

# PRAVASI INDIANS

The India Connection

## THE INDIAN DIASPORA BRIDGES BEYOND BORDERS

INDIA-CHINA

WHY INDIA MUST KEEP 3 CS IN MIND WHILE ENGAGING WITH CHINA



CLIMATE CRISIS  
IT BEGINS IN  
THE MIND

DIASPORA  
BETWEEN CURRY NIGHTS & CAREER FIGHTS  
परदेश की एक अनकही कहानी

विचारधारा  
आस्था, असहमति और  
आज का समय



# MADHYA PRADESH TAKES TOURISM TO NEW HEIGHTS WITH HELICOPTER SERVICE

*A vast landscape punctuated by spiritual hubs, ancient monuments and sites where wildlife and natural beauty abound. Exploring all of Madhya Pradesh would take a lifetime! In today's age of pressed timelines, Madhya Pradesh presents a service to assure the elderly pilgrim of safe and comfortable trips and delight the contemporary traveller. The PM Shri Heli Tourism Service offers fast and affordable aerial connectivity between major attractions, replacing long road journeys with short flights.*

**Here's a snapshot of how this integrated aerial network will bring the state's great destinations closer to each other than ever before:**

### **Navigating Nature: Bhopal-Madai-Pachmarhi**

A weekend getaway from Bhopal to the picturesque locales of Madai and Pachmarhi involves more than five hours of driving on winding roads. Turn this into an effortless and affordable journey via just an hour of helicopter hopping. Cruise along dreamy islands of the Tawa Dam & reservoir or laze in the infinity pool of the MP Tawa Resort. Enjoy a never-before 45-minute joyride over the Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve, touching incredible nature-based experiences.

### **Heritage Hopping: Bhopal – Khajuraho – Rewa – Satna-Singrauli**

Beyond helicopters, leverage the PM Shri Vayu Paryatan Seva and hop from Bhopal to explore historic temples, palaces and caves in Khajuraho, Rewa, Satna and Singrauli.

If you have a destination, and are short on time, Madhya Pradesh's newly launched aerial services offer curated experiences for the contemporary traveller. Reduce the strain of long road journeys and take in more of the magical heart of India by maximizing your holiday time.

### **Wildlife & Worship: Jabalpur - Maihar - Chitrakoot - Kanha - Bandhavgarh - Amarkantak**

Base yourself in Jabalpur to explore the Mahakoshal region. Helicopter rides make tiger spotting in the stunning flora and fauna of Bandhavgarh and Kanha's sanctuaries even easier. Taking the aerial route empowers visitors with fast and smooth trips to pray at the Sharda Devi Shaktipeeth at Maihar, or at the mouth of the Narmada at Amarkantak. Relive the Ramayana with a flying visit to the pilgrim town of Chitrakoot.

### **Seamless Spirituality: Indore-Ujjain-Omkareshwar**

Hop on to a helicopter at Indore and cut travel time to Ujjain by an hour. Do a darshan at the iconic Mahakaleshwar Temple, pray at the Kaal Bhairav and Harsiddhi shrines and walk through the Bhartihari Caves. You can even sample a traditional Ujjain thali and then do what was unimaginable earlier – taking the aerial route once more, save over three hours and land at Omkareshwar for a same-day darshan of the state's other Jyotirlinga too. Truly a blessing, especially for senior citizens who can travel in comfort!

### **The Narmada Parikrama: Circle of Faith**

Do a symbolic circumambulation of the mighty Narmada River, using a mix of aerial and road routes while walking the last mile. In a spiritually transformative journey that covers more than three thousand kilometres, a traveller touches a range of experiences – from stunning shrines to tribal life, from forests and wildlife to ancient rituals, from historical anecdotes to riverine adventures. It is a journey for the ages!

## LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



## Between Home and the Horizon

Dear Readers,

As we welcome 2026, we extend our warmest New Year greetings to our readers across India and the world. A new year always brings renewed hope, fresh resolve, and an opportunity to reflect on where we stand—and where we wish to go. At *PRAVASI INDIANS*, this moment of transition invites us to pause, reflect, and engage meaningfully with the ideas shaping our collective future.

This edition opens with a question central to India's journey toward *Viksit Bharat 2047*: Can Bihar emerge as a catalyst for national transformation? With nearly 60 per cent of its population under the age of 25, the state represents both promise and pressure. While governance reforms, digital connectivity, and rising aspirations signal change, persistent challenges—low industrialisation, migration, and employment gaps—continue to test progress. Whether Bihar's demographic energy becomes a dividend or a drag will depend on bold leadership and the ability to convert aspiration into opportunity.

Beyond economics, we turn our gaze to a deeper crisis—climate change. No longer a distant threat, it now shapes daily life and human behaviour. This issue invites readers to reflect on the inner dimensions of sustainability, reminding us that environmental healing begins with personal awareness and responsibility. The planet's distress mirrors our own imbalance, urging a more mindful way of living.

Our global Indian community also occupies centre stage. For decades, Indians have carried their ambitions across borders, quietly shaping economies and societies worldwide. What began as migration has evolved into a powerful global presence—one that influences diplomacy, innovation, and cultural exchange. Today, the Indian diaspora stands not on the margins of history but at its crossroads, shaping India's place in an interconnected world.

Geopolitically, India finds itself navigating a complex global order. As China asserts itself more confidently, India must balance engagement with strategic clarity. The choices made today will define not just foreign policy, but India's role as a stabilising force in an increasingly uncertain world.

Closer to home, economic concerns surface through conversations around the rupee crossing the 90-mark against the dollar. While such moments trigger anxiety, they also demand perspective. Beneath the volatility lie structural strengths, long-term reforms, and demographic potential that point toward resilience rather than retreat.

Equally important is the quiet erosion of civility in everyday life. In a world driven by speed and ambition, courtesy often feels outdated. Yet empathy, patience, and mutual respect remain the invisible glue of social harmony. Reclaiming them is not nostalgia—it is necessity.

This issue also carries deeply personal narratives of migration. From postcard-perfect landscapes to the silent struggles behind closed doors, these stories reveal the emotional cost of displacement—of learning to belong while carrying home within. They remind us that migration reshapes not just geography, but identity itself.

Cultural memory finds its voice through Kabir, whose words cut through noise, power, and fear. In an age of polarisation, his wisdom urges courage, conscience, and humanity.

Finally, we reflect on astrology—not as prediction, but as introspection. A mirror to inner awareness, it reminds us that life's journey is shaped as much by inner alignment as by external circumstance.

Together, these stories form a mosaic of reflection, resilience, and renewal. As 2026 unfolds, may this issue inspire deeper understanding, thoughtful dialogue, and collective purpose.

Wishing you a reflective, hopeful, and meaningful New Year.

Happy reading *PRAVASI INDIANS*!

*Rashmi*  
CEO and Publisher

We would love to hear from you. We also invite diaspora members to write for us and share their experiences

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# PRAVASI INDIANS

The India Connection

JANUARY 2026 | Volume 5 | Issue 01

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### Registered Office

405, The Cedar Estate,  
Golf Course Road, Gurgaon-122011

### Printed at

Rolleract Press Services, A-83/1, Naraina  
Industrial Area Phase 1, New Delhi-110028

Printed, published and owned by RASHMI  
and printed at Rolleract Press Services,  
A-83/1, Phase-1, Naraina Industrial Area,  
New Delhi-110028 on behalf of M/s Template  
Media LLP. Place of Publication: #302, B-537,  
Vasant Kunj Enclave, New Delhi-110 070.  
Sudhanshu Ranjan is Editor

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A 1988-batch IFS officer, **SANJAY KUMAR VERMA**—who has served as India’s Ambassador to Sudan, Japan, and Canada, and currently heads the Global South think tank, Research and Information System for Developing Countries—writes, “For nearly four decades, Indians have carried their ambitions across continents with quiet determination. What began as migration has grown into a living bridge between nations, cultures, and ideas, shaping how the world sees India today.” He further adds, “The Indian diaspora is no longer just a reflection of the country it left behind. It is an active force shaping India’s future—economically, culturally, and morally. This is the story of that transformation.”



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## LEAD STORY

The Patliputra University Assistant Professor **DR. BAIKUNTH ROY**, a PhD from JNU, says, “As India charts its path towards becoming a Vikshit Bharat by 2047, Bihar’s transformation has emerged as a national imperative. Rising youth aspirations and deepening digital connectivity, with notable improvements in governance and infrastructure yet burdened by low industrialisation, weak human development, employment challenges and large-scale migration, Bihar stands at a decisive crossroads,” adding whether the state’s demographic energy becomes a dividend or a drag will depend on bold governance and how it converts aspiration into opportunity.

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## CLIMATE CRISIS

A well acclaimed spiritual educator and columnist, who has 9000+ articles/columns to his credit, **RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJJI** asserts that climate change is no longer a distant threat; it is a lived reality. “Long before climate change becomes visible in melting ice or rising seas, it takes shape in human thought and

behaviour,” he says, adding “The planet’s growing distress mirrors a deeper imbalance in how we live, consume, and relate to nature.”

18-21

## INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS



The SBI Chief Executive Officer, Dubai **DR. NILAY RANJAN SINGH**, in his write-up says, “India’s rise as a global economic and strategic force coincides with China’s growing assertiveness,” adding that in this evolving geopolitical landscape, New Delhi needs to carefully balance collaboration, competition, and confrontation in order to safeguard its national interests and evolve a stable and multipolar global order..



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A Mumbai-based columnist and banker, **SATISH SINGH**, who keeps a close eye on the Indian rupee's slide which crosses the symbolic 90-mark against the US dollar, in his write-up expresses concerns over currency stability which have re-surfaced across markets and households alike and says that this moment demands not to panic.

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## MANNERISM

A Motivational Speaker, trainer and social worker, **SAURABH ASTHANA**, laments that in modern era, which is defined by speed, ambition, and constant connectivity, etiquette which is something deeply human quietly slipping through our fingers, adding 'we increasingly encounter behavioural anomalies that reflects impatience rather than empathy, assertion rather than understanding across professions, social hierarchies, and public spaces, Once considered the foundation of social life, good manners now appear almost optional in an increasingly fragmented world'.

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A creative soul, **KRITIKA SINHA** sees life as a canvas and every day as a learning experience. She loves sharing her journeys to inspire others. In this piece, she offers a first-hand account of moving to the UK—a place that initially felt "like stepping into a postcard: orderly streets, polite conversations, and endless possibilities." Yet life as an Indian immigrant, she reflects, is shaped less by landmarks and more by quiet struggles, small victories, and the constant pull of home. "Between curry nights that soothe homesickness and career battles that test resilience," she writes, "this is my story of learning to belong while living between two worlds."

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डॉ. नूपुर अशोक, जिनकी रचनाएँ देश-विदेश की अनेक पत्र-पत्रिकाओं में प्रकाशित हो चुकी हैं, अपने अनुभव साझा करते हुए कहती हैं, "विदेश जाना अक्सर सपनों की उड़ान माना जाता है—बेहतर जीवन, सुविधाएँ और सम्मान की तलाश।" लेकिन इस चमक के पीछे एक ऐसी दुनिया भी है, जहाँ छोटे-छोटे झटके धीरे-धीरे भीतर उतरते जाते हैं। किराए के कमरों से लेकर रिश्तों की दूरियों तक, और सोशल मीडिया की मुस्कानों के पीछे छिपी खामोशियों तक—यह कहानी प्रवासी जीवन की उसी अनकही सच्चाई को सामने लाती है, जहाँ सुविधा है, पर अपनापन नहीं; आज़ादी है, पर अकेलापन भी। नूपुर आगे कहती हैं, "यह सिर्फ़ एक अनुभव नहीं, बल्कि हर उस इंसान की दास्तान है जिसने सपनों की कीमत चुकाकर नया आसमान चुना।"

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## HOROSCOPE / राशिफल

ज्योतिष आचार्य दिनायक कहते हैं ज्योतिष शास्त्र केवल भविष्यवाणियाँ करने का साधन नहीं है, बल्कि यह आंतरिक जागरूकता का विज्ञान है जो जीवन यात्रा के गहरे उद्देश्य को प्रकट करता है। जन्म कुंडली हमारे कर्मों के निशान और हमारे लिए आने वाले सबक को दर्शाती है और आपको पूरे नए साल (2026) की ज्योतिषीय भविष्यवाणियाँ देता है, जो वैदिक ज्योतिष और बृहस्पति, शनि, राहु-केतु जैसे ग्रहों के गोचर पर आधारित हैं।

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## विचारधारा

इस्तांबुल (तुर्की) का इब्र खलदून विश्वविद्यालय के सभ्यता अध्ययन विभाग में कार्यरत एक शोधार्थी एवं शिक्षण साथी, **राजीव कुमार** कहते हैं, दक्षिण एशिया की स्मृति में "कहत कबीर" केवल अतीत की प्रतिध्वनि नहीं, बल्कि वर्तमान की चुनौती है—एक ऐसा प्रश्न, जो धर्म, जाति और सत्ता के आवरण को भेदकर मनुष्य से मनुष्य होने का साहस माँगता है। आगे कहते हैं, "कहत कबीर केवल एक आध्यात्मिक उद्घोष नहीं है। ऐसे शोरगुल भरे समय में, जहाँ घुटन और भय व्याप्त हैं, कबीर को फिर से सुनने की कोशिश एक शुभ संकेत है—जो बताता है कि साहस की संभावना अब भी शेष है।"

VIKSIT BIHAR

# WHY BIHAR MATTERS TO INDIA'S 2047 DREAM

As India charts its path towards becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047, Bihar's transformation has emerged as a national imperative. Home to nearly 60 per cent of its population under the age of 25, the state reflects rising youth aspirations and deepening digital connectivity, alongside notable improvements in governance and infrastructure. Yet, burdened by low industrialisation, weak human development, employment challenges, and large-scale migration, Bihar stands at a decisive crossroads. Whether its demographic energy becomes a dividend or a drag will depend on bold governance, productive job creation, and an economic strategy that converts aspiration into opportunity.



BY DR. BAIKUNTH ROY

A PhD from JNU, author is an Assistant Professor of Economics at the College of Commerce, Arts & Science, Patliputra University.

**B**ihar stands at a decisive moment in its development journey. If India's aspiration of becoming a *Viksit Bharat* by 2047 is to be realised, Bihar's transformation is not optional—it is indispensable. As Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam observed as early as 2006, India's development is impossible without the development of Bihar. Nearly two decades later, this insight remains profoundly relevant.

With close to 9 per cent of India's population but contributing only about 3 per cent to the national GDP, Bihar occupies a paradoxical position in India's political economy. Its demographic weight is immense, yet its economic output

remains disproportionately low. The re-elected government today confronts deep structural challenges amid a rapidly changing social landscape—one marked by an increasingly assertive, educated, and aspirational young population that expects far more than incremental change. Whether Bihar's demographic energy becomes a dividend or a drag will depend on the boldness of governance and the state's ability to convert aspiration into opportunity.

## **Structural Constraints and the Long Arc of Underdevelopment**

Bihar's developmental trajectory has been shaped by



long-standing structural disadvantages rooted in policy decisions and historical disruptions. The Freight Equalisation Scheme (1952–1993), which equalised freight costs across India, inadvertently discouraged industrialisation in mineral-poor states like Bihar further worsened by the state’s bifurcation in 2000 whereby most of the mineral-rich and industrial pockets went to Jharkhand, resulting in Bihar losing nearly three-quarters of its industrial units and close to 60 per cent of its revenue base.

These structural shocks continue to haunt Bihar’s economy even today. According to the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) 2022–23, Bihar had only 3,307 factories—just 1.31 per

cent of India’s total. What is more worrying is the fact that numbers of factories have declined in Bihar whereas the demand for industrial employment has risen. Industrial stagnation is not a recent phenomenon; it is the cumulative outcome of decades of missed opportunities.

The post-1991 reform era, which transformed many Indian states through liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation, largely bypassed Bihar. Weak infrastructure, limited institutional capacity, and persistent governance challenges prevented the state from attracting large-scale private investment. Bihar’s failure to piggyback economic reforms remains a defining feature of Bihar’s underdevelopment.



### **Growth Without Transformation**

Bihar's economic performance during the 1990s and early 2000s, largely coinciding with the tenure of Lalu Prasad Yadav and the subsequent Rabri Devi governments, was marked by pronounced instability. The 1990s witnessed sharp year-to-year fluctuations, including multiple episodes of negative GSDP and per-capita growth, reflecting structural stagnation and weak productive capacity. This pattern persisted into the early 2000s, where intermittent spurts of high growth were offset by repeated contractions, yielding a modest average growth rate of around 3–4 per cent rather than sustained expansion. After 2005, growth accelerated sharply under Nitish Kumar, with Bihar recording sustained double-digit expansion for several years—one of the most striking turnarounds in state-level economic performance in India.

Yet, this acceleration did not translate into structural transformation. Bihar's per capita income relative to the national average has remained stubbornly unchanged at roughly 30 per cent, both in 2005 and today. Over the past two decades, the state's economy has grown, but not consistently faster than the national average. Occasional spurts—particularly during high-growth phases and the post-pandemic rebound—have been offset by longer periods of relative stagnation.

The result is growth without convergence. Bihar is better off than it was two decades ago, but it remains far behind where it needs to be.

### **Fiscal Dependence and Vulnerability**

Bihar's fiscal architecture compounds its development challenge. In 2023–24, the state's own tax collection stood at just 5.8 per cent of GSDP. Transfer receipts from the Centre account for nearly 73 per cent of total revenue, meaning Bihar generates only about 27 per cent of its own income. This heavy dependence on central transfers creates both fiscal and political vulnerability, limiting the state's autonomy in development planning.

In 2024–25, Bihar spent 3.27 lakh crore against revenues of 2.44 lakh crore, leaving a gap of 82,000 crore. Borrowings of 63,000 crore pushed the

fiscal deficit to 9.2 per cent of GSDP—nearly double the national average of 4.8 per cent. Total debt has risen to 3.48 lakh crore, or 38.9 per cent of GSDP, among the highest in the country.

Alarming, much of this borrowing finances debt servicing and routine expenditure rather than asset creation. Interest payments rose by 12 per cent over the previous year. Constrained by the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act's 3 per cent borrowing limit, Bihar faces shrinking fiscal space, forcing cuts in capital expenditure that could undermine long-term growth.

### **Land, Governance, and Investment Climate**

Another enduring bottleneck has been the absence of clear and secure land and property rights. Unclear titles, fragmented holdings, outdated records, and prolonged disputes have made land acquisition difficult and costly, discouraging private investment and urban development. Industries have naturally gravitated towards states with more transparent land governance.

● ●

**With nearly 9% of India's population but only 3% of its GDP, Bihar's transformation is no longer optional—it is central to India's journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047.**

● ●

Recent initiatives to modernise land records and streamline mutation processes are therefore significant. By improving transparency and predictability in land transactions, Bihar is finally addressing one of its most persistent structural constraints. If sustained, these reforms could restore investor confidence and unlock stalled industrial and urban projects.

### **Demography: Opportunity and Risk**

Bihar today holds one of India's greatest demographic opportunities. Nearly 58 per cent of its population is below the age of 25, and about one-third falls in the 15–29 age group. This generation is more educated, digitally connected, and ambitious than any before it. Expectations have shifted from basic survival to demands for quality education, employable skills, entrepreneurship, safe mobility, and transparent governance.

However, without corresponding economic opportunities, demographic advantage can quickly turn into social stress.

### **Human Development: The Weak Foundation**

Despite improvements in law and order,



roads, and basic infrastructure since 2005, human development remains Bihar's weakest pillar. The India Human Development Report 2022 ranked Bihar last among Indian states, with an HDI score of 0.609.

Health outcomes remain poor. According to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), Bihar failed to utilise nearly 31 per cent of its health budget between 2016–17 and 2021–22. The state faces a 53 per cent shortage of allopathic doctors relative to WHO norms. Out-of-pocket health expenditure remains high, pushing households into financial distress.

NFHS-5 data show that Bihar's Total Fertility Rate, though declining, remains at 3.0—well above the replacement level. Full immunisation coverage stands at around 82.7 per cent, indicating uneven progress.



● ●

**Home to one of the youngest populations in the country, Bihar stands at a crossroads: without urgent investment in skills, education, and jobs, its demographic advantage could turn into a demographic burden.**

● ●

Education quality is equally concerning. ASER 2024 reveals that only 26 per cent of Class III children in rural Bihar can read a Class II-level text, and just 36 per cent of Class V students can perform division. Persistent gaps between government and private schools highlight deep inequities in foundational learning.

In higher education, Bihar's Gross Enrolment Ratio is only 17.1 per cent, compared to the national average of 28.4 per cent. Many colleges lack basic infrastructure, and industry-academia linkages are virtually absent.

#### **Employment and the Risk of a Lost Dividend**

Bihar's employment structure has seen little transformation. As of 2022–23, nearly half the workforce remains in agriculture, forestry, and fishing. Manufacturing employs only 5.7 per cent—barely half the national average—while construc-

tion absorbs a growing share of low-skilled labour.

Labour force participation stands at just 43.4 per cent, compared to the national average of 56 per cent. Female participation is alarmingly low at 15.6 per cent. Urban youth unemployment is 10.8 per cent, while graduate unemployment approaches 15 per cent and rises to nearly 19 per cent among postgraduates.

These figures reveal a deep mismatch between education, skills, and employment. Without urgent intervention, Bihar's demographic dividend risks becoming a demographic burden.

#### **Migration, Remittances, and Local Revival**

Migration remains central to Bihar's economy. Census 2011 shows over seven million Biharis working outside the state, largely in informal sectors. Remittances contribute 8–10 per cent of GSDP, sustaining household consumption.

The return of 23.6 lakh migrant workers during the COVID-19 lockdown exposed the fragility of this model. Many would prefer local employment if assured of stability and dignity. This presents an opportunity to rebuild Bihar's local economic base through cluster-based industrialisation, MSMEs, food processing, textiles, leather, furniture, and traditional industries such as Munger's arms manufacturing.

Entrepreneurship is rising, with 3,766 DPIIT-recognised start-ups as of 2025. However, these require sustained support through credit access, incubation centres, seed funding, and single-window clearances. Expanding BPO and KPO hubs could significantly reduce distress migration.

#### **Governance, Infrastructure, and Climate Resilience**

Good governance is central to Bihar's future. Young citizens demand digital public services, transparent recruitment, efficient grievance redressal, and reliable infrastructure. Investments in electricity, public transport, and digital connectivity are no longer optional.

Agriculture, employing nearly half the workforce, must become climate-resilient. Strengthening FPOs, micro-irrigation, solar pumps, crop diversification, agri-tech integration, and food processing can raise rural incomes and reduce disguised unemployment.

Fiscal innovation is equally essential—improving GST administration, municipal finances, PPPs, multilateral funding, and credit flows. Without this, ambition will remain unfunded.

#### **Conclusion: From Beneficiaries to Contributors**

The Bihar envisioned by its youth is one where talent does not migrate out of compulsion; where education leads to opportunity; where industries and start-ups thrive; where governance is transparent and just.

Bihar now stands at an inflection point. Its demographic energy, digital literacy, and aspirations offer immense promise. But realising this promise demands bold policy imagination, decisive investment in human capital, and a governance framework that treats youth not as beneficiaries, but as contributors.

Empowering Bihar is not merely a regional imperative—it is central to India's journey towards *Viksit Bharat @2047*. ■

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# IT BEGINS IN THE MIND

Climate change is no longer a distant threat; it is a lived reality. Long before climate change becomes visible in melting ice or rising seas, it takes shape in human thought and behaviour. The planet's growing distress mirrors a deeper imbalance in how we live, consume, and relate to nature. To heal the Earth, we must first examine the inner world from which our actions arise.



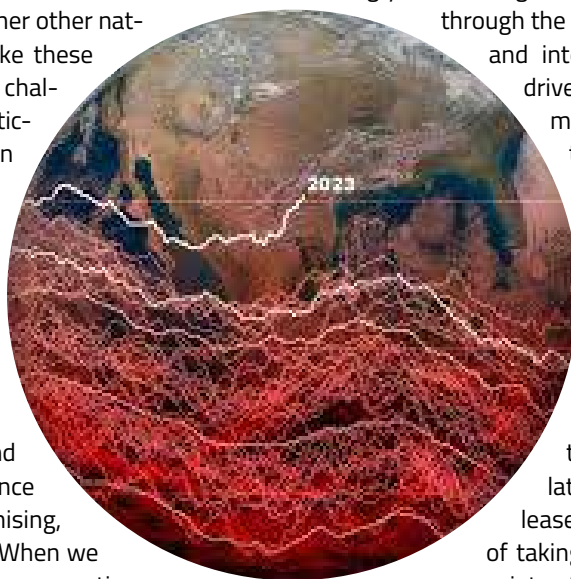
**BY RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI**  
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Writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist, who has written 9000+ articles/columns till date across India, Nepal & UK.

All of us are witnessing the realities of climate change in the form of rising temperatures, declining Arctic Sea ice, extreme weather events, heatwaves, floods, droughts, stronger storms, hurricanes, and more. There is ongoing debate about whether the climate will change catastrophically or whether other natural factors might intervene to make these phenomena less severe. The crucial challenges facing the Earth today—particularly the unprecedented changes in its climate—are best understood when we view the planet as a living system. Living systems theory is a body of work that explains how all living systems function, how they sustain themselves, and how they evolve and transform. A living system can be understood as an animate arrangement of parts and processes that continually influence one another over time—self-organising, growing, changing, and connecting. When we begin to recognise the intricate interconnections among the many components of this living system, our perception of the world begins to shift. We must understand that the natural world does not need humanity for its survival, but humanity cannot survive without the natural environment—

soil, water, air, sunlight, and countless other life-supporting elements. Thus, we must accept the truth that we are part of the Earth, not separate from it.

According to climate scientists, human activity is increasingly influencing the Earth's climate and temperature through the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and intensive livestock farming. All these drivers of climate change and environmental degradation are directly linked to the problem of endless consumerism. The core issue is that no matter how much we have, we always want more. As Mahatma Gandhi famously said, "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed." Whether it is the industrialist billionaire chasing the next billion or the urban consumer upgrading to the latest smartphone the moment it is released, we are all, in different ways, guilty of taking more than we need. In fact, modern society often pressures us to earn as much as possible throughout our working lives and to accumulate as many material possessions as we can before we die. Albert Einstein wisely observed that we cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them. To address





today's challenges, we must rise to a higher and more inclusive level of perception—one that allows us to truly understand what is unfolding around us.

It has often been observed that there exists a deep sense of fear among those who focus intensely on these issues—the doomsayers, activists, researchers, environmentalists, and climate advocates. At the same time, there is a striking sense of indifference among large sections of the wider public, many of whom prefer to remain detached, unbothered, and focused on their daily routines, ignoring warnings of impending ecological crisis. Such individuals are often unwilling to give up comforts they enjoy for the sake of future generations or the preservation of ecological balance. The roots of this behaviour run deep. Human attachment to sensory pleasure is so powerful that rational judgment alone often fails to alter habits or curb the excessive consumption driving climate change.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his address to the United Nations, stated: "We can achieve the same level of development, prosperity, and well-being without necessarily going down the path of reckless consumption. It doesn't mean that economies will suffer; it means our economies will take on a different character. For us in India, respect for nature is an integral part of spirituality. We treat nature's bounties as sacred. Yoga is an invaluable gift of our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between human beings and nature; and a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but about

discovering a sense of oneness with yourself, the world, and nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating awareness, it can help us deal with climate change."

The inner world of thought and the outer world of physical phenomena are not separate systems; they are part of the same causal continuum. External realities often begin as subtle internal phenomena—impressions, thoughts, and feelings.

We must remember that our experiences and perceptions can transform even deeply held beliefs. For instance, astronauts and cosmonauts once viewed Earth as a vast, stable planet until they saw it from space—fragile, luminous, and suspended like a small blue marble in an immense cosmic ocean. After this experience, many spoke of Earth's vulnerability and referred to it as "Spaceship Earth."

Within this causal continuum, awareness naturally shapes attitude. Our thoughts and emotions arise from our attitudes, and these attitudes influence how we perceive the world. In turn, our perceptions guide our actions, and our actions create the world we inhabit.

If we wish to address chronic challenges such as environmental degradation, we must work at their roots. If we genuinely want to transform the world we are continuously recreating, we must move "upstream" from laws, treaties, and policies that merely regulate behaviour. These mechanisms operate at the end of the causal chain. Instead, we must begin at the source—by transforming awareness itself—so that new attitudes and actions can emerge organically, at a scale large enough to meet the challenges of our time. ■

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**Climate change is not merely an environmental crisis—it is a crisis of consciousness, shaped by how we think, consume, and relate to the living world around us.**  
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# BRIDGES BEYOND BORDERS

For nearly four decades, Indians have carried their ambitions across continents — quietly, steadily, and with an unshakable sense of belonging. From Silicon Valley to Singapore, from London to Lagos, they have built careers, communities, and connections that now shape the global imagination of India itself. What began as migration has become something far more powerful: a living bridge between nations, cultures, and ideas. Today, the Indian diaspora is not just a reflection of the country it left behind, but an active force shaping its future—economically, culturally, and morally. This is the story of that transformation. Of how distance became strength, memory became momentum, and how a people scattered across the world are helping India find its place in a changing global order.



**BY SANJAY KUMAR VERMA**

A 1988 IFS Officer having 37 years of experience who has served as India's Ambassador to Sudan, Japan, and Canada, the author is currently the Chairperson of RIS (Research & Information System for Developing Countries), a Global South Think Tank and has special interests in foreign policy, security, and the global economy.

For nearly four decades, I have watched my fellow citizens step off aircraft in faraway lands with nothing more than stubborn ambition and a suitcase brimming with hope. Some were young tech professionals chasing opportunity in Silicon Valley, seeking the quiet discipline of Japan, or drawn to the promise of Canada and the perseverance of Taiwan. Others were traders in the Gulf, enduring fourteen-hour workdays to keep families afloat. Still others were students in Europe, wide-eyed and slightly overwhelmed by the cold, the accents, and the dizzying velocity of life beyond India.

They left quietly, without ceremony or spectacle, often without certainty or a clearly mapped future. Yet they car-

ried something enduring: an unmistakable Indian instinct to remain connected, even when distance stood between them and their dreams. That instinct would eventually reshape not one, but two worlds — the homeland they left behind and the societies they came to inhabit.

Over time, their role evolved dramatically. From workers abroad, they became bridge-builders — cultural interpreters, political influencers, economic contributors, and social investors. Today, their imprint is unmistakable. What stands out is not merely their contribution to India, but the deeper reality that they have woven themselves into India's global story in ways few could have predicted even two decades ago.

The Indian diaspora is vast, but its true strength does not lie in numbers alone. It lies in cohesion — in the ability



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**From migration to meaning, the Indian diaspora has become one of the most powerful forces shaping India's global identity.**  
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to remember where one comes from while fully embracing where one has arrived. This dual belonging has gifted India something no policy framework or diplomatic initiative could manufacture: a global constituency that is at once emotional, intellectual, and economic.

India is not the first nation to experience this phenomenon. Across centuries, Jewish, Irish, Chinese, Korean, and Armenian communities have reshaped the destinies of their homelands through the quiet but enduring force of distance. The Jewish diaspora helped build enduring political and cultural support for Israel in Western capitals, not merely through advocacy but through sustained participation in academia, technology, culture, and civic life. The Irish diaspora infused Ireland with confidence, capital, and connectivity at a moment when the nation was searching for renewal. The Chinese diaspora, particularly across Southeast Asia and North America, catalysed China's rise by transferring knowledge, capital, and entrepreneurial models long before Beijing possessed global leverage. The Korean diaspora transformed a nation once defined by

war into a cultural and technological powerhouse.

Each of these communities carried something home — sometimes capital, sometimes influence, sometimes ideas — but always loyalty. They sent more than remittances; they sent reassurance. They became extensions of their homelands beyond borders.

From these experiences, certain lessons emerge clearly. Diasporas flourish when home countries treat them not as lost citizens, but as extended limbs of the national body — without forcing loyalty tests or political conformity. Ireland did this through institutional openness. Israel did it through disciplined engagement. China did it through strategic incentives. Korea amplified it through cultural diplomacy. In every case, diaspora communities responded with innovation, energy, and long-term commitment when they felt respected rather than managed.

Another crucial lesson is that today's most powerful flows are no longer financial alone. They move as ideas, collaborations, partnerships, and ways of thinking. India already benefits enormously from such currents. Across Silicon Valley, London, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, and beyond, Indian-or-

igin professionals lead companies, laboratories, universities, hospitals, investment funds, and start-ups. They shape public discourse, influence policymaking, and sit at the crossroads of global decision-making. Their lived experience — navigating plural societies, understanding institutional strengths and weaknesses, and engaging with diverse political systems — offers India a reservoir of insight that few nations can match.

Yet diasporas thrive only when allowed the freedom to be plural. They are not ambassadors awaiting instructions from Delhi. They are independent actors — emotionally anchored to India but civically committed to the countries that gave them opportunity. The most successful home nations un-

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**What began as a search for  
opportunity has evolved into a quiet  
revolution—where distance no longer  
divides, but connects.**

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derstand this duality and work with it rather than attempt to choreograph it. India, with its democratic temperament and civilisational confidence, is uniquely positioned to strike this balance, provided it does so with humility and trust.

Having observed these movements closely for decades, I believe India now stands at a pivotal moment. The diaspora has evolved from a sentimental presence — often invoked during Pravasi Bharatiya gatherings and ceremonial speeches — into a strategic asset of immense consequence. Across global capitals, people of Indian origin increasingly serve as interpreters of India's aspirations. When universities seek partnerships, Indian-origin scholars often open the door. When global entertainment platforms present nuanced Indian stories, it is frequently Indian-origin creators shaping the narrative. When corporations diversify supply chains, Indian-origin executives help place India at the table. When policymakers seek to understand India's choices, it is often the diaspora that provides context and credibility.

We are living through a moment when India is no longer an abstract idea abroad, but a lived presence across continents. This is diaspora soft power in its most organic form. It cannot be engineered by campaigns or slogans. It emerges because ordinary Indians lived with integrity, professionalism, and empathy abroad. They built trust — and trust, in geopolitics, is a currency far more valuable than rhetoric.

Yet this reservoir cannot be taken for granted. Diaspora engagement must evolve beyond ceremonial events and symbolic gestures. What is needed now is institutional imagination: platforms for knowledge exchange, collaborative research, philanthropic partnerships, mobility pathways, and cross-border innovation. India must create spaces where diaspora expertise can engage meaningfully with policymaking, free from performative nationalism or political baggage. The

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## Across continents, Indian professionals are redefining influence—through ideas, innovation, and an enduring sense of belonging.

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goal should not only be to attract capital, but to cultivate confidence and continuity.

Equally, the diaspora must begin to see India not merely as a place of memory, but as a partner in shaping the future. Nostalgia may open the door, but purpose keeps it open. The next chapter of India's story will not be written solely within its geographical borders; it will be co-authored across its global human footprint. In a world increasingly fractured yet deeply interconnected, this distributed strength may prove decisive.

The older era of migration was about movement. The new era is about connection. The earlier journey sought opportunity; the present one builds bridges. These bridges do not merely carry people — they carry ideas, ethics, imagination, and responsibility. The Indian diaspora has already begun constructing them. India must now meet them halfway.

For every nation, there comes a moment when it must learn to walk back toward its people — even those who once walked away. That moment has arrived for India. This is the quiet promise of *The Long Bridge Home*: that distance, when treated with dignity, can become destiny; and that a people who once left in search of possibility can now help shape the future of the land they still carry within them. ■

# WHY INDIA MUST KEEP 3 CS 'COLLABORATION, COMPETITION, AND CONFRONTATION' WHILE ENGAGING WITH CHINA IN MIND



India's rise as a global economic and strategic force coincides with China's growing assertiveness on the world stage. In this evolving geopolitical landscape, New Delhi must move beyond reactive diplomacy toward a structured and strategic engagement with Beijing. By carefully balancing collaboration, competition, and confrontation, India can safeguard its national interests while shaping a stable and multipolar global order.



**BY  
DR NILAY  
RANJAN SINGH**

A recipient of several international accolades, including the recent 'CEO of the Year' award in the Middle East, the author is currently the Chief Executive Officer of State Bank of India, DIFC, Dubai.

**W**hen I was discussing the Indian budget and growth story at a panel in Dubai during an event organised by the Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) around a year and a half ago, I had stated that the Chinese economy would continue to sustain it-

self despite slowing growth and rising risks of deflation. Some delegates were cautious and did not agree with my assessment. However, based on various data points and my understanding of ground realities—gathered through extensive conversations within finance and banking circles—I remained confident in my view. Developments since then, despite growing geopolitical tensions, have largely vindicated that as-

essment. Within this evolving global context, there is a significant lesson for a country like India, which is currently the world's fastest-growing large economy and has recently become the fourth-largest economy globally. India is well on track to become the third-largest economy in the near future and has set itself an ambitious goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047, marking the centenary of its independence. There is no doubt that India possesses immense potential. Yet, despite this promise, the country has often underachieved—not due to a lack of intent, but because of multiple constraints. Some of these were beyond its control, while others could

strength. As two of the world's most ancient civilisations, they possess a depth of wisdom and continuity that few nations can claim. Had they historically come together, they could have shaped global history in transformative ways—though India has traditionally sought not domination, but the propagation of the philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, the idea that the world is one family. This shared civilisational depth underscores the significance of how India engages with its powerful neighbour and strategic competitor, China.

### **The Strategic Trinity of the Three Cs: Navigating the China Challenge**

The India–China relationship has evolved into one of the most complex and consequential geopolitical equations of the 21st century. Since the early years following independence



**India's engagement with China must rest on a careful balance of collaboration, competition, and confrontation—each applied with strategic clarity and national interest at its core.**



and India's emergence on the global stage under Prime Minister Nehru, the relationship has defied simple classification as either rivalry or partnership. It has instead been marked by cycles of cooperation, competition, and confrontation. Today, amid shifting global power structures, it is imperative for India to adopt a carefully calibrated strategy—one that can be best articulated through three guiding principles: Collaborate, Compete, and Confront. The real challenge lies in maintaining the right balance among these three approaches and applying each in its appropriate domain.

self despite slowing growth and rising risks of deflation. Some delegates were cautious and did not agree with my assessment. However, based on various data points and my understanding of ground realities—gathered through extensive conversations within finance and banking circles—I remained confident in my view. Developments since then, despite growing geopolitical tensions, have largely vindicated that as-

have been managed more effectively but were allowed to impede progress through half-hearted execution. Another critical factor shaping India's trajectory today is how it engages with its neighbours, partners, and competitors in an increasingly volatile geopolitical environment.

India and China are two great civilisations with rich legacies of culture, heritage, trade, and economic





### Collaboration: Pragmatic Engagement

Despite border tensions, strategic distrust, and historical disagreements, the economic and geopolitical realities make collaboration between India and China a necessity rather than a choice. Both nations face common challenges and possess shared opportunities that can be better addressed through pragmatic engagement. While collaboration at present must be guided by realism rather than idealism, it should not preclude the possibility of trust-building over time. These two Asian powers represent the world's largest populations and major economic engines. Working together, they could not only amplify the voice of the Global South but also help reshape global governance structures.

#### Standing on the Global Stage:

On issues such as climate change, global trade architecture, and public health, India and China share overlapping interests. Both have consistently advocated for reforms in global institutions and have raised concerns about Western dominance in global decision-making. Platforms such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) have enabled co-

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**As geopolitical fault lines deepen, India's rise will depend not on reaction, but on its ability to build economic strength, technological capability, and strategic autonomy.**

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operation, allowing both nations to champion the concerns of developing countries. India's growing role within the SCO has enhanced its engagement with Central Asia, while BRICS has emerged as a credible alternative voice for the Global South.

#### Economic Interdependence:

India's efforts to reduce its trade deficit and dependency on Chinese imports are legitimate and necessary. However, complete economic decoupling is neither feasible nor economically prudent in the short term. Through initiatives

such as *Make in India* and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, India is strengthening its manufacturing ecosystem. Yet Chinese capital, technology, and components continue to play a role in key sectors such as pharmaceuticals, electronics, and renewable energy. Strategic collaboration, balanced with safeguards for national interest, remains essential.

#### Diplomatic Engagement:

Maintaining open communication channels—both diplomatic and military—is indispensable between two nuclear-armed nations. Continuous dialogue reduces miscalculations and builds predictability. While deep trust may take time, sustained engagement can gradually foster stability. Strong nations, when in dialogue, reduce the risks of conflict and create space for cooperation.

#### Getting It Right:

Collaboration must be pragmatic, interest-driven, and carefully insulated from areas of conflict. It should be transactional rather than emotional, focused on tangible outcomes that serve India's national priorities while managing inherent frictions.

### **Compete: The Arena of Comprehensive National Power**

Competition forms the core of the India–China relationship in the long term. This competition is not about military confrontation alone but about economic strength, technological leadership, and geopolitical influence.

#### **Economic and Technological Competition:**

India's manufacturing push through initiatives like *Make in India* and the PLI schemes directly challenges China's dominance in global supply chains. The ambition is to emerge as a credible alternative manufacturing hub. In technology, the competition spans areas such as 5G and 6G, green technologies, semiconductors, and artificial intelligence. The banning of certain Chinese apps was not merely a security decision but a strategic move to create space for domestic innovation and entrepreneurship.

#### **Geopolitical Influence:**

The competition also extends to strategic regions such as the Indian Ocean, Africa, and Southeast Asia. While China advances its influence through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), India counters through its *Neighbourhood First* policy, development partnerships, and strategic groupings like the Quad (with the United States, Japan, and Australia). This is a contest of influence, trust, and long-term partnerships.

#### **Building Domestic Capacity:**

The most decisive aspect of competition lies within. Strengthening infrastructure, enhancing human capital, fostering innovation, and improving governance are essential for India to remain competitive. A resilient and growing domestic economy is the most powerful tool in this long-term contest.

#### **Getting Priorities Right:**

Competition must be fair, firm, and forward-looking. India must focus on building comprehensive national capabilities through long-term vision, policy consistency, effective execution, and

capacity building—rather than symbolic gestures or short-term optics.

### **Confront: No Compromise on National Sovereignty**

While collaboration and competition define much of the relationship, confrontation becomes unavoidable when core national interests are

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**Collaboration with China is possible—but only when guided by pragmatism, reciprocity, and a clear understanding of red lines that safeguard sovereignty.**

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threatened. This includes issues of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and strategic autonomy.

#### **Territorial Security:**

The military standoff and violent clash in Galwan Valley in 2020 underscored the need for preparedness along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). India must continue strengthening its border infrastructure, troop deployment, and surveillance capabilities. Diplomatic engagement should persist, but India must also send a clear message that aggression will be met with firm resistance.

#### **Defending Strategic Space:**

India must also counter attempts to expand influence in its strategic neighbourhood. Projects under the Belt and Road Initiative in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir violate India's sovereignty, and increased Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean demands vigilance. India must protect its strategic autonomy and regional influence while making it clear that cooperation, not coercion, is the preferred path.

#### **A Structured and Calibrated Approach:**

Confrontation does not imply recklessness. It must be deliberate, measured, and guided by clear objectives. Effective deterrence lies in credibility, preparedness, and clear communication. The goal is not escalation but stability—ensuring that red lines are understood and respected.

#### **Right on Target:**

Confrontation must be precise, principled, and proportionate. It should serve national interests rather than inflame tensions. A strong deterrent posture, combined with diplomatic maturity, ensures peace through strength rather than conflict.

### **Conclusion: The Right Mix**

India's approach toward China must rest on a careful balance of the three Cs—Collaboration, Competition, and Confrontation. Each has its place, and none can function in isolation. India must engage China where interests converge, compete where strategic advantage is at stake, and confront firmly when sovereignty is challenged.

Achieving this balance requires wisdom, strategic patience, and clarity of purpose. India can collaborate in technology and services, compete in manufacturing and innovation, and confront where national security is threatened. In doing so, India and China—despite their differences—can emerge as responsible global powers and credible voices of the Global South. If managed wisely, this complex relationship has the potential not only to shape Asia's future but also to contribute meaningfully to global stability and prosperity. ■

## RUPEE UNDER PRESSURE

# BETWEEN GLOBAL HEADWINDS AND INDIA'S RESILIENCE

As the Indian rupee crosses the symbolic 90-mark against the US dollar, concerns over currency stability have resurfaced across markets and households alike. Yet beneath the anxiety lies a more complex economic reality—one shaped by global volatility, shifting capital flows, and India's own structural strengths. While short-term pressures persist, the fundamentals suggest resilience rather than retreat. This moment, therefore, demands perspective, not panic.



BY SATISH SINGH

A Mumbai-based columnist, the author currently serves as an Assistant General Manager with SBI.

**O**n December 3, the Indian rupee crossed the 90-mark against the US dollar for the first time, following a previous close of 89.95 on December 2. Since the beginning of this year, the rupee has depreciated by more than 5 percent, making it the worst-performing

currency in Asia during this period. Notably, the rupee took only 773 trading days to decline from 80 to 90 against the dollar. Concurrently, the dollar index—which measures the greenback's strength against six major global currencies—declined by 0.13 percent to 99.22, marking its fourth consecutive day of decline in the domestic market.

Despite these developments, the current financial environment has become increasingly fragile, raising concerns over sustained foreign portfolio investment (FPI) outflows. This trend has triggered anxiety across financial markets and among the general public. Uncertainty surrounding trade negoti-

ations with the United States has further prompted foreign investors to pare down their exposure, redirecting capital toward markets offering comparatively higher returns.

However, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has maintained a measured and composed outlook, expressing confidence that stability will soon return. Initially, the central bank refrained from intervening to support the rupee, but corrective measures were later undertaken. These included sizeable dollar purchases by nationalised banks on December 2, which helped arrest the slide and enabled a modest recovery in the currency.

Amid the rupee's continued depreciation, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently revised India's exchange rate classification from "stable" to "crawling." This assessment, however, must be viewed in the context of India's structural trade dynamics. As a net importer, India consistently requires substantial dollar inflows to meet its import obligations, which naturally places pressure on the currency. While this can temporarily weaken the rupee, such movements are not necessarily indicative of long-term vulnerability. The Reserve Bank remains confident that the currency will stabilise on its own, as the underlying factors contributing to its recent weakness are largely transient.

It is also important to recognise that a depreciating rupee offers certain advantages, particularly for exporters who benefit from higher rupee realizations on dollar-denominated earnings. Although this depreciation does not fully offset the impact of tariffs imposed by the United States, it does enhance the competitiveness of Indian exports and encourages the exploration of new markets. Furthermore, despite the rupee's decline against several major currencies, it has strengthened notably against the Chinese yuan since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has made imports from China more affordable and eased procurement pressures for Indian businesses.

At the same time, bilateral discussions are underway to address the 50 percent tariff imposed by the United



States on Indian goods. There is cautious optimism that these negotiations will yield positive outcomes, particularly as former President Donald Trump's stance appears to be evolving. Once this issue is resolved, foreign portfolio investors are expected to return, restoring capital flows to earlier levels. It is worth noting that FPIs have withdrawn approximately \$15 billion so far in 2025.

In November, the manufacturing sector recorded moderate growth, with the HSBC Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) easing to 56.6 from 59.2 in October. This marked the slowest pace of expansion in the past nine months. Although growth in new orders and output remained positive, it too moderated to its weakest level over the same period. However, the recent reduction in the repo rate by the Reserve Bank of India is expected to stimulate lending activity and support economic momentum. Lower borrowing costs are likely to benefit sectors such as real estate, corporate enterprises, and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). In addition, a weaker rupee could further boost export competitiveness.

In contrast, the services sector

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**The rupee's slide reflects global turbulence more than domestic weakness—India's economic fundamentals remain intact.**

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**From export gains to resilient services growth, India's economy continues to find balance even amid currency pressure.**

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 demonstrated robust performance in November. The HSBC India Services Purchasing Managers' Index rose to 59.8 from 58.9 in October, reflecting a notable rebound in business activity following a brief slowdown. A PMI reading above 50 indicates expansion, while a figure below that threshold signals contraction—un-

derscoring the continued resilience of India's services-driven economy.

Looking ahead, foreign exchange strategists at Barclays have projected that the rupee could weaken to 94 against the dollar by 2026. However, this forecast appears somewhat pessimistic when weighed against the underlying strength and resilience of the Indian economy. There is little reason for undue alarm, as the factors currently weighing on the currency are largely cyclical and manageable. Moreover, the Reserve Bank of India possesses ample foreign exchange reserves to address volatility and maintain stability. Importantly, the rupee's appreciation against the Chinese yuan in recent months has further strengthened India's trade position with China, enabling smoother commercial transactions.

In this context, the depreciation of the rupee should not be viewed as a cause for panic. Instead, it reflects a complex interplay of global and domestic forces—many of which are temporary in nature. With prudent monetary management, improving global conditions, and sustained domestic resilience, the Indian economy remains well positioned to navigate these challenges with confidence. ■

# WHY ETIQUETTE STILL MATTERS TODAY?

In an age defined by speed, ambition, and constant connectivity, something deeply human is quietly slipping through our fingers — courtesy. Across professions, social hierarchies, and public spaces, we increasingly encounter behaviour that reflects impatience rather than empathy, assertion rather than understanding. Good manners, once considered the foundation of social life, now appear almost optional. Yet, they remain one of the most powerful tools for building trust, dignity, and harmony in an increasingly fragmented world.



BY  
**SAURABH ASTHANA**

Author is a Motivational Speaker, trainer and social worker.

**G**ood manners are not a sign of social status or formal education; they are a reflection of inner values. They reveal how we see others — not as obstacles or conveniences, but as fellow human beings deserving of respect. In a time when digital interactions often replace human connection, the importance of civility, empathy, and restraint has never been greater.

We often witness unexpected—and sometimes unsettling—behaviour from people across all walks of life, regardless of their position, success, or authority. Such moments remind us that etiquette and grace are not automatically acquired with achievement. A refined sense of manners remains a cornerstone of personality, shaping not only how we present ourselves but also how we treat others.



In today's fast-moving world, where efficiency often overshadows empathy, good manners act as a stabilising force. They nurture respect, reduce friction, and help sustain meaningful human connections. Below are some essential aspects of good manners that can significantly improve the quality of our social interactions.

### **Politeness in Communication**

Politeness is the simplest yet most powerful form of respect. Words such as *please*, *thank you*, *sorry*, and *excuse me* may seem small, but they carry immense emotional weight. Speaking calmly, choosing words thoughtfully, and listening without interruption foster clarity and goodwill. Polite communication not only prevents misunderstandings but also builds trust and emotional safety in both personal and professional spaces.

### **Respect for Others**

True respect transcends differences of age, profession, belief, or background. It includes punctuality, regard for personal space, and openness toward differing viewpoints. Respect does not require agreement; it requires dignity. When individuals feel respected, social harmony follows naturally.

### **The Art of Listening**

Good manners are as much about listening as they are about speaking. Attentive listening—maintaining eye contact, acknowledging emotions, and responding thoughtfully—makes others feel valued. In a world where many speak but few truly listen, this simple act can strengthen relationships and deepen understanding.

### **Behaviour in Public Spaces**

Public behaviour reflects collective consciousness. Simple acts such as maintaining cleanliness, standing patiently in queues, following civic rules, and avoiding unnecessary noise demonstrate social responsibility. Such conduct not only improves shared spaces but also cultivates a culture of mutual respect.

### **Table Manners**

Dining etiquette reflects discipline and consideration. Eating gracefully, using



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**India's engagement In an age of noise, speed, and shrinking patience, good manners emerge as a quiet yet powerful force—restoring dignity, empathy, and human connection in both public and private life.**

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**From everyday interactions to digital spaces, civility shapes who we are as a society. This reflection reminds us that kindness, respect, and empathy are not outdated virtues, but the foundations of a truly civilized world.**

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cutlery appropriately, and waiting for others before beginning a meal express courtesy and self-awareness. These small gestures leave lasting

impressions, particularly in formal or social gatherings.

### **Digital Etiquette**

As much of life now unfolds online, manners must extend into the digital world. Respectful communication, privacy awareness, thoughtful responses, and refraining from spreading misinformation are essential elements of responsible digital behaviour. Online courtesy is no longer optional—it is a social necessity.

### **Kindness and Empathy**

At the heart of all good manners lies kindness. Small gestures—offering help, acknowledging effort, showing empathy—can profoundly affect others. Empathy allows us to see beyond ourselves and respond with compassion rather than judgment.

### **Conclusion**

Good manners are not outdated traditions; they are timeless principles that shape the quality of human interaction. They promote understanding, cooperation, and social harmony. In practising good manners—both offline and online—we contribute to a more respectful, compassionate, and balanced society.

In an increasingly divided world, civility may seem quiet, even fragile. Yet it remains one of the most powerful forces capable of restoring dignity, trust, and connection among people. Good manners, after all, are not merely social habits — they are reflections of our humanity. ■



BY KRITIKA SINHA

Author is a creative person who sees life as a canvas and lives each day to learn something new, and loves sharing her experiences to motivate others and move forward in life.

If you had asked me, years ago, what life abroad looked like, I would have described a postcard version of London—red buses rolling past old buildings, misty evenings, and a cup of tea by the window. That image did not disappear when I moved to the UK, but it quickly made room for something far more real. Life here, as an Indian, is a blend of ambition and homesickness, laughter and exhaustion. It is, quite simply, a life lived between curry nights and career fights.

#### **When the Dream Took Shape**

My journey began the way many others do—with a dream. Someone around me had already taken the leap: a friend heading to university in London, a cousin landing an IT job in Birmingham, a couple moving to Leeds to build what they called a better life. Soon, it was my turn to say the words aloud: “I’m going to the UK.”

My family reacted exactly as I had expected. Pride mixed with worry. My

mother began packing masalas and pickles, as if flavours could protect me from loneliness. My father spoke confidently about opportunities in England. Friends imagined weekend photos with Big Ben. I smiled through it all, unaware of how quickly reality would replace imagination.

The moment I stepped out of Heathrow Airport, the cold wind hit me harder than any emotion. That was my first lesson: this journey would move fast, and I would have to keep up.

#### **The Early Weeks: Awe and Anxiety**

The first few weeks felt like living in two emotions at once. Everything impressed me—the punctual buses, the orderly queues, the politeness that kept conversations pleasant yet distant. I relied on Google Maps as if it were a survival tool. I stared at British coins, wondering why there were so many of them. I bought my first ready-made meal from Tesco and wondered how something so ordinary could cost more than an entire lunch back home.

Then came the evenings. Quiet rooms. Early sunsets. A silence that felt heavier than noise. I missed the whistle of the pressure cooker, the smell of chai, and my mother’s familiar question: “Beta, khana kha liya?” I started calling home every night, even if only



# BETWEEN CURRY NIGHTS AND CAREER FIGHTS

Moving to the UK felt like stepping into a postcard—orderly streets, polite conversations, and endless possibilities. But life as an Indian immigrant is shaped less by landmarks and more by quiet struggles, small victories, and the constant pull of home. Between curry nights that soothe homesickness and career fights that test resilience, this is my story of learning to belong while living between two worlds.



for a few minutes. That was when distance became real.

### **Finding Home in Curry Nights**

Slowly, I found my people. Other Indians who understood without explanation. Weekend curry nights became sacred. Someone brought paneer from an Indian store in Wembley. Someone cooked biryani. Someone insisted that chai must be made the 'right way'.

We laughed about our first winters, complained about rent, and joked about accents that were quietly changing. These evenings were not just about food. They were about belonging. They reminded me that India had travelled with me—in the way we decorated our

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**From Heathrow's cold wind to warm curry nights, this first-person account captures the quiet struggles, homesickness, and resilience behind an Indian immigrant's life in the UK.**

● ●

flats for Diwali using fairy lights from Poundland, and in our endless debates about which Indian city had the best street food.

### **The Career Fights No One Sees**

Alongside comfort came the grind. As a student, I balanced classes, part-time jobs, and bills. Cafés, delivery shifts, supermarket work—none of it was easy. Yet every payslip felt like proof that I was surviving on my own.

For professionals like me, the struggle took another form. Degrees and experience mattered, but not as much as learning a new work culture. I often felt as if I had to start again, to prove myself from scratch. There



were days of doubt, visa anxieties, and quiet loneliness.

And yet, I saw what was possible. I saw Indians rise—doctors leading hospital departments, engineers building start-ups, and immigrants' children reaching the highest offices in the land. These stories inspired me, not because they were glamorous, but because I knew the fight behind them. Long hours. Extra effort. Relentless perseverance. That stubborn Indian refusal to give up.

#### **Living Between Two Worlds**

Over time, I learned to live two lives at once. On weekdays, I was immersed in meetings, deadlines, and polite conversations about the weather. On weekends, I returned to myself—

● ●  
**Beyond postcards  
 and pay slips, the  
 story traces how  
 ambition, loneliness,  
 and small victories  
 shape an Indian's  
 journey of belonging  
 between two  
 cultures.**

● ●  
 cooking *daal*, watching Bollywood films, calling home for wedding updates and festival news.

I noticed changes in myself. My

accent shifted slightly at work. My vocabulary changed depending on who I spoke to. I learned to enjoy fish and chips, yet still craved *pani-puri* on rainy evenings. Sometimes, I felt I belonged nowhere—too Indian here, too British back home. Eventually, I realised that this in-between space was not a weakness. It was my identity.

#### **The Weight of Home**

What people rarely talk about is the pressure from home. From afar, life abroad looks easy. Relatives imagine comfort and constant travel. They don't see the skipped meals to save rent, the loneliness after long workdays, or the pain behind missed weddings and festivals.

I learned to carry guilt and pride to—

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**A deeply personal reflection on building a life abroad—where career fights test resolve, community becomes family, and home is carried within.**

● ●



gether—guilt for being away, pride for standing on my own. And every time I returned to India, I realised how much I had changed. The streets were familiar, but I was not the same person. I had grown in ways my younger self could never have imagined.

### **Community, Love, and Belonging**

The Indian community in the UK became my safety net. From London to Leicester, there were temples, grocery stores, festivals, and faces that felt familiar. During Diwali, cities glowed with lights, Bollywood music filled the air, and for a moment, distance disappeared.

Friendships here became deeper, almost familial. We celebrated birthdays in small flats, shared fears, and promised to look out for one another.

Some of us found love—sometimes within the community, sometimes beyond it—learning to bridge cultures through patience and understanding.

### **The Quiet Victories**

What kept me going were the small wins. My first full-time job. Cooking a proper meal without burning it. Sending money home. Hearing my parents say, “We’re proud of you.”

These moments mattered more than any postcard view. They reminded me that I was building a life from scratch—one that carried India within it.

### **Looking Forward**

Today, I see new generations growing up here—Indian by heart, British

by habit. They celebrate Diwali and Christmas with equal joy. They embody a future shaped by more than one culture.

For me, and for anyone dreaming of moving abroad, this journey is not just about success. It is about courage. It is about holding on to your roots while growing new ones. It is about the comfort of curry nights and the resilience forged through career fights.

In the end, I learned that home is not always a place. Sometimes, it is the smell of masala on a cold British night, a phone call from your mother, or the quiet realisation that you made it—against all odds.

Between curry nights and career fights, I found myself. ■

# परदेश की एक अनकही कहानी



विदेश जाना अक्सर सपनों की उड़ान माना जाता है—बेहतर जीवन, सुविधाएँ और सम्मान की तलाश। लेकिन इस चमक के पीछे एक ऐसी दुनिया भी है, जहाँ छोटे-छोटे झटके धीरे-धीरे भीतर उतरते जाते हैं। किराए के कमरे से लेकर रिश्तों की दूरी तक, और सोशल मीडिया की मुस्कानों के पीछे छुपी चुप्पियों तक—यह कहानी प्रवासी जीवन की उसी अनकही सच्चाई को सामने लाती है, जहाँ सुविधा है, पर अपनापन नहीं; आज़ादी है, पर अकेलापन भी। यह सिर्फ़ एक अनुभव नहीं, बल्कि हर उस इंसान की दास्तान है जिसने सपनों की कीमत चुकाकर नया आसमान चुना।



डॉ नूपुर अशोक

कविता, व्यंग्य, 'दास मलूका कह गए' (व्यंग्य) और 'रमता जोगी' (यात्रा स्तम्भ) की रचयिता, लेखिका की रचनाएँ देश-विदेश की अनेक पत्र-पत्रिकाओं में प्रकाशित हो चुकी हैं। उनकी प्रकाशित पुस्तकें हैं *मेरे मन का शहर*, *दस्तक* (कविता संग्रह), *पचहत्तर वाली भिण्डी* (व्यंग्य संग्रह) और *यह, वह प्रदेश तो नहीं* (संस्मरण संग्रह)।

बड़े अरमानों से रखा था बलम, तेरी क्रसम, तेरे इस देश में ये पहला क़दम...

**ले**किन इस बलम के लटके-झटके कुछ ऐसे पड़े कि बिजली भी गिरी और हम 'हाय' तक न कह सके। (वैसे इस देश में आकर 'हाय' और 'बाय' ही सबसे ज़्यादा कह रहे हैं।) झटके भी कोई एक नहीं थे—कई थे।

सबसे पहला झटका लगा मकान के किराये से। सूची में सबसे नीचे से तलाश शुरू की तो मिला—ढाई सौ डॉलर। यानी कोई पंद्रह हज़ार रुपये। लगा, ठीक है। पहुँच गए किरायेदार बनने। लेकिन जब अपने भावी आशियाने पर पहुँचे, तो

दृश्य कुछ स्वयंवर जैसा था। लोग कतार में खड़े थे। और जैसे ही हम पहुँचे, पहले से खड़े लोगों की निगाहें हम पर ऐसी पड़ीं कि साफ़ समझ आ गया—“आप कतार में हैं।”

हमने भी शालीनता से अपनी बारी का इंतज़ार किया। जब प्रवेश का अवसर आया, तब पता चला कि यह किराया पूरे फ्लैट का नहीं, एक कमरे का है। वह भी एक महीने का नहीं, एक हफ्ते का। अपने चेहरे पर भाव प्रकट न होने देने की जो कला हमने उस दिन सीखी, वह आज भी हमारे काम आती है। वैसे भी हम कौन होते थे 'हाँ' या 'ना' कहने वाले? हम तो बस यह इंतज़ार कर सकते थे कि 'मकान कन्या' स्वयं वरमाला हमारे गले में डाल दे। लेकिन उस पहली मुठभेड़ में तो



हमारे गले में मानो हड्डी अटक गई—न निगलते बनी, न उगलते।

खैर, झटका सहकर लौट आए। हम थे ही जीवट किस्म के जीव। फिर से मकान-संधान शुरू हुआ और अंततः एक वरमाला हमारे गले में पड़ ही गई। एक बड़े से मकान में एक छोटा-सा कमरा हमारा हो गया। रसोई इस्तेमाल करने की अनुमति मिली। बल्कि एक अलमारी में एक रैक भी हमारे हिस्से आया। फ्रिज में भी एक रैक हमें नसीब हुई। दो कमरों के बीच एक साझा बाथरूम था। दूसरे कमरे में भी एक किरायेदार रहता था और हम दोनों को प्रेमपूर्वक उसका उपयोग करना था।

यहाँ आकर समझ में आया कि प्रेम का अर्थ है—एक-दूसरे का टाइमटेबल जानना। कौन कितने बजे उठता है, बाथरूम में कब जाता है और कितनी देर में बाहर निकलता है। हमने प्रेम निभाया — पूरी निष्ठा से।

हमने देशप्रेम भी निभाया। यहाँ रहते हुए जाना कि देशप्रेम का अर्थ है अपनी छोटी-सी उपलब्धि को सुंदर फ्रेम में सजाकर देशवासियों के सामने पेश करना। इस कला में सोशल मीडिया

● ●

**विदेश की ज़िंदगी जितनी  
चमकदार दिखती है, उतनी ही  
खामोश भी होती है—जहाँ  
मुस्कानें कैमरे के लिए होती हैं  
और अकेलापन दिल के भीतर  
पलता रहता है।**

● ●

ने हमें अच्छी ट्रेनिंग दे रखी थी। लिहाज़ा हमने अपने छोटे से कमरे, बाथरूम, किचन, घर के आगे-पीछे, दाएँ-बाएँ—हर कोण से तस्वीरें खींचीं और घरवालों व दोस्तों को भेज दीं। सब हमारी उपलब्धि पर फिदा हो गए। कम से कम हमें ऐसा ही लगा। किसी ने खुलकर कहा नहीं, पर हमने मान लिया। यह भी हमने यहीं आकर सीखा—सत्य वही है, जिसे मानकर मन खुश रहे। जो उदास करे, वह सत्य किस काम का?

देशप्रेम निभाने के लिए उस सुपरमार्केट की तस्वीरें भी साझा कीं, जो आगे चलकर हमारा तीर्थस्थान बनने वाला था। हालाँकि यह समझने में समय लगा कि मंदिर साल में दो बार जाना होता है, पर सुपरमार्केट के दर्शन हफ्ते में दो बार अनिवार्य होते हैं।

हमने रेडीमेड रोटियों की तस्वीरें भी भेजीं और घोषणा की कि अब रोज़ रोटि बनाने की झंझट से मुक्ति मिल गई है। इस स्वर्ग में सब कुछ बना-बनाया मिलता है—बस बाज़ार से लाओ, फ्रिज में रखो और ज़रूरत पड़ने पर माइक्रोवेव में गरम करो। दो मिनट में खाना तैयार।

लेकिन उन सूखी रोटियों को बेस्वाद ग्रेवी



के साथ निगलते हुए जो आँसू हमने पिपे, वे आज भी हमारे सीने में दफन हैं।

धीरे-धीरे हमारा सीना ऐसे कई राजों की कब्रगाह बन गया। एक राज तब जुड़ा, जब एक तीन साल की बच्ची ने हमें सीधे नाम लेकर पुकारा। बिना भैया, दीदी, अंकल, आंटी के। उसका मुँह खुला और मेरा नाम निकला—ऐसा लगा जैसे किसी नन्ही चींटी ने किसी हाथी से कह दिया हो, “अबे ओ हाथी!” इतनी बेअदबी! हमें इसकी आदत नहीं थी। हम तो उस संस्कृति से आए थे जहाँ माँ ने हमारे जुड़वाँ भाई को उम्र में एक मिनट बड़ा होने के कारण ‘भैया’ घोषित कर दिया था। स्कूल में सीनियर भैया-दीदी होते थे, टीचर ‘मैथ्स सर’ और ‘बायोलॉजी मैम’। यहाँ तो टीचर को भी सीधे—‘हे जॉन’, ‘हे पैट्रिक’—कहते सुना। उस टीस को भी चुपचाप सीने में दबा लिया।

ऑफिस में भी ऐसे ही दृश्य थे। जो बॉस हमारे यहाँ ‘अनाधिकार प्रवेश निषेध’ वाले केबिन में विराजमान रहते, यहाँ उन्हें सब नाम लेकर पुकार रहे थे। कोई दरवाज़ा नहीं, कोई सुरक्षा घेरा नहीं।

● ●  
**किराए के कमरे से लेकर  
 रिश्तों की दूरी तक, यह  
 कहानी बताती है कि संस्कृति  
 बदलने से पहले आत्मसम्मान  
 और पहचान कैसे बदलती है।**

● ●  
**सोशल मीडिया पर दिखने  
 वाला ‘स्वर्ग’ अक्सर उन  
 अनकहे आँसुओं से बना होता  
 है, जिन्हें कोई पोस्ट कभी  
 बयां नहीं करती।**

आम आदमी की तरह सबके बीच घूमते हुए। और बड़े-बड़े अधिकारी, मंत्री—टीवी एंकर के सामने ऐसे खड़े होकर जवाब देते जैसे अदालत में हों। शायद कैमरा बंद होते ही पसीना भी पोंछते हों।

हम तो उस देश से आए थे जहाँ क्लर्क को भी ‘बड़े बाबू’ कहा जाता था और उनके नखरे सहना हमारी नियति होती थी। इसलिए हमें समझ ही नहीं आया कि कोई बॉस या मंत्री बिना ठाठ-बाट के कैसे ही सकता है। हम तो उसी रौब-रुतबे के लिए सालों प्रतियोगी परीक्षाएँ देते रहे। जब कहीं बात नहीं बनी, तो किस्मत आजमाने यहाँ आ गए।

मिला भी बहुत कुछ। और जो नहीं मिला—उसका क्या गिला। दिल में जो था, आपको बता दिया। किसी और को मत बताइएगा।

बाकी दुनिया के लिए तो हमारे पास इस स्वर्ग जैसे देश के सुख-समृद्धि से भरे किस्से ही हैं। वही हम फेसबुक और इंस्टा पर डालते रहेंगे। आप ‘लाइक’ ज़रूर कर दीजिएगा, बस कमेंट में हमारी पोल मत खोलिएगा... प्लीज़। ■



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# WHISPERS OF THE STARS!

Astrology is not just a tool for foretelling events rather a science of inner awareness that reveals the deeper purpose of one's life journey. A Janam Kundli mirrors the karmic imprints we carry and the lessons awaiting us.

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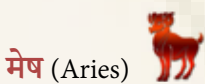
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With 15 years of dedicated practice and profound knowledge in Astrology science, author is known for deep understanding of ancient astrological principles which enable him to provide predictions and insightful interpretations with accuracy.

## 2026: पूरे साल की ज्योतिषीय भविष्यवाणियाँ

राशिफल 2026 आपको पूरे साल की ज्योतिषीय भविष्यवाणियाँ देता है, जो वैदिक ज्योतिष और बृहस्पति, शनि, राहु-केतु जैसे ग्रहों के गोचर पर आधारित हैं। इसका मकसद आपको साफ़ और सही दिशा दिखाना है, ताकि आप अपने फैसले सोच-समझकर ले सकें। चाहे आप प्रेम, विवाह, करियर, पैसों, स्वास्थ्य, पढ़ाई या संपत्ति में निवेश को लेकर चिंतित हों, इस वार्षिक राशिफल में हर किसी के लिए कुछ न कुछ खास है। मेष से लेकर मीन तक, हर राशि के लिए नए मौके और चुनौतियाँ आपका इंतजार कर रही हैं। यह सिर्फ़ मीठी-मीठी बातें या अस्पष्ट भविष्यवाणियाँ नहीं हैं, बल्कि व्यावहारिक सलाह है—क्या हो सकता है, कब हो सकता है और आप कैसे तैयारी कर सकते हैं। राशिफल 2026 की मदद से आप बस इंतज़ार करने के बजाय, समय से पहले सही कदम उठा पाएंगे। तो, 2026 की शुरुआत करने से पहले एक बार जान लें कि इस साल की ज्योतिषीय भविष्यवाणियाँ आपके और आपके प्रियजनों के लिए क्या लेकर आई हैं।



**मेष (Aries)**

कैरियर: नए काम की शुरुआत सफल होगी।  
धन: धन लाभ, रुका पैसा मिल सकता है।  
स्वास्थ्य: सिरदर्द/थकान।  
प्रेम: पुराना रिश्ता वापस जुड़ सकता है।




**वृषभ (Taurus)**

कैरियर: प्रमोशन या नई जिम्मेदारी का योग।  
धन: बचत बढ़ेगी, निवेश अनुकूल।  
स्वास्थ्य: गला और थायरॉइड का ध्यान।  
प्रेम: रिश्तों में मिठास बढ़ेगी।




**मिथुन (Gemini)**


कैरियर: नौकरी परिवर्तन का संकेत।  
धन: अचानक खर्च बढ़ेगा।  
स्वास्थ्य: तनाव और नींद कमी।  
प्रेम: पार्टनर से मनमुटाव दूर होगा।

**कर्क** (Cancer) 


कैरियर: विदेश कार्य या यात्रा का योग ।  
 धन: आर्थिक लाभ के अच्छे अवसर ।  
 स्वास्थ्य: पेट-पाचन का ध्यान ।  
 प्रेम: रिश्ते मजबूत होंगे ।

**सिंह** (Leo) 


कैरियर: गवर्नमेंट और एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन वालों को लाभ ।  
 धन: प्रॉपर्टी/जमीन से फायदा ।  
 स्वास्थ्य: ऊर्जा बढ़ेगी ।  
 प्रेम: नए रिश्ते बन सकते हैं ।

**कन्या** (Virgo) 


कैरियर: मेहनत का फल मिलेगा, लक्ष्य पूरे होंगे ।  
 धन: फाइनेंशियल ग्रोथ अधिक ।  
 स्वास्थ्य: पुरानी समस्या राहत देगी ।  
 प्रेम: पार्टनर का पूरा सहयोग ।

**तुला** (Libra) 


कैरियर: कार्यस्थल पर बड़ा सम्मान मिलेगा ।  
 धन: पार्टनरशिप से आय बढ़ेगी ।  
 स्वास्थ्य: ब्लड प्रेशर नियंत्रित रखें ।  
 प्रेम: शादी/सगाई की बात बनेगी ।

**वृश्चिक** (Scorpio) 


कैरियर: नया प्रोजेक्ट मिलेगा, सफलता सुनिश्चित ।  
 धन: धन लाभ और फाइनेंशियल स्टेबिलिटी ।  
 स्वास्थ्य: बीपी/तनाव से बचें ।  
 प्रेम: रिश्तों में भावनात्मक जुड़ाव बढ़ेगा ।

**धनु** (Sagittarius) 


कैरियर: नई नौकरी या बिजनेस शुरुआत ।  
 धन: बचत कम, खर्च ज्यादा ।  
 स्वास्थ्य: खान-पान सुधारें ।  
 प्रेम: अचानक शादी या नया रिश्ता संभव ।

**मकर** (Capricorn) 

कैरियर: प्रमोशन या पोजीशन बढ़ सकती है ।  
 धन: आय के नए स्रोत बनेंगे ।  
 स्वास्थ्य: घुटने/जोड़ों में दर्द ।  
 प्रेम: रिलेशन में स्थिरता और शांति ।

**कुंभ** (Aquarius) 

कैरियर: बड़ी उपलब्धि या सम्मान मिलेगा ।  
 धन: निवेश से बड़ा फायदा ।  
 स्वास्थ्य: स्किन/ऐलर्जी सावधान ।  
 प्रेम: प्रेम विवाह के संकेत ।

**मीन** (Pisces) 

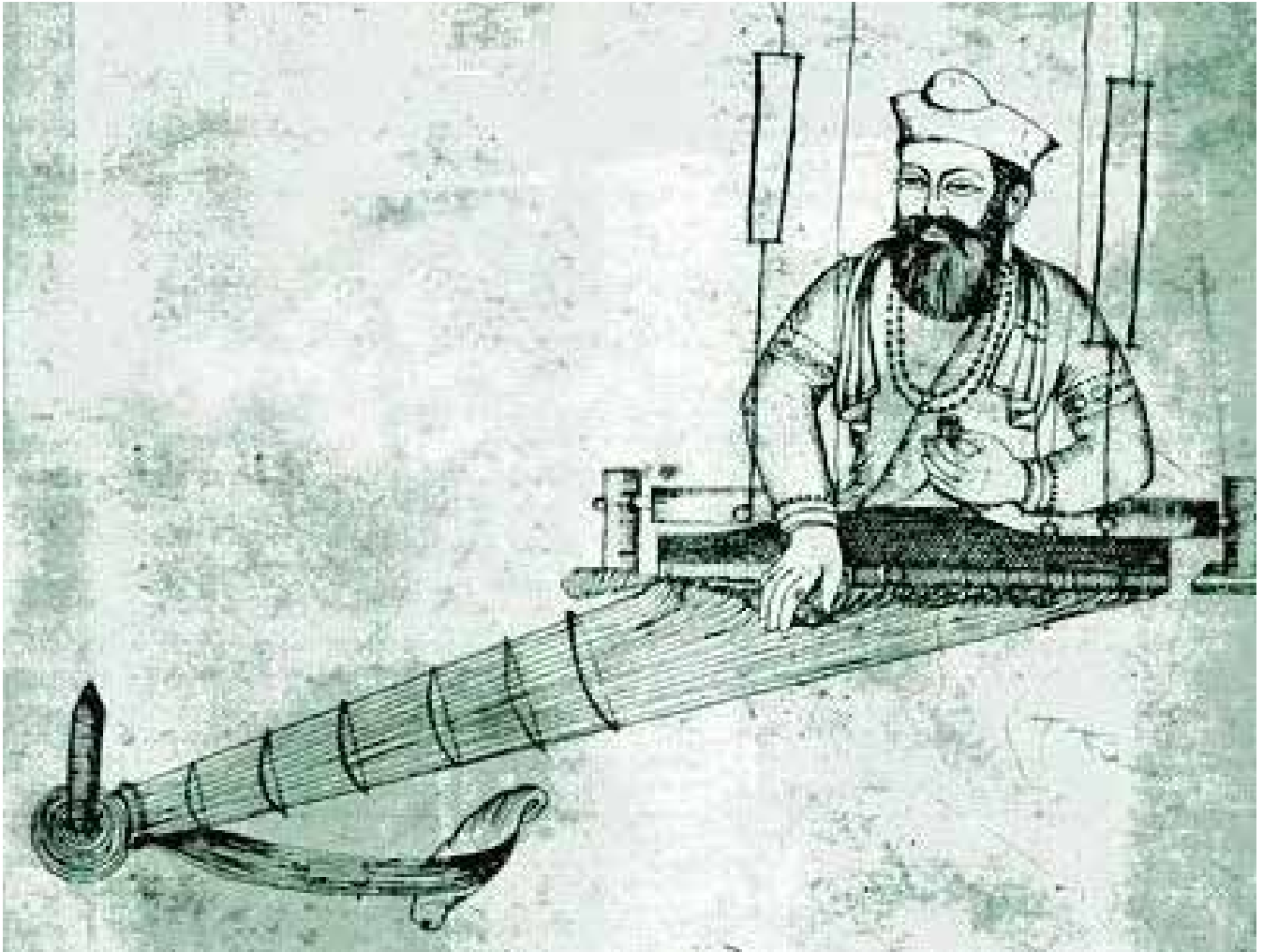
कैरियर: काम में बदलाव या नई शुरुआत ।  
 धन: रुका पैसा मिलेगा, खर्च कम होंगे ।  
 स्वास्थ्य: नींद और मानसिक शांति जरूरी ।  
 प्रेम: दूरी कम होगी, रिश्ते मजबूत होंगे ।



कहत कबीर

# आस्था, असहमति और आज का समय

दक्षिण एशिया की स्मृति में “कहत कबीर” केवल अतीत की प्रतिध्वनि नहीं, बल्कि वर्तमान की चुनौती है— एक ऐसा प्रश्न, जो धर्म, जाति और सत्ता के आवरण को भेदकर मनुष्य से मनुष्य होने का साहस माँगता है। “कहत कबीर” केवल एक आध्यात्मिक उद्घोष नहीं है। अफ़सोस, आज आस्था सत्ता का औज़ार बन चुकी है और असहमति अपराध। ऐसे शोरगुल भरे समय में, जहाँ घुटन और भय व्याप्त हैं, कबीर को फिर से सुनने की कोशिश एक शुभ संकेत है—जो बताता है कि साहस की संभावना अब भी शेष है।



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लेखक इस्तांबुल (तुर्की) का इब्र खल्दून विश्वविद्यालय के सभ्यता अध्ययन विभाग में एक शोधार्थी एवं शिक्षण साथी हैं।

**एक स्वर, जो घटना बन गया**  
दक्षिण एशिया के इतिहास में एक घटना घटी। जंगलों, गाँवों, गलियों, बाज़ारों और घर-आँगनों में एक स्वर गुँजा—“कहत कबीर।”

वह स्वर शांति लेकर आया, हृदय को सांत्वना दी, प्रेम का स्पर्श दिया। हम नहीं जानते कि “कहत कबीर” पहली बार किसने कहा, पर लोकस्मृति कहती है—कबीर ने। किसी के लिए वह सुकून

बना, किसी के लिए बेचैनी। फिर भी उसने कुछ माँगा नहीं—सिर्फ़ सोचने का साहस दिया।

कोई उनके दोहों में खो गया, कोई उनके शब्दों में। किसी ने उन्हें गीत बना दिया, किसी ने पवित्र ग्रंथ। इस तरह लोगों ने “कहत कबीर” को पुकारा।

पर “कहत कबीर” स्वयं एक घटना था— एक हताश और थके समाज में मानवीय चेतना

● ●  
 “कहत कबीर”  
 केवल भक्ति नहीं,  
 प्रतिरोध की भाषा  
 है—एक ऐसा स्वर  
 जो धर्म, जाति और  
 सत्ता के आवरण को  
 चीरकर मनुष्य से  
 साहस माँगता है।

● ●  
 जब आस्था सत्ता  
 का औज़ार और  
 असहमति अपराध  
 बन जाए, तब कबीर  
 को सुनना एक  
 सांस्कृतिक नहीं,  
 नैतिक ज़रूरत बन  
 जाता है।

● ●  
 यह कथा अतीत की  
 नहीं, वर्तमान की  
 है—जहाँ घुटन,  
 भय और शोर के  
 बीच ‘कहत कबीर’  
 आज भी हमें सोचने  
 और सच बोलने का  
 साहस देता है।

● ●  
 कबीर कोई स्मृति  
 नहीं, एक जीवित  
 चुनौती हैं—जो  
 पूछते हैं कि क्या  
 हम अब भी मनुष्य  
 बने रहने का साहस  
 रखते हैं?

● ●

का उभार, जहाँ सामाजिक और धार्मिक उत्पीड़न  
 घुटन बन चुका था।  
 वह स्वर असहाय नहीं था।  
 वह चुनौती था।  
 वह दिशा था।  
 और शायद—एक वरदान।

**क्या आज भी वही समय है?**

क्या आज दक्षिण एशिया उसी मोड़ पर खड़ा है?  
 क्या हम उस क्षण को पहचान सकते हैं?  
 क्या हमारे भीतर उसे समझने की बौद्धिक  
 क्षमता शेष है?

और क्या “कहत कबीर” फिर से गूँज सकता

फूटा था।

वही आग, जिसके बारे में उन्होंने गाया था—  
 चला चली पियावा के देस,  
 नइहरवा में आग लगे सजनी।  
 ब्रह्मा जरी गई, विष्णु जरी गई,  
 जरी गई शेष-सुरेश।

यह आग सांसारिक नहीं थी। यह सत्य  
 की आग थी—जो झूठे देवताओं को जला  
 देती है।

और इस दहक में उन्होंने पानी नहीं माँगा,  
 संदेश दिया—

कहे सुख-सागर, तू मान ल कहनवा,  
 सतगुरु कबीर सन्देश।



है—या वह केवल एक लोकगीत बनकर रह  
 गया है?

चारों ओर देखिए। हवा फिर भारी हो चली  
 है। यह लकड़ी के धुँएँ या करघे की गंध  
 से नहीं, बल्कि नफ़रत की डिजिटल स्थैतिक से  
 भरी है।

आज के नए पुरोहित टेलीविज़न स्क्रीन  
 पर विराजमान हैं। उनके मंदिर सोशल मीडिया  
 एल्गोरिद्म में बसते हैं। वे जनेऊ नहीं पहनते—वे  
 साज़िशें बेचते हैं।

जाति, जिस पर कबीर ने थूका था, आज  
 राजनीतिक घोषणापत्रों में मुस्कुराती फिरती है।

धर्म—जिसे उन्होंने बच्चों का खेल कहा  
 था—अब सत्ता की सबसे धारदार तलवार बन  
 चुका है।

**वही ज़मीन, वही आग**

यह वही ज़मीन है—उपेक्षित, पर  
 उपजाऊ—जहाँ से कभी “कहत कबीर”

**आज वह आवाज़ कहाँ है?**

शायद वह किसी नए पैग़म्बर में नहीं, बल्कि पुराने  
 को वर्तमान में खींच लाने में है।

हमने उनकी चुनौती को भजन बना दिया।

उनकी क्रांति को पाठ्यपुस्तकों में बंद  
 कर दिया।

उनके प्रश्नों को दर्शन की मुलायम चादर में  
 लपेट दिया।

पर ज़रा सुनिए—

“हिंदू कहत राम हमारा, मुसलमान रहमाना,  
 आपस में दोउ लरत-मरत हैं, मरम कोई  
 न जाना।”

क्या यह भजन है?

या समाज की सबसे सटीक चिकित्सकीय  
 रिपोर्ट?

कबीर प्रार्थना नहीं कर रहे थे।

वे इशारा कर रहे थे—उन मूर्खताओं की  
 ओर, जहाँ लोग प्यास से मरते हुए भी पानी के  
 नाम पर लड़ते हैं।



### जहाँ आज भी कबीर जीवित हैं

उनकी आवाज़ आज भी वहाँ है—

जहाँ कोई कहता है, “बादशाह नंगा है।”

जहाँ एक किसान उस नेता पर हँसता है जो ईश्वरीय अधिकार का दावा करता है।

जहाँ एक युवती उस जाति को अस्वीकार करती है जो उस पर थोपी गई है।

जहाँ एक कलाकार मुखौटों के पीछे छिपे साझा दुख को चित्रित करता है।

यह उस शांत, जिद्दी अस्वीकृति में जीवित है, जो थोपी गई पागलपन को स्वीकार नहीं करती।

### कबीर: एक बौद्धिक विद्रोह

“कहत कबीर” बौद्धिक स्वतंत्रता का घोषणापत्र था।

वह वह क्षण था जब किसी ने कहा—

“तू कहता कागद की लेखी, मैं कहता आँखिन की देखी।”

यह साहस था। और आज भी है।

कबीर भारतीय परंपरा के विरोधी नहीं थे। वे उसके सबसे गहरे प्रश्नकर्ता थे।

भारतीय सोच की दो धाराएँ हैं—

एक, जो स्वीकार करती है;

दूसरी, जो प्रश्न उठाती है।

कबीर दूसरी धारा के प्रतिनिधि हैं। वे प्रवाह को नकारते नहीं, उसमें उतरकर उसकी जड़ता को उजागर करते हैं। उनकी आवाज़ भाग्यवाद में नहीं, मुक्ति की संभावना में विश्वास रखती है।

### अंत में: एक अधूरा सवाल

प्रश्न यह नहीं कि हम एक और कबीर पैदा कर सकते हैं या नहीं।

प्रश्न यह है—क्या हम उस कबीर को सुन सकते हैं जो पहले से हमारे बीच है?

क्या हम उसकी आवाज़ को आश्रमों की शांति से बाहर, सोशल मीडिया की अराजकता में सुन सकते हैं?

क्या हम राजनीतिक-धार्मिक आडंबर के बीच उसकी चेतावनी पहचान सकते हैं?

यह स्वर कभी गीत नहीं था।

हमने ही उसे सुर में बाँध दिया।

वह तो कंपन था—हिलाने के लिए।

दक्षिण एशिया की स्थिति स्पष्ट है।

घुटन वास्तविक है।

बौद्धिक क्षमता मौजूद है—बस डर और शोर के नीचे दबी हुई।

“कहत कबीर” को फिर से गूँजने के लिए,

हमें पहले उसे गाना बंद करना होगा—

और कहने का साहस जुटाना होगा।

पंद्रहवीं सदी की वह आवाज़ आज भी प्रतीक्षा में है—

पूजा के लिए नहीं, प्रयोग के लिए।

चुनौती अब भी सामने है।

सवाल सिर्फ यह है—

कौन है, जो एक बार फिर उसे आमंत्रित करेगा? ■

**POWERGRID - Powering South Asian Energy Cooperation**



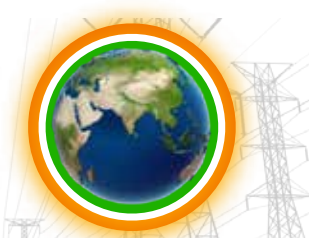
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- Instapin from Branches
- BOI Internet Banking

### ELIGIBILITY FOR RUPAY WOMEN'S CREDIT CARD

- A minimum age of 18 years
- A regular income proof. The customer can either be a salaried employee, or self-employed and managing his own business
- A Female Indian Resident or a Non-Resident Indian (NRI)
- A good credit history

Contact your bank branch for more details.

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