mr Navani articulated a vision that encompassed several key pillars. He spoke about the need to achieve holistic leadership and create a robust ecosystem that would maximize economic progress. Equally important, he emphasized, was the need to revitalize India’s soft power in areas such as art, culture, tourism, and sport. These elements of India’s identity needed to shine on the global stage as brightly as its economic achievements.

Innovation, Mr Navani suggested, must be at the forefront of India’s development strategy. He urged the audience



to consider innovation ahead of the curve in critical sectors such as climate and sustainability, digital platforms, and transformative technology. However, he was quick to point out that to achieve all of this, concentrated efforts were needed in what he termed the CORE areas such as education and skill development, healthcare, infrastructure and urbanization, the judiciary, and governance and administration.

**India's journey to 2047 is not a single leap but a marathon run in disciplined sprints. For a nation of 1.4 billion to transform democratically from developing to developed, progress must be collaborative, industry-led, and people-powered. Our strength lies in trust, in our empowered demography, especially Gen Z, and in our ability to align economic growth, soft power, and institutional reform. Nation-building succeeds only when every generation, every sector, and every stakeholder moves forward together.**

Mr Navani stressed the importance of understanding these requirements across different contexts, whether rural or urban, at state or national levels. The challenge, he noted, was to comprehend what metrics were truly required and then figure out how to achieve them. Central to this effort was the need to collaborate meaningfully with youth and women, building trust with these crucial demographics. This generation, he emphasized, was going to shape the future and drive India's consumption story.

Turning to technology, Mr Navani posed a thought-provoking question about how India could take technology forward. He spoke about the immense potential of artificial intelligence and the need to harness and unlock AI power within the country. With so many priorities competing for attention, he noted that summits like this one truly brought together people to think collectively and strategically about India's future.

#### **Address by Ashish Kumar Chauhan, Managing Director & CEO, NSE India**

Ashish Kumar Chauhan delivered a stirring address that placed India's current aspirations within a broader historical context. He began by reiterating the summit's theme of holistic leadership and development toward Viksit Bharat, before taking the audience on a journey through India's illustrious past.

For centuries, Mr Chauhan reminded the gathering, India was celebrated as the land of prosperity, enterprise, and global action. India stood at the center of the commercial and cultural universe, a beacon of innovation and wealth. However, colonization brought about a period of subjugation

that made Indians progressively poorer and stripped the nation of its former glory.

Mr Chauhan emphasized a crucial historical point: some of the biggest economic and technological breakthroughs, including metallurgy, the decimal system, and foundations of modern medicine, were introduced to the world by Indians. Yet, a thousand years of slavery, colonization, and subjugation crippled India's ability to develop technology in subsequent centuries. The nation that once led the world in innovation was forced to follow internal hierarchies and adopt technologies developed elsewhere. Post-British India's share of global GDP fell from 33 percent to a mere 2 percent, primarily because India could not maintain its technological edge.

Today, Mr Chauhan noted with urgency, when the technology race is on once again, India must be ahead of the curve. He emphasized that the next 22 to 50 years would be crucial, as those who lead the technology race during this period would secure their position as developed nations. Interestingly, he pointed out that there was no need to invent every technology from scratch; the key was to adapt quickly to new technologies and harness them effectively.

**India has always been a civilisation of ideas, innovation, and enterprise. Our history shows that whenever we embraced technology, whether in mathematics, medicine, or knowledge systems, we shaped the world. Today, with a young, digitally confident population and an accelerating pace of innovation, India is once again at the forefront of the technology journey. By learning, adapting, and applying new technologies at scale, we are creating fresh wealth, new opportunities, and a future of shared prosperity. Technology is not just our advantage, it is the engine of India's next rise.**

Technology, Mr Chauhan explained, is fundamentally a wealth creator. Societies with younger populations that are technology-oriented would naturally accumulate more wealth. He drew an interesting parallel to ancient times, noting that thousands of years ago, creating and managing fire was considered technology, and those who mastered this technology prospered. The Industrial Revolution, he observed, made the world realize that technology could create unprecedented wealth. Europe, he noted, created more wealth during the Industrial Revolution than in the previous 2,000 years combined.

The lesson was clear: societies exposed to technological challenges and those who harness and adapt to technology

would be the ones to develop and prosper. A demographically young population that is technologically oriented would have a great future ahead. India, unlike many other nations, was uniquely positioned to become a technological fulcrum in the coming decades.

Reflecting on India's recent trajectory, Mr Chauhan noted that over the last 30 years, India had become a services-driven economy. However, he urged the audience not to be complacent with this achievement. India needed to become a manufacturing hub, excel in new metals and materials, and develop deep tech capabilities. The nation should not be satisfied by merely saying it had reached the pinnacle; there was still much higher to climb.

He highlighted an important shift in the economic landscape: previously, creating technology required substantial capital, but in the present scenario, businesses needed less capital and bigger markets. He cited the Infosys story as an example, noting how the company experienced no initial subscription but eventually became one of the biggest technological wonders of our time. Numerous companies had used technology to create more capital with less initial investment.

Mr Chauhan stressed the need to increase India's per capita income to match that of the United States and the United Kingdom. Encouragingly, he noted that Indians had started investing significantly in the creation of new companies. Even those with modest means were investing heavily because they had developed trust in the economy's fundamentals and future trajectory.

#### **Address by Jayant Acharya, Joint Managing Director & CEO, JSW Steel**

Jayant Acharya brought a manufacturing perspective to the discussion, highlighting the critical role this sector must play in India's development journey. He began by acknowledging that India is largely a service-driven economy at present, with manufacturing contributing only around 15 to 17 percent of the economy. The aspiration, he emphasized, was to elevate this to 25 percent, and this goal was not merely about economic numbers.

Manufacturing, Mr Acharya explained, would provide India with three crucial benefits: economic sovereignty, social empowerment, and technological leadership. He drew attention to a sobering reality: even a small halt in the supply chain of critical minerals could create havoc in the manufacturing industry. This vulnerability underscored the urgent need to develop a robust domestic manufacturing sector that could weather global uncertainties.

Speaking about the steel industry specifically, Mr Acharya noted with pride that the Indian steel industry had taken a leadership role on the global stage. India had become the second-biggest producer and consumer of steel in the world, a remarkable achievement that reflected the sector's

growth and potential. His own organization, JSW, currently produced 35 million tons and had plans to grow to 50 million tons by the end of the decade. This expansion, he emphasized, would not only boost industrial capacity but would also provide employment to hinterland areas and contribute to regional development.

Mr Acharya highlighted a significant transformation: types of critical steel that India once had to import were now being produced domestically. This shift represented a crucial step toward self-reliance and demonstrated the sector's growing capabilities.

**The uncertainties of our world demand a model of leadership that is holistic, inclusive and future-oriented. The choices that we make in this and the next decade will define India's industrial leadership, employment quality and technological foundations.**

Beyond business metrics, Mr Acharya spoke about the JSW Foundation's comprehensive work in education, livelihoods, and art and culture. This holistic approach, he explained, reflected a commitment to making a real difference to the people of India, recognizing that corporate success must translate into social benefit.

Looking to the future, Mr Acharya emphasized that the choices made today would decisively shape tomorrow. He urged a focus on four key areas: capacity building, capability building, competitiveness, and sustainability. The overall model for holistic development, he stressed, should be genuinely holistic and deeply rooted in inclusivity, ensuring that growth benefited all segments of society.

#### **Address by Vir S. Advani, Deputy Chairman, CII Western Region & Chairman and Managing Director, BlueStar Ltd**

Vir S. Advani offered a global perspective on India's development journey, situating the nation's aspirations within the context of an evolving international landscape. He began by painting a picture of a world in flux: supply chains were being reimagined, trade relationships were evolving, and new growth corridors were opening up. Amid this global uncertainty, India stood at the center of the world, uniquely placed in the global market to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

The real question, Mr Advani suggested, was how India and India Inc. chose to move forward in this dynamic environment. He posed a fundamental challenge: India cannot become Viksit unless it becomes truly globalized. This was not merely about participating in global trade but about becoming an integral and indispensable part of global value chains.

Mr Advani acknowledged that today, globalization

itself was under stress. Trade fragmentation and tariff realignments were creating uncertainties in international commerce. However, he viewed this as a strategic opening for India. The nation possessed several advantages: a strong domestic market that provided resilience, a large pool of skilled workers, and growing technological capabilities. These factors positioned India favorably to capture opportunities that were emerging from the reorganization of global trade patterns.

**The world is resetting globalization, and India stands at the centre of this moment. Viksit Bharat cannot be achieved by looking inward alone, we must engage boldly with the world through exports, partnerships, and trusted trade. With competitiveness, compliance, and smart use of FTAs, Indian industry has a historic opportunity to integrate into global value chains and emerge as a reliable engine of global growth.**

India must actively search for new markets, Mr Advani urged, rather than waiting for opportunities to present themselves. Free Trade Agreements would play a crucial role in helping India expand its global footprint and access new markets. However, success in global markets would require a relentless focus on competitiveness, cost efficiency, and the ability to operate at scale. Alongside manufacturing prowess, India also needed to excel in design and research, moving up the value chain.

In today's interconnected world, Mr Advani highlighted several critical considerations: data protection, regulatory compliance, and traceability. These were no longer optional extras but fundamental requirements for participating in global trade. Encouragingly, he noted that India had made great progress in connectivity through improved ports, ease of doing business initiatives, and reducing logistics costs, all of which enhanced the nation's competitiveness.

Global partnerships, Mr Advani emphasized, would be a cornerstone of India's development strategy. Technology collaboration and skill exchange would help India grow rapidly while learning from the best practices of other nations. He concluded with a powerful articulation of India's unique strengths: the ability to scale with trust, proceed with speed while maintaining stability, and pursue ambition with responsibility. These qualities, properly leveraged, would help India not just participate in globalization but shape it.

Globalization, properly embraced, would be the pathway through which India would achieve Viksit Bharat, he concluded.

**Address by Rishi Kumar Bagla, Chairman, CII Western Region, Chairman and Managing Director, BG Electronic India Ltd.**

Rishi Kumar Bagla brought the discussions to a close with a pragmatic yet optimistic perspective on the question of Viksit Bharat. He began by addressing the central question being debated: would India truly become a developed country? His answer was unequivocal i.e. India was going to be a developed country, and this certainty was based on what he termed the three Ds: Democracy, Demand, and Demographic dividend.

However, Mr Bagla was quick to add important caveats. India's ambition, he stressed, must be matched by action. Growth must be balanced by inclusion. It was not enough to grow rapidly if significant portions of the population were left behind. The next phase of India's rise would depend on three critical factors: how collaboratively the nation grew, how intelligently it built its institutions and infrastructure, and how swiftly it moved while including everyone in the journey.

Viksit Bharat, Mr Bagla explained, would require strong foundations across multiple sectors: industry, infrastructure, and the digital economy. Each of these pillars needed to be robust and well-integrated with the others.

Turning his attention to regional development, Mr Bagla suggested that the Western Region could serve as a model for India's overall development. This region, with its industrial base, entrepreneurial culture, and infrastructure, had the potential to demonstrate what balanced and inclusive growth looked like. He introduced the concept of MSME, suggesting it would play an important role in the development framework.

**India's next leap will not be defined by how fast we grow, but by how inclusively and intelligently we build. Viksit Bharat demands strong regions, globally competitive MSMEs, and at least a thousand Indian-born MNCs. By hand-holding SMEs, embedding inclusiveness at the core, and aligning industry, innovation, and institutions, we can transform ambition into shared prosperity and global leadership.**

India, he emphasized, should aspire to supply the world with goods and services of the highest standards. The nation should position itself as an innovation hub, where new ideas were born and brought to fruition. Indian enterprises must think globally from the outset, not limiting their ambitions to the domestic market. He made a bold assertion: unless India had at least 1,000 Indian multinational corporations, it could not truly be called Viksit Bharat. This target repre-

sented not just numerical growth but the creation of globally competitive, innovation-driven enterprises that could hold their own on the world stage.

Recognizing that not all enterprises started at scale, Mr Bagla emphasized the importance of handholding small and medium enterprises to help them achieve their growth potential. CII Western Region, he noted, aimed to strengthen capabilities and help enterprises in their growth journey, providing mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to resources.

Inclusiveness, he stressed, must be at the core of all development efforts. This meant actively helping youth,

women entrepreneurs, and small enterprises become great, not leaving them to fend for themselves. By focusing on inclusive growth, India could ensure that the benefits of development reached every corner of society.

Mr Bagla suggested that "Viksit Paschim" (Developed West) could indeed become a growth model that other regions could learn from and adapt to their contexts. However, he was realistic about the timeline and effort required. The journey to Viksit Bharat, he reminded everyone, would be a marathon, not a sprint. It would require sustained effort, unwavering commitment, and collaborative action over many years.



# — Viksit Bharat Dialogue: Shaping a Resilient Economy for a Viksit Bharat

**Speaker:** K.V. Kamath, Past President, CII; Chairman, Jio Financial Services Ltd.

**Moderator:** Rajan Navani, Chairman, CII Council on India@100 and Chairman & Managing Director, JetSynthesys



## CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

**India is the fastest-growing major economy today, but in an uncertain global environment, how do we build long-term resilience?**

When we talk about resilience, we must first acknowledge the journey we have taken. India set ambitious goals early on, but for almost half the period leading up to India at 75, we were constrained by stalled projects, stressed balance

sheets, and infrastructure bottlenecks. This was a phase we could ill afford.

The real turnaround began around 2015, when these issues were systematically addressed. Then came the 2020 crisis, which many believed would set us back permanently. Instead, Indian industry responded with extraordinary adaptability. Companies restructured operations, adopted automation, improved efficiency, and strengthened balance sheets.

Within a year, corporate India reduced leverage, banks cleaned up NPAs, and a problem that had persisted for decades—the twin balance sheet stress—was largely resolved. This ability to absorb shocks and reinvent itself is the true source of India's resilience.

**With balance sheets now stronger, how should India think about capital formation and scaling growth?**

For more than 50 years, the narrative has been that India lacks capital. In my experience, this has largely been a perceived constraint rather than a real one. Despite limited capital availability, India has consistently found ways to grow.

We have repeatedly leapfrogged constraints. Telephony is a classic example—what was once considered an insurmountable limitation disappeared almost overnight. Similarly, in renewable energy, being late allowed us to adopt solutions at viable costs.

Indian industry has repeatedly demonstrated that when it is determined, perceived shortages—whether of capital, technology, or infrastructure—cease to be binding constraints.

**Infrastructure investment is often discussed as a necessity. How do you view its role in economic growth?**

Infrastructure should not be seen merely as an enabler or a social good—it must be viewed as a direct contributor to GDP growth. Every act of investment must be economically accretive.

The highway network built over the past decade is a powerful example. It has transformed logistics, reduced transportation time, and connected markets across the country. Yet its economic impact has not been fully documented or appreciated.

These roads have enabled farmers to diversify crops, reduced agricultural wastage, and improved supply chains. Similarly, urban rejuvenation and rebuilding of cities, towns, and villages should be seen as growth opportunities rather than challenges. Each of these investments adds to productivity and long-term economic output.

**Digital public infrastructure has become a defining feature of India's growth. How significant is it in your view?**

Digital infrastructure has fundamentally altered India's development trajectory. Earlier attempts to expand financial

inclusion failed due to lack of connectivity. That changed decisively around 2014–15 with Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, and widespread digital access.

India's digital stack is unique—not just in its design, but in the speed of its rollout and adoption. The COVID period accelerated usage, but acceptance was already widespread.

Today, digital platforms enable inclusion at a scale that was unimaginable earlier.

Everyday citizens can transfer money, make payments, track investments, and participate in the formal economy. The widespread adoption of UPI, even in rural areas, reflects how deeply digital infrastructure has penetrated society.

This is a practical demonstration of “folding the future in.”

**From Crisis to Confidence: How Indian Industry Reinvented Itself and Took Technology to the Masses**

“India's true strength was revealed in the toughest of times. Within a year of the COVID crisis, Indian industry reinvented itself—becoming leaner, more automated, and financially stronger. Balance sheets improved, banks cleaned up legacy NPAs, and a decade-old twin balance sheet problem was resolved through collective resilience and reform. But this transformation is not just about numbers; it is about inclusion. When a household worker can use UPI, open a bank or investment account, and participate in the financial system through a smartphone, that is when growth becomes real. Technology, made accessible and fair, is the foundation on which India's next phase of inclusive and sustainable growth will be built.” — K.V. Kamath

**How does digital infrastructure contribute to inclusivity as India moves toward Viksit Bharat?**

The most difficult barrier to inclusion—connectivity—has been solved. This has made the task of inclusion significantly easier.

Technology now allows financial services, investments, and basic economic participation to reach the last mile. What was once considered the domain of the urban or affluent—banking, investing, digital transactions—is now accessible to the average citizen.

This transformation has brought millions into the mainstream economy and created opportunities for wealth creation, not just income stability. Inclusivity today is no longer aspirational; it is operational.





**Geopolitics is increasingly shaping economics. How does India navigate this shifting global landscape?**

The current geopolitical environment resembles the early phase of COVID—marked by uncertainty and unpredictability. However, India has navigated this phase better than many expected.

Despite global disruptions, India has sustained strong growth and maintained balance-of-payments stability. While merchandise exports remain important, services exports—such as tourism, global capability centers, and digital services—have become equally critical.

India is increasingly strengthening bilateral economic relationships and developing alternative settlement mechanisms. This evolution enhances self-reliance while keeping India integrated into global value chains.

**To achieve leadership by 2047, how critical is IP-led**

**and product-led growth for India?**

India has a long runway to 2047, and the opportunity ahead is substantial. Infrastructure renewal alone can support sustained growth, but incremental growth must come from IP creation and digital-led industries.

Digital contributes a much larger share to China's economy than to India's today. This gap highlights India's untapped potential. As entrepreneurship matures, IP creation will naturally follow.

The future growth model will be driven by two engines: physical infrastructure and brain-led digital infrastructure.

**How important are institutions, governance, and entrepreneurship in sustaining this growth?**

Entrepreneurship in India is thriving at an unprecedented scale. The sheer number of startups reflects not just wealth creation, but a raising of standards across industries.

These entrepreneurs are challenging incumbents, driving innovation, and reshaping business models. This energy is a structural advantage for India and will increasingly translate into IP creation and global competitiveness.

**Does India need to rethink education and skilling for the future economy?**

Yes, very clearly. Skilling must be aligned with the future needs of the economy and embedded within the education system itself.

Preparing young people early—while they are still in school—ensures that aspirations and opportunities remain aligned. India has a long runway ahead, and structured skilling will be critical to sustaining growth over that period.

**India is often associated with delays. Why has this been accepted historically, and is that changing?**

Historically, delays were accepted because of resource constraints. Waiting became normalized. That mindset is changing rapidly.

As India's capabilities and resources improve, delays are becoming less acceptable. We are already witnessing faster execution across sectors, and this shift will accelerate further.

**When you look ahead to 2047, what must India do to ensure success?**

India must stay the course. The path is clear, the opportunities are well-defined, and the momentum is strong.

If there is one aspiration for 2047, it is that young Indians can look back and say there was never a better time to be born Indian—because they were part of this extraordinary journey toward a Viksit Bharat.



# —Viksit Bharat Dialogue: Green Growth, India's Symphony for Viksit Bharat

**Speaker:** Dr Ricky Kej, 3-time Grammy® Award Winner, Padma Shri Awardee, Indian Music Composer and Environmentalist

**Introduction by:** Piruz Khambatta, Past Chairman, CII Western Region

The second dialogue session took a refreshingly different turn, bringing the conversation to the intersection of environment, culture, and development. Mr Piruz Khambatta introduced Dr Ricky Kej, posing a question that would set the tone for this unique session: how could development and environment be combined?

Dr Kej began by introducing himself as both an environmentalist and a musician, emphasizing that he would speak about the environment through the lens of his artistic journey. Since childhood, he had been exposed to music in its myriad forms—instruments, ethnicity, different musical traditions. He fell deeply in love with music, and over time, he came to understand that music itself came from nature. Tribal communities had music at the heart of their culture, he noted, demonstrating the ancient connection between human expression and the natural world.

Dr Kej shared a profound philosophical perspective: every single atom has divinity within it. The world is one family—Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. In the ancient context, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* meant humanity must live in harmony with the environment, animals, forests, and all elements of nature. Co-existence was not optional; it was essential. This wasn't merely an environmental message but a deeply spiritual and cultural one rooted in Indian philosophy.

He observed that big brands had realised the power of music as a communication tool. Music was a powerful language that transcended barriers. He offered a simple but compelling example: songs learned in childhood are remembered throughout life. Every religion has songs, and community bonding happens through music. Music connects people in ways that words alone cannot.

Then Dr Kej made a crucial point about climate change narratives. The narrative on climate change that came from the West, he argued, was not entirely applicable to India. For centuries, Indians had been conserving nature—it was woven into the cultural and spiritual fabric of the civilization.

Solutions for clean energy, a renewable future, and improved standards of living needed to be found from India's own wisdom and traditions, not merely imported from the West. India had its own sustainable practices and philosophies that predated modern environmental movements.

## Change the World by Changing Yourself: A Musician's Call for Coexistence and Conscious Living

"I'm not here as a leader or an expert, but as a musician who learned from nature before textbooks. Music taught me that every sound, every species, and every human choice matters. The greatest threat we face is not climate or conflict—it's the belief that someone else will fix it. Real change begins when each of us makes small, conscious shifts in how we live, think, and coexist with the world around us." — Dr Ricky Kej

Dr Kej offered a thought-provoking observation about global problems. Every problem on the planet was either a problem of survival or a problem of thriving. All the challenges humanity faced stemmed from a belief that change would come from someone else. But the truth, he emphasised, was that change had to come from within us. Everyone held the power to create transformation.

How, then, could this change be brought about? Dr Kej's answer lay in the role of artists and musicians. They should convey messages to people's hearts through storytelling. Art and music had the unique ability to bypass intellectual resistance and speak directly to human emotion and values. When people felt something deeply, they were moved to action.

The program concluded with a powerful and moving moment: a symphony orchestra singing Vande Mataram, India's national song. This performance beautifully embodied Dr Kej's message—that culture, music, and environmental consciousness could come together to inspire the vision of a developed, sustainable India.





# — Viksit Bharat Dialogue: From Skilling to Scaling up Businesses, Accelerating India's 2047 Ambition

**Speaker:** Ronnie Screwvala, Co-founder, upGrad & Swades Foundation

**Moderator:** Rajan Navani, Chairman, CII Council on India@100 and Chairman & Managing Director, JetSynthesis



## CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

**You've been deeply involved in building scalable businesses and working on skilling. From your journey, what should India be thinking about today as we try to scale businesses alongside skills?**

India stands at a point where opportunities are massive, but challenges are equally significant. When we talk about scaling, it requires a certain level of maturity and acceptance. Often, the rhetoric of "I want to scale" or "I want to build big" overtakes the real understanding of what operating at scale truly demands.

India has 1.4 billion people, is extremely price-sensitive, and has nearly 600 million people living in rural areas. Every problem we face must be solved at scale—there is no alternative. However, not everyone is yet ready for that scale. As Mr Kamath mentioned earlier, we are still learning how to fully appreciate what it takes to operate at a global level.

When we step onto the global stage, work discipline and work ethics must rise substantially. While I am deeply optimistic and patriotic, I believe one of our biggest challenges over the next 5, 10, or 15 years will be improving discipline and work culture. Without fixing this underlying DNA, ambition will always outpace execution.

**You've spoken strongly about discipline and entitlement in the workforce. Why do you believe this is such a critical issue for India's future?**

Discipline fundamentally shapes outcomes. I personally believe that everyone below the age of 35 should either spend six months in rural India or one year in the army. Such experiences significantly alter a person's sense of discipline, responsibility, and humility.

When the workforce is less entitled and more disciplined, the quality of output changes dramatically. Today, entitlement levels are high, and work ethics need serious improvement. Unless we address these at a foundational level, the rhetoric of scaling will remain ahead of reality.

**Skilling is a major national focus. How should we redefine skilling in today's rapidly changing world?**

Traditionally, skilling in India has been associated with physical or vocational abilities. But today, mental skilling—continuous learning, adaptability, and upgrading—is far more important.

There is currently a strong sense of FOMO around AI. From boardrooms to shop floors, everyone feels the need to talk about AI. But if people haven't mastered the basics—data science, analytics, machine learning, coding—it becomes very difficult to meaningfully adopt AI.

We cannot jump straight to advanced tools without understanding fundamentals. While people may use AI easily as consumers, building and applying it at scale requires deeper capability. Otherwise, the conversation around AI will remain largely superficial.

**Many founders aspire to scale quickly and go global. What challenges do they underestimate?**

Scaling and global expansion bring tremendous chal-

lenges. One of the most common mistakes founders make is failing to take their teams along on that journey.

Scaling is not just about ambition; it requires readiness—organizationally, culturally, and operationally. India today is a cup half full: we have enormous ambition and opportunity, but we must still fix our basics and core DNA to truly succeed at scale.

## From Scale to Substance: Why Discipline, AI Readiness, and Creativity Will Define India's Next Growth Chapter

**"India's opportunity is immense, but scale without maturity is just rhetoric. To truly compete globally, we must strengthen our work ethics, build discipline, and invest in both mental skilling and AI fundamentals. Technology can push us forward, but only if communities understand and harness it. The next phase of India's growth will not be defined by outsourcing or GDP alone, but by our ability to create intellectual property, nurture creativity across sectors, and build our own definition of a 'decent product', one rooted in innovation, inclusion, and shared responsibility across government, industry, and society."**

— Ronnie Screwvala

**Technology and AI are often seen as the primary drivers of scale. How should Indian businesses think about this?**

Technology alone does not drive scale—consumer adoption does. Over the last 20 years, many technologies failed simply because consumers did not adopt them.

Before leapfrogging with technology, businesses must pause and understand consumer trends. Technology only succeeds when entire communities or user groups embrace it.

AI, however, has the potential to push India forward in a meaningful way. Historically, our mindset has been that of an outsourced nation. Even today, while global capability centers are more advanced, the underlying mindset is still outsourcing. To become a Viksit Bharat, we must shift toward originating ideas and creating intellectual property rather than copying or executing for others.

**India has seen rapid growth in startups. Is that enough to drive innovation and economic transformation?**

India now has around 200,000 startups, which is encouraging. But for a country of 1.4 billion people, this number is still insufficient—we need closer to 2 million startups.

More importantly, we must examine the depth of innovation. Many founders believe innovation depends on the



government improving ease of doing business. I see this as a cop-out. Countries like Israel have innovated at the highest levels despite constant conflict.

Innovation is driven by mindset, not environment. AI will help push us toward higher-quality jobs, original thinking, and intellectual property creation, moving us away from an outsourcing-led model.

**You've worked across media, education, business, and philanthropy. How did such a multidimensional journey evolve for you?**

I come from a lower middle-class background, at a time when entrepreneurship was not encouraged. One of the biggest advantages I had was a lack of entitlement.

When I started out, my father supported my decision but made it clear he could not financially bail me out. That reality creates a powerful leveling field and pushes you to innovate and take responsibility.

Creativity has been central to everything I've done. Creativity is not limited to storytelling—it is essential in manufacturing, EVs, solar, education, and every sector today. Without creativity, innovation cannot happen.

**You've emphasized soft power as a key pillar of Viksit Bharat. Why is it so important?**

A Viksit Bharat cannot be defined solely by GDP or per capita income. Soft power—sports, culture, creativity, and storytelling—is equally critical.

We cannot become a developed nation without excelling in these areas. Soft power reflects a nation's self-belief and conviction.

India must define its own development model rather than copying others. While we've articulated the headline of Viksit Bharat, we haven't yet fully articulated the subtext—what it truly means for our society and identity.

**How do you view the relationship between business success and giving back to society?**

One of India's greatest strengths today is sweat equity—people giving time and effort, not just money.

Giving back does not require age, wealth, or status. Young people can and should contribute early. CSR has increased the scale of giving, but volunteerism is equally powerful.

I don't believe in the concept of "for less profit." You are either for-profit or not-for-profit. What matters is scale and access. In sectors like healthcare and education, access must come before affordability. Without access, affordability has no meaning.

**What concerns or worries you most about India today?**

I remain an optimist, but I worry about proclamation without execution. India has often announced ambitious goals without sufficient focus on execution.

While we are moving in the right direction, the velocity must increase. Another concern is entitlement among youth—the expectation that skills automatically guarantee jobs.

Jobs cannot be demanded from the government or private sector.

Entrepreneurship, self-employment, and job readiness must become part of our DNA, starting at school and college levels. Many of our challenges are being viewed in a uni-dimensional way, whereas progress requires multidimensional thinking.

**Storytelling has come up repeatedly. How important is it for India, especially in the digital age?**

Storytelling is not about spinning narratives; it is about authentic stories told with conviction.

Without soft power, we cannot be a hard power. Global influence is built through culture, cinema, music, and stories that shape perception.

Technology and AI are breaking language barriers, making storytelling more accessible than ever. India has immense storytelling potential across its diversity, but we have not fully unlocked it yet.

**Tourism is often discussed as a growth lever. How does it fit into the Viksit Bharat vision?**

India cannot become a Viksit Bharat without emerging as a major global tourism destination.

Infrastructure matters, but storytelling and branding are equally important. Tourism creates jobs, strengthens soft power, and drives inclusive growth.

While leadership has elevated India's global standing, storytelling must come from millions of citizens, not just institutions.

**What role do governance and discipline play in national development?**

Governance is basic housekeeping. It begins with integrity, responsibility, and maturity.

If the workforce is disciplined, compromises reduce naturally, and governance improves.

Discipline is the foundation on which everything else stands.

**Finally, when you wake up on 15th August 2047, what does Viksit Bharat look like to you?**

Viksit Bharat will be defined by how people think, behave, and work.

If I see a traffic signal without lights and people still wait patiently and move smoothly, I will know we have arrived. That collective discipline will be the true sign of a Viksit Bharat.

# — Viksit Bharat Dialogue: India's Creative Renaissance, Shaping Global Narratives through Storytelling

**Speaker:** Saurabh Dwivedi, Founder Editor, The Lallantop & Editor, India Today Hindi  
**Introduction by:** Piruz Khambatta, Past Chairman, CII Western Region; Chairman, Rasna Pvt. Ltd



## The Foundation: Language and Civilizational Wisdom

Mr Saurabh Dwivedi delivered a compelling address in Hindi, beginning with a profound assertion that language serves as the cornerstone of national development. He drew attention to India's ancient understanding of critical aspects of civilization—from river-based settlements and red brick construction techniques to sophisticated drainage systems—demonstrating that our ancestors possessed remarkable knowledge about sustainable living and urban planning long



before these concepts gained global recognition.

Central to his discourse was the significance of Vedic wisdom, which he positioned not merely as religious texts but as comprehensive guides encompassing economics, ethics, and life philosophy. He highlighted the concept of ‘Pragyan Brahma’ from our scriptures, which articulates the holistic pursuit of Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth and prosperity), Kama (desires and fulfillment), and Moksha (liberation). This framework, he explained, recognizes that human existence emerges from desire and consciousness, ultimately seeking connection with the divine while fulfilling earthly responsibilities.

### Preserving Knowledge and Preventing Brain Drain

A critical concern raised by Mr Dwivedi was the urgent need to preserve indigenous knowledge systems and prevent the continued brain drain that depletes India’s intellectual capital. He emphasized that scientists and innovators must be encouraged and supported within the country, creating an ecosystem where brilliance can flourish on home soil. This preservation and nurturing of talent, he argued, is fundamental to India’s journey toward becoming truly developed and self-reliant.

### The Power of Storytelling and Hidden Histories

Mr Dwivedi posed a thought-provoking question to the audience: while we may not remember ordinary school days, we vividly recall our greatest achievements during those years. This, he suggested, speaks to humanity’s intrinsic nature as storytellers—we remember and pass on narratives that inspire and educate. He lamented that while the world knows the story of Troy, few are aware of Swapnavāsavadatta, where King Udayana was trapped by enemies using a trojan horse technique that predates the famous Greek tale. This exemplifies how our rich narratives have been overshadowed by stories told through the lens of hegemonic powers.

Our ancestors, he emphasized, were profoundly curious individuals dedicated to understanding life’s deeper meanings. When we envision a developed India, we must ask ourselves whether we have stories to tell the world. The answer is an emphatic yes—but these stories have been suppressed or ignored, replaced by narratives imposed during colonial subjugation. Mr Dwivedi urged the audience to reconnect critically with our history, as our ancestors instructed. The practice of asking questions, he noted, lies at the very heart of our philosophical traditions and legendary texts.

### Cultivating Ancient Virtues for Modern Progress

Drawing from our civilizational heritage, Mr Dwivedi advocated for inculcating rationalism, patience, and curi-

osity—virtues that our ancestors exemplified. He stressed that India must produce outcomes of the highest standards without seeking validation from others, unlike the colonial period when external approval became the benchmark of success. True development, he argued, requires us to stand confidently in our own knowledge and capabilities.

Technology, in his vision, must be learned, created, and adapted indigenously rather than merely imported. He proposed the establishment of special knowledge zones dedicated to research, innovation, and the synthesis of ancient wisdom with modern science. Drawing a poignant contrast, he observed that while ancient rishis and munis engaged in deep meditation and knowledge-seeking, contemporary society often prioritizes entertainment and festivities. While celebration has its place, the balance has tilted away from serious intellectual pursuit.

**India must produce outcomes of the highest standards without seeking validation from others, unlike the colonial period when external approval became the benchmark of success. True development requires us to stand confidently in our own knowledge and capabilities.**

### Inclusivity Rooted in Diverse Heritage

India’s extraordinary diversity in culture and practices, Mr Dwivedi noted, is not a weakness but a tremendous strength. He called for seeking knowledge with inclusivity, drawing from the full spectrum of our historical experiences and cultural traditions. This inclusive approach to knowledge-building ensures that development benefits all sections of society and honors the contributions of diverse communities throughout history.

### Lessons from Mahābhārata: Governance and Resource Management

Mr Dwivedi drew profound insights from the Mahābhārata, particularly the post-war conversations between Bhishma Pitamaha and Yudhishtira. He highlighted Bhishma’s wisdom that the period after war is more challenging than the conflict itself—a metaphor relevant to nation-building. Bhishma’s teaching that life flows like a river, requiring optimal use of resources coupled with knowledge-based governance, offers timeless guidance for contemporary India’s development challenges.

### The Human Advantage: Language, Knowledge, and Imagination

In concluding his address, Mr Dwivedi identified three distinctive attributes that separate humans from other species. First is language—not merely communication but in-



tricate codes developed and refined over centuries, carrying within them the accumulated wisdom of generations. Second is the brain’s capacity for knowledge, enabling humans to understand complexities and abstractions far beyond other life forms. Third, and perhaps most powerful, is imagination—the uniquely human ability to conceive the impossible and then work toward making it reality.

These three attributes, when harmoniously applied, form the foundation for true progress. Mr Dwivedi’s vision for Viksit Bharat centers on rationalizing knowledge—bringing together ancient wisdom with new learnings, preserving time-tested insights while remaining open to innovation and adaptation.

### Conclusion: A Call for Knowledge-Centric Development

Mr Saurabh Dwivedi’s dialogue presented a compelling vision where India’s development is not measured solely by

economic metrics or technological adoption, but by our ability to reconnect with indigenous knowledge systems, tell our authentic stories, cultivate intellectual curiosity, and create an ecosystem where brilliance thrives. His message was clear: Viksit Bharat will emerge not by imitating others or seeking external validation, but by confidently drawing from our civilizational strengths while embracing the future with rationalism, inclusivity, and imagination. The path forward requires us to be as curious, patient, and knowledge-seeking as our ancestors, while applying that wisdom to contemporary challenges with creativity and courage.



# —Plenary Session on Art & Culture, Tourism & Holistic Wellbeing from Indian Roots to Global Resonance

**Panelists:** Dr Nidhi Choudhari, IAS, Director NGMA Mumbai; Brinda Miller, Fine Artist, Hon. Chairperson, Kala Ghoda Association; Kunal Vijayakar Actor, Broadcaster, YouTuber & Food-Writer; Dr Mickey Mehta, Global Leading Holistic Health Guru; Subodh Tiwari, Hon. Secretary & CEO, Kaivalyadhama, Secretary General, Indian Yoga Association  
**Session Anchor:** Vinaya Deshpande, Chief of Bureau, Maharashtra, The Hindu

## From Indian Roots to Global Resonance

The plenary session on Art and Culture, Tourism and Holistic Wellbeing explored India's journey from preserving its ancient heritage to establishing itself as a global destination for wellness, culture, and authentic experiences. Moderated by Vinaya Deshpande, the discussion brought together distinguished voices including Dr Mickey Mehta, Mr Subodh Tiwari, Mr Kunal Vijaykar, Ms Brinda Miller, and Dr Nidhi Choudhari, each offering unique perspectives on how India can leverage its rich cultural legacy while embracing contemporary opportunities.

## Wellness and Holistic Health: India's Inherent Strength

Dr Mickey Mehta opened the conversation by emphasizing that India's contributions to wellness are not merely soft power but represent the nation's hard power on the global stage. He highlighted that India was the birthplace of science, art, and culture, with the country's ancient rishis and munis serving as the world's first scientists, poets, and philosophers. These sages made groundbreaking discoveries, from understanding that the earth is round and rotates on its axis to developing the science of mindfulness and molecular restructuring. Dr Mehta underscored that yoga, wellness, and Ayurveda are deeply rooted in India's scientific and philosophical traditions. He also shared that the AYUSH Ministry is preparing to implement transformational initiatives in Ayurveda beginning in March of the coming year, signalling a renewed commitment to establishing India as the premier global destination for health and wellness.

## Reclaiming Yoga's Spiritual Essence

Building on the wellness theme, Mr Subodh Tiwari addressed concerns about whether India had missed the opportunity to establish itself as the authentic home of yoga. He reassured that over the past decade, particularly since 2014



with the strong support of Prime Minister Modi, India has made significant strides in reclaiming yoga's essence. While the West initially adopted primarily the asana or physical aspect of yoga, there is now a reverse cycle occurring, with countries coming to India to learn the complete yogic tradition. The establishment of the Yoga Certification Board under the Ministry of AYUSH has been instrumental in this process, and public health centers are now mandating the presence of qualified yoga teachers. Mr Tiwari emphasized that yoga encompasses far more than physical exercise; it represents the holistic dimensions of mental, social, physical, and spiritual wellbeing as embodied in Ashtanga Yoga. He observed that while our lives often concentrate on "doing," true transformation occurs when we shift our focus to "being." This deeper understanding positions yoga institutions and experts with the crucial responsibility of propagating authentic knowledge and preserving traditional practices.

## Indian Cuisine: Celebrating Diversity Over Uniformity

Mr Kunal Vijaykar brought a refreshing perspective to the discussion of Indian cuisine as a soft power tool. He candidly acknowledged that there is no singular entity called "Indian food," but rather a magnificent tapestry of diverse regional cuisines, each with distinct characteristics shaped by geography, culture, and tradition. Rather than attempting to homogenize this diversity under one label, Mr Vijaykar suggested that India should celebrate and promote its regional culinary identities, much as Chinese cuisine successfully established itself in America while maintaining its regional distinctions. Interestingly, he noted that regional Indian food often finds greater acceptance in Europe than within India itself, indicating a need for Indians to first embrace

their own diverse culinary heritage. The path forward, he proposed, involves physically going out to the world, showcasing street food traditions, and inviting global audiences to experience authentic regional cuisines in their original settings. Social media serves as an effective teaser for these experiences, but the physical, sensory encounter with food and culture remains irreplaceable.

## Democratizing Art and Culture Through Festivals

Ms Brinda Miller shared the inspiring story of the Kala Ghoda Festival, which began as a local initiative for the people of Mumbai and has evolved into an internationally recognized celebration of arts and culture. The festival's success lies in its democratic approach, making art accessible to everyone without financial barriers while creating a platform for artists across various disciplines, from classical dance to contemporary visual arts. The festival operates through fifteen verticals encompassing food, culture, art, and other creative domains, supported by corporate social responsibility initiatives from companies interested in promoting the arts. Ms Brinda emphasized that the festival has become possible through the collaborative efforts of people from all parts of India and various sectors working toward a common vision. While the festival includes commercial stalls, its primary achievement has been democratizing access to art and providing artists with invaluable exposure and opportunities to showcase their work.

## Public-Private Partnership in Cultural Preservation

Dr Nidhi Choudhari contributed important insights on the role of government and private sector collaboration in nurturing India's cultural ecosystem. She observed that



most cultural institutions, including academies of arts and music and museums, can truly thrive only when public and private entities work together effectively. While government support remains essential, particularly through cultural institutions, the private sector has increasingly stepped forward to support arts and culture. The government's evolving role, she suggested, should focus on setting policy frameworks, establishing vision and agenda, facilitating permissions through single-window systems, and providing active support through scholarships and other mechanisms, while allowing the creative sectors the freedom to flourish. Successful festivals such as Serendipity in Goa, Kochi-Muziris Biennale in Kerala, and Bengal Biennale demonstrate what can be achieved when diverse stakeholders unite with a shared vision.

### Digital Access vs Physical Experience

An important dimension of the discussion centered on the role of technology and digital experiences in promoting culture and tourism. Dr Nidhi Choudhari acknowledged initiatives such as JATAN, a museum platform provided by the government that offers digital access to artifacts, and the National Manuscript Mission, which preserves and promotes ancient manuscripts in digital format. The Mahatma Gandhi Memorial of Art (MGMA) has achieved complete digitization of its collection. However, she firmly maintained that while digitization democratizes access to cultural heritage, it cannot replace the transformative power of physical experience. Authentic cultural immersion requires presence: experiencing Ganesh Chaturthi by visiting Maharashtra, Durga Puja in Bengal, or Narali Purnima in Alibaug. Mr Kunal Vijaykar reinforced this

perspective, describing social media as an effective teaser that can generate interest and awareness, but emphasized that physical experience remains paramount. He cited the example of Spain's La Tomatina festival, questioning why similar creative celebrations couldn't be promoted more actively in India with the strategic use of social media as a promotional tool while maintaining the integrity of the physical experience.

### Looking Forward: An Integrated Vision

The plenary session illuminated a clear pathway for India's cultural and wellness sectors. The consensus among panelists pointed toward an integrated approach that honors tradition while embracing innovation, that celebrates diversity rather than enforcing uniformity, and that leverages technology as an enabler rather than a replacement for authentic experience. India's position as an unbroken civilization with millennia of accumulated wisdom in wellness, philosophy, arts, and cuisine positions it uniquely to offer the world something increasingly scarce: authenticity, depth, and holistic wellbeing. The coming years will be crucial as initiatives by the AYUSH Ministry, continued development of yoga certification programs, expansion of cultural festivals, and strategic promotion of regional cuisines work together to establish India not merely as a tourist destination, but as a global center for transformative cultural and wellness experiences. Success will require continued collaboration between government, private sector, artists, cultural practitioners, and communities, all working toward the shared vision of taking India's rich heritage from its roots to global resonance.

# —Plenary Session on India as a global Power in 2047: Catalyzing Growth, Innovation, And Leadership

**Session Lead:** [Ninad Karpe](#), Founder, Karpe Diem Ventures

**Keynote Address:** [Suhel Seth](#), Founder & Managing Partner, Counselage India

**Panelists:** [Piruz Khambatta](#), Past Chairman, CII Western Region; Chairman, Rasna Pvt. Ltd; [Ipsita Dasgupta](#), Senior Vice President & Managing Director, India, Bangladesh, & Sri Lanka, HP Inc.; [Kunal Vijaykar](#), Actor, Broadcaster, YouTuber & Food-Writer

### Opening Remarks: Foundations of Viksit Bharat

The session opened with a thought-provoking exchange between Piruz Khambatta and Suhel Seth on the vision for a developed India (Viksit Bharat). Mr Seth emphasized that while slogans have their place, true development requires accountability and a willingness to address fundamental challenges. He outlined four critical pillars for India's transformation: recognizing and celebrating our civilizational legacy, developing the courage to call out inadequacies, investing substantially in knowledge creation, and dramatically improving our planning and execution capabilities, particularly for critical infrastructure projects.

Mr Seth highlighted that India's greatest asset lies in having some of the brightest minds globally, yet cautioned that the concept of "jugaad" (improvised solutions) should not become a substitute for genuine innovation. He stressed the importance of questioning decision-makers constructively for the nation's benefit, while maintaining respect for elders and persons with disabilities. His message to parents was particularly compelling: empower the youth through knowledge, literature, and books rather than material possessions alone. He advocated for promoting rich Indian literature, citing examples like the works of Dinkar, and argued that true development begins with individual transformation and respect for our knowledge systems.







### Women's Participation and Social Empowerment

Addressing the critical issue of women's participation in the workforce and leadership roles, Mr Khambatta emphasized that meaningful change stems from social environment and family values rather than statutory measures. He expressed concern that quotas and reservations, while well-intentioned, can sometimes become barriers to organic development and merit-based advancement, suggesting that creating an enabling ecosystem is more sustainable for long-term empowerment.

### Technology Leadership and AI Integration

Ipsita Das Gupta presented an optimistic vision for India's technological future, expressing confidence that India will emerge as a global leader in frontier technologies by 2047. She acknowledged that while India is currently one of the world's largest technology consumers, the critical transition needed is toward becoming technology creators. A particular concern she raised was the imbalance in how time is allocated—Indians spend considerable time as entertainment consumers but invest comparatively less in creating technology and innovation.

On artificial intelligence specifically, Ms Das Gupta identified two pressing challenges: the digital divide between large corporations and smaller enterprises, and the urgent

need to deploy AI for solving pressing societal issues. She advocated for innovative applications such as AI-enabled teacherless teaching systems to address educational gaps. The verification of information in an AI-driven world emerged as a significant concern, particularly regarding the spread of misinformation. During the rapid-fire round, she emphasized the importance of AI regulation over unchecked acceleration, and stressed talent reskilling over mere job orientation, advocating for building fast while maintaining quality standards.

### Cultural Diplomacy and India's Soft Power

Kunal Vijaykar offered fascinating insights into how India's cultural narrative—particularly through food, film, and regional languages—can establish global influence. He observed that in the age of social media, content creators have assumed roles traditionally held by diplomatic missions, with viewers placing greater trust in authentic creators than government messaging. Food, in particular, presents an exceptional opportunity for cultural diplomacy, allowing India to invite the world to experience its diversity and richness.

However, Mr Vijaykar also cautioned about the need for balanced regulation of social media and AI. While emphasizing the importance of protecting freedom of speech, he acknowledged that some framework is necessary to address harmful content and misinformation. He strongly advocated

for vernacular, local, and hyper-local storytelling, believing that India's authentic stories will resonate globally when told in native languages and contexts. In his rapid-fire responses, he prioritized authenticity over virality, local stories over global appeal, and culture over content, reinforcing his belief in the power of genuine narratives.

### Systemic Reforms and Unlearning

Suhel Seth delivered pointed observations on systemic issues requiring urgent attention. He urged the country to move beyond ceremonial practices like lengthy vote of thanks and introductions, focusing instead on substantive discussions and action. He highlighted the deteriorating state of public health centers and the public education system, advocating for technology-driven solutions to address these fundamental challenges. Mr Seth emphasized that preserving India's food culture, literature, art, and soft power assets is essential for sustainable development.

When asked about India's greatest advantage, he unhesitatingly identified democracy as the nation's strongest foundation. He acknowledged his generation's responsibility for slower progress but expressed tremendous hope in younger generations to drive transformation. He also stressed the importance of engaging the Indian diaspora more meaningfully in nation-building efforts.

### Supply Chain and Infrastructure

On supply chain optimization, Mr Khambatta identified logistics costs as a critical bottleneck, noting that India's competency exists but is undermined by costs significantly higher than other countries. He advocated for transport subsidies for logistics and raised concerns about port monopolies inflating product costs. In the rapid-fire round, he emphasized stability over speed, self-reliance over scale, supply-side efficiency over cost efficiency alone, and prioritized exports to drive growth.

### Audience Engagement and Future Vision

Audience questions brought forth important discussions on preventing AI misutilization and overcoming the tendency to undervalue indigenous developments. Ms Das Gupta acknowledged that society is still learning about AI's implications and effects will become clearer with time. Mr Seth candidly admitted his generation's shortcomings in development pace while expressing optimism about youth-led transformation.

The session concluded with Mr Seth sharing his vision for 2047: newspapers reporting stories of a great, inclusive India where Indians are winning Nobel Prizes in physics and chemistry, signalling true scientific and intellectual leadership on the global stage.





# Gallery





- सीआईआई शिखर सम्मेलन में उद्योग जगत की हस्तियों ने कहा: भारत न केवल घरेलू समृद्धि के लिए तैयार है, बल्कि एक नई विश्व व्यवस्था को आकार और उभरने के लिए भी है तैयार

© Updated on 17 Dec, 2025 08:36 PM IST

     



एशियस ग्लोब मीपल

सीआईआई शिखर सम्मेलन ने लखनौ, नकावा और समावेशिता के माध्यम से विकसित भारत की परिकल्पना को साकार करने की साझा प्रतिबद्धता की पुष्टि की। सम्मेलन में शामिल हुए उद्योग जगत की हस्तियों ने इस बात पर जोर दिया कि भारत की मजबूत आर्थिक बुनियाद, तकनीकी नेतृत्व और सहयोगात्मक साझेदारियाँ वैश्विक अनिश्चितता के

**REPUBLIC**  **LIVE TV** 

India has emerged from economic stress and global disruptions with renewed strength, setting the stage for sustained long-term growth, Chairman, Jio Financial Services, KV Kamath said, crediting the Indian industry for rapidly repairing balance sheets and rebuilding confidence after the COVID-19 pandemic shock.

Speaking at a leadership forum, titled 'Holistic Leadership for an Inclusive World' organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Wednesday, Kamath described the period after 2020 as a decisive inflection point. Corporate India, he said, responded to workforce shortages and operational disruption by improving efficiency and automation, which translated directly into stronger profitability.

"If anybody does an analysis of pre-Covid profitability and post-Covid... you will see Indian balance sheets come out much stronger," Kamath said, noting that companies also repaid debt, enabling banks to clean up

## Post-Covid Reset Puts India on Strong Long-Term Growth Path to 2047: KV Kamath

Jio Financial Services Chairman KV Kamath says India has emerged from Covid-era stress with stronger corporate balance sheets, higher profitability & cleaner bank books. He cites infra investment and digital public platforms like UPI and Jan Dhan as key drivers for India's 2047 growth vision.

Asian News International  
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The collage consists of 15 screenshots of social media posts, mostly from the CII Western Region, celebrating the 'India Ahead Towards a Viksit Bharat Summit 2025'. The posts are arranged in a grid-like fashion, showing various speakers and panel discussions. Key elements include:

- Top Left:** A post by Rajan Navani (@RajanNavani) dated Dec 10, 2023, mentioning a conversation with Padma Bhushan KV Kamath.
- Top Middle:** A post by CII Western Region (WIR) dated Dec 11, 2023, highlighting India's cultural and wellness heritage.
- Top Right:** A post by CII Western Region (WIR) dated Dec 17, 2023, titled 'Ancient Wisdom, Living Consciousness: Reconnecting with the Civilisational Roots of Meaning'.
- Middle Left:** A post by Pooja Khambatta (@pooja.khambatta) dated Dec 15, 2023, expressing excitement about the summit.
- Middle Middle:** A post by CII Western Region dated Dec 15, 2023, titled 'From Scale to Substance: Why Disciplines, AI Readiness, and Creativity Will Define India's Next Growth Chapter'.
- Middle Right:** A post by CII Western Region dated Dec 17, 2023, titled 'India 2047: Charting the Path to Global Leadership'.
- Bottom Left:** A post by CII Western Region dated Dec 17, 2023, titled 'Building Viksit Bharat: Inclusive Growth, Global Enterprises, and Collaborative Leadership'.
- Bottom Middle:** A post by CII Western Region dated Dec 17, 2023, titled 'Thought Leaders on Leading with Purpose in a Changing World'.
- Bottom Right:** A post by CII Western Region dated Dec 20, 2023, titled 'A deeply moving moment unfolded at CII India Ahead Towards a Viksit Bharat Summit 2023'.

The screenshots show various speakers on stage, including Rajan Navani, Pooja Khambatta, Siddhant Gangawane, and others, along with group photos of the summit attendees. The background of the stage features the 'INDIA AHEAD TOWARDS A VIKSIT BHARAT 2025' logo.









## Confederation of Indian Industry

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering Industry, Government and civil society through advisory and consultative processes.

CII is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organisation, with around 9,700 members from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs, and an indirect membership of over 365,000 enterprises from 318 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.

For 130 years, CII has been engaged in shaping India's development journey and works proactively on transforming Indian Industry's engagement in national development. CII charts change by working closely with the Government on policy issues, interfacing with thought leaders, and enhancing efficiency, competitiveness, and business opportunities for industry through a range of specialised services and strategic global linkages. It also provides a platform for consensus-building and networking on key issues.

Through its dedicated Centres of Excellence and Industry competitiveness initiatives, promotion of innovation and technology adoption, and partnerships for sustainability, CII plays a transformative part in shaping the future of the nation. Extending its agenda beyond business, CII assists industry to identify and execute corporate citizenship programmes across diverse domains, including affirmative action, livelihoods, diversity management, skill development, empowerment of women, and sustainable development, to name a few.

For 2025-26, CII has identified "Accelerating Competitiveness: Globalisation, Inclusivity, Sustainability, Trust" as its theme, prioritising five key pillars. During the year, CII will align its initiatives to drive strategic action aimed at enhancing India's competitiveness by promoting global engagement, inclusive growth, sustainable practices, and a foundation of trust.

With 70 offices, including 12 Centres of Excellence, in India, and 9 overseas offices in Australia, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Singapore, UAE, UK, and USA, as well as institutional partnerships with about 250 counterpart organisations in almost 100 countries, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

### Confederation of Indian Industry

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