

Outlook

Read • Think • Understand



Sanjib Sahoo



Nandan Nilekani



Challa Rajendra Prasad



Challa Srishant



Narayan Das Agrawal



Falguni Nayar



Anisha Chandy Eckardt



Vivek Singh Rathore



Anuradha Puri Rathore



Hafeez Contractor



Dr Syed Muhammad Ali Al Hussaini



Dr (Prof) Anil Arora



Sharad Baid



S. Rashpal Singh Dhaliwal



Abhishek Kulkarni



Sundar Pichai



Manav Subodh



Virat Kohli



Dr S Chandrakumar



Dr M P Shyam



Satya Nadella



Dr Shakti Gupta



Raj Prabhu



Dr Davish Jain



Sridhar Vembu



Mohan Subrahmanya



Neeraj Chopra



Ritesh Agarwal

GAMECHANGERS OF THE DECADE



Gamechangers of the Decade

India's growth through unprecedented challenges and transformative changes sets a powerful benchmark on the global stage

Over the past decade, India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world. Its GDP has expanded from \$2.1 trillion in 2015 to \$4.3 trillion in 2025, an impressive 105% growth, as reported by the IMF. This trajectory reflects a nation that has increasingly embraced technology, research, innovation, and education as core drivers of development. With a clear focus on inclusive growth, sustainability, and effective governance, India is steadily addressing the consequences of geopolitical challenges while remaining an attractive destination for global investors, whether resource, efficiency, or market seekers.

India's financial markets have mirrored this upward momentum, delivering an average annual return of 15.2% over the past decade, outperforming global benchmarks like the S&P 500 according to BCG's India

Value Creators Report 2025. Meanwhile, digital public infrastructure platforms such as Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker revolutionised access to services across governance, finance, healthcare, and education. AI is further amplifying this transformation, enabling precision agriculture, climate forecasting, and scalable healthcare diagnostics.

At the heart of this progress lies the powerful combination of technology and talent. India's youthful population presents immense opportunity but also underscores the urgency of large-scale job creation, particularly in manufacturing sectors with high employment potential. Concurrently, reforms such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 are reshaping the education landscape by enhancing quality, flexibility, and accountability.

Infrastructures that build smart

cities, enhance rural development, improve gender participation in the workforce, and strengthen social equity have laid the groundwork for long-term, balanced growth. Collaboration between public and private sectors has further accelerated innovation, knowledge exchange, and skill development across industries.

The Outlook feature on "Gamechangers of the Decade" celebrates individuals who embody this spirit of transformation. From visionary entrepreneurs and policymakers to social innovators, corporate leaders, and educationists, these trailblazers are redefining excellence, driving impactful change, and shaping a future-ready India. Their leadership, resilience, and commitment continue to inspire progress, reinforcing India's journey toward becoming a developed and globally influential economy.

Nurturing Future Leaders

Dr M P Shyam speaks of RV Educational Institutions' framework to produce a future-ready workforce capable of contributing meaningfully to national development and global progress, in conversation with Aditi Chakraborty



Dr M P Shyam,
President, RV Educational Institutions (RVEI)

Q What is your view on the transformation of education and skilling in India?

In the current scenario, policy reforms, technology and skilling are the key drivers of Indian education. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the introduction of the NEP 2020 has made significant changes in the education system to provide greater flexibility and relevance to students' needs. For example, the multi-exit system recognises partial learning, allowing students to adapt education according to their circumstances or career aspirations.

Universities are increasingly focusing on skill-based and experiential learning. Across our campuses under RV Educational Institutions, also known as RVEI, we have established multiple skill laboratories, integrated into the curriculum, where students can experiment, build prototypes, and apply theoretical concepts to real-world problems.

To ensure that the curricula reflect contemporary needs of modern industries, universities work closely with industry leaders to identify skill gaps. At RVEI, industry experts and corporate leaders are part of advisory boards that help shape academic programmes.

Q How is RV Educational Institutions honing future-ready students from across various sections of society?

In India, about 70% of the population

lives in rural areas, viewing higher education as a pathway to stable jobs. To support this aspiration, we promote strong industry-academia collaboration. We also focus on faculty development, including advanced research and sabbaticals at leading institutions such as IISc and the IITs to enhance their knowledge curve.

We encourage research and innovation, especially interdisciplinary work in emerging areas like AI, advanced manufacturing, and materials sciences. Students and faculty collaborate to solve complex technological problems. Industry partnerships through MoUs with numerous companies, help students receive opportunities for internships and real-world projects, often leading to research publications and early job offers.

We emphasise communication skills, critical thinking, and professional development, particularly to support students from rural or regional backgrounds. With the rise of digital learning, recorded lectures, online resources, and continuous assessment through quizzes, projects, and assignments have become integral to education.

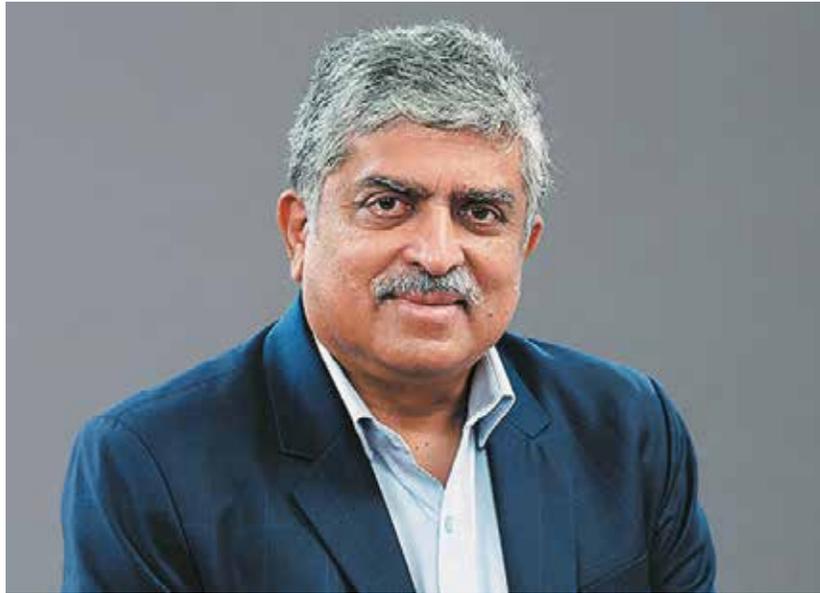
Q How is RV Educational Institutions ensuring new-age learning and holistic development?

At RV Educational Institutions, we promote holistic development by combining academic learning with innovation, entrepreneurship, social responsibility, and sustainability.

Innovation and creativity are encouraged through 25 "Centres of Excellence" and student clubs, where students explore new technologies, build prototypes, and participate in national and international competitions. For example, our students have even collaborated with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on advanced research projects like launching student-made satellites to study gut bacteria in space.

RV Educational Institutions has introduced, along with engineering and other traditional courses, interdisciplinary programmes such as media, filmmaking, and digital production, giving students hands-on experience in creative fields. Industry collaborations with companies like Mercedes-Benz and MG Motor provide specialised training in automotive management and electric vehicle engineering, leading to strong placement outcomes in India and overseas.

Through initiatives like the National Service Scheme, students work with rural communities and contribute to village development. They participate in projects related to water conservation, lake restoration, and renewable energy. Programmes such as the Surya Mitra solar initiative help in making a career in the renewable energy sector. We aim to prepare students to succeed professionally while contributing meaningfully to society and national development.



Nandan Nilekani
Co-founder and Chairman, Infosys Technologies Limited

Digital Economy for Development

A navigator in the domain of technology and a leader of social causes, Nandan Nilekani continues to champion technology as a tool for equitable and connected growth

Nandan Nilekani, Chairman of the Infosys board, addressed shareholders in the company's annual report for FY'25, highlighting that multiple converging global trends are compelling the company to revisit its business fundamentals, emphasizing stability and AI integration for clients.

Born in Bengaluru, Nilekani earned his bachelor's degree from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay. Since 1978, he has been at the forefront of India's IT revolution, helping establish the country as a global technology powerhouse. He co-founded Infosys, an India-based multinational providing business

consulting, technology, engineering, and outsourcing services. Between 2009 and 2014, he served as the chairman of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), responsible for issuing Aadhaar ID numbers to all Indian residents—a role equivalent in rank to a cabinet minister.

Nilekani's leadership of the Aadhaar initiative earned him The Economist Social & Economic Innovation Award in 2014. In 2017, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from Ernst & Young, the CNBC-TV18 India Business Leader Award, and the 22nd Nikkei Asia Prize for Economic and Business Innovation. He was inducted as an International Honorary Member of

the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2019. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2006. In January 2023, he was appointed co-chair of the G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure for Economic Transformation, Financial Inclusion, and Development.

Beyond Infosys, Nilekani co-founded and chairs the EkStep Foundation, a not-for-profit platform focused on improving literacy and numeracy for millions of children. He is also an accomplished author, having written *Imagining India* and co-authored *Rebooting India: Realizing a Billion Aspirations with Viral Shah*, and *The Art of Bitfulness: Keeping Calm in the Digital World with Tanuj Bhojwani*, released in January 2022.

Nilekani has been a keynote speaker at global forums including the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2025, the Semafor World Economy Summit 2025, and the Raisina Dialogue 2025, advocating adaptable systems over dependence on specific AI models. He predicts that India will host 1 million startups by 2035, driven by digital public infrastructure, AI, and fintech.

His advisory role in initiatives such as the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), DigiLocker, and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) highlights his commitment to inclusive technological progress, enabling smaller merchants to harness technology for growth. As of October 2025, his net worth is estimated at \$3.2 billion. He also serves as the chief mentor for the India Energy Stack task force and was the chief guest at the Mayo College Prize Giving 2025 ceremony, reflecting his enduring influence on India's digital and economic transformation.



Sanjib Sahoo, President, Global Platform Group, Ingram Micro

Sanjib Sahoo: Leading in Transformative Times

In an era where artificial intelligence and digital platforms are reshaping industries, Sanjib Sahoo has emerged as one of the architects of modern enterprise transformation.

For him, the journey of transformation did not begin in boardrooms or technology labs. It began with a dream.

Born and raised in Kolkata in a modest household, Sahoo began working at a young age after the passing of his father to help support his family. Balancing work, studies, and responsibility shaped his early years, but it was his mother's optimism and quiet resilience in the face of adversity that left the deepest mark. She instilled in him a powerful belief: that circumstances

do not define destiny, and that courage, integrity, and imagination can change the course of one's life.

That belief would go on to define Sahoo's career.

Throughout his journey in technology, he has repeatedly stepped into moments of change—often when industries were uncertain about what the future would look like. Early in his career, he helped pioneer one of the first online trading platforms designed for both web and mobile, an

innovation that would later be acquired and evolve into what the world came to know as E*TRADE.

Today, as President of the Global Platform Group at Ingram Micro, a Fortune 100 technology company, Sahoo is leading another bold transformation. He is helping reimagine a 45-year-old global technology distribution giant into a modern platform company powered by data, artificial intelligence, and ecosystem collaboration.

For Sahoo, transformation is not simply about technology. It is about belief.

"Every meaningful transformation begins with an idea that feels bigger than what is currently possible," he often says. "In that moment, leaders have two choices: step back into comfort or step forward with conviction."

Over the years, he has come to believe that leaders who successfully drive change share three core principles.

First, belief must be visible. People do not rally around strategy documents; they rally around purpose. When leaders clearly articulate what an organization can become, teams find the courage to pursue that future.

Second, momentum begins with action. Transformation rarely starts with perfect clarity. It begins with curiosity and the willingness to ask a simple question: What will it take?

Finally, change must live in the heart of the organization. It cannot be a side initiative driven by a few individuals. When transformation becomes part of a company's DNA, people stop fearing change and start building it.

In a world defined by relentless technological disruption, Sahoo believes leadership is not about predicting the future. It is about daring to dream of a different future—and inspiring others to build it together.



Challa Rajendra Prasad
Executive Chairman
CCL Products (India) Limited



Challa Srishant
Managing Director
CCL Products (India) Limited

From Beans to Global Brands

From brewing success across generations, a sneak peek into how the Challa family built India's instant coffee powerhouse by becoming a pioneer of global coffee leadership

Over the decades, India's role, from being an exporter of raw coffee beans to becoming a significant player in value-added coffee manufacturing, has boosted the country's economy through increased foreign exchange, employment generation and profit maximisation. At the heart of this transformation stands the vision of a man who dared to dream big. The pioneering journey of Challa Rajendra Prasad, often referred to as the "Coffee King", unfolds a story of grit and gumption, as he became the driving force for placing Indian instant coffee on the global map.

Building the Coffee Empire

For Challa Rajendra Prasad, entrepreneurship was a deliberate choice. Growing up in an agricultural family in Andhra Pradesh, moulded by strong Gandhian values inculcated by his late father, who was a High Court Judge, he was inspired by industrial

pioneers and driven by a desire to build something of his own.

"When I finished mechanical engineering in 1970, I never wanted to work under anybody," he recalls. "I am the first generation entrepreneur in my family." With just ₹50,000 as initial capital and support from a state finance corporation loan, he began his first industrial venture in Hyderabad.



CCL Products (India) Limited manufacturing unit in Duggirala, AP

The early years were modest, but his entrepreneurial instinct soon led him to explore new opportunities.

In the 1980s, India was primarily a tea-drinking country and exported nearly 75% of its coffee as raw beans, though it produced some of the world's finest coffee. Challa Rajendra Prasad identified this critical gap and believed that the country could do much more by exporting value-added coffee products and competing globally.

"At the time, India's industrial landscape was shaped by the restrictive policies of the License Raj, with multinational companies dominating the market, posing major entry barriers for entrepreneurs. But I kept trying my luck even after getting rejected for over nine years!" Wistfully remembers Challa Rajendra Prasad. "When I approached the Ministry of Commerce for a licence to establish a coffee plant, I was advised to consult the Coffee Board of India. There too, I received little encouragement, but I remained undeterred."

Under the Government of India's newly introduced 100% Export Orientated Unit (EOU) scheme, he finally secured approval and in 1989 established Asian Coffee Ltd in Toopran village, becoming the first 100 per cent Indian-owned company engaged in the manufacture and export of instant coffee to Europe and the United States. The company also achieved a notable milestone by

becoming the first in India to receive support from the Commonwealth Development Corporation, reflecting international confidence in India's emerging capabilities in value-added coffee production.

After institutional investors later sold their stake in Asian Coffee to Tata Tea Limited which later became Tata Coffee, Challa Rajendra Prasad continued his entrepreneurial journey with renewed ambition. He went on to establish Continental Coffee (India) Ltd, which later evolved into CCL Products (India) Limited. Beginning with a modern manufacturing facility in Duggirala, Andhra Pradesh, he steadily built the company into a globally recognised coffee manufacturer.

Coffee Cup on Global Map

Transforming a single plant into one of the world's largest private-label instant coffee manufacturers, CCL Products has developed a robust international footprint, exporting premium coffee products to more than 100 countries and supplying global retailers and brands. Today, it operates manufacturing facilities in India, Vietnam, and Switzerland, exporting coffee products to major markets worldwide, producing a wide range of coffee products, including freeze-dried coffee, spray-dried coffee, roast and ground coffee, and premix blends. From an initial production capacity of 3,000 metric



CCL Products (India) Limited manufacturing unit in Kuvakolli, AP

tonnes, the company now has a combined manufacturing capacity exceeding 80,000 metric tonnes; making it the second largest instant coffee manufacturer in the world.

"Our strategy is simple. We adopt the best technology in the world and build long-term relationships with global clients," he says. These relationships have proven to be one of the company's strongest competitive advantages, with many customers continuing partnerships spanning decades.

Second-Generation Leadership

Challa Srishant is shaping the next phase of growth at CCL Products (India) with a clear focus on sustainable expansion and brand development. A gold medalist in Corporate Law at NALSAR and a diploma holder in Information Technology Law from the Asian School of Cyber Laws, Srishant stands tall as a new-age business leader with a strong analytical and legal foundation.

Under his leadership, CCL has expanded its consumer-facing portfolio and strengthened its presence in the domestic market through brands such as Percol, Continental Xtra and Malgudi Coffee. This strategic shift signals a move beyond export dependence toward building recognisable retail brands.

Srishant is also driving initiatives in product innovation, speciality coffee,

and sustainable operations. By doubling manufacturing capacity, the company has created room to onboard new customers while maintaining operational efficiency. His approach emphasises improving product mix, expanding into premium offerings, and enhancing EBITDA margins.

"We understand evolving consumer preferences in packaging, branding, and speciality formats," he notes. "Long-term success depends on trust, quality, and strong relationships rather than short-term gains."

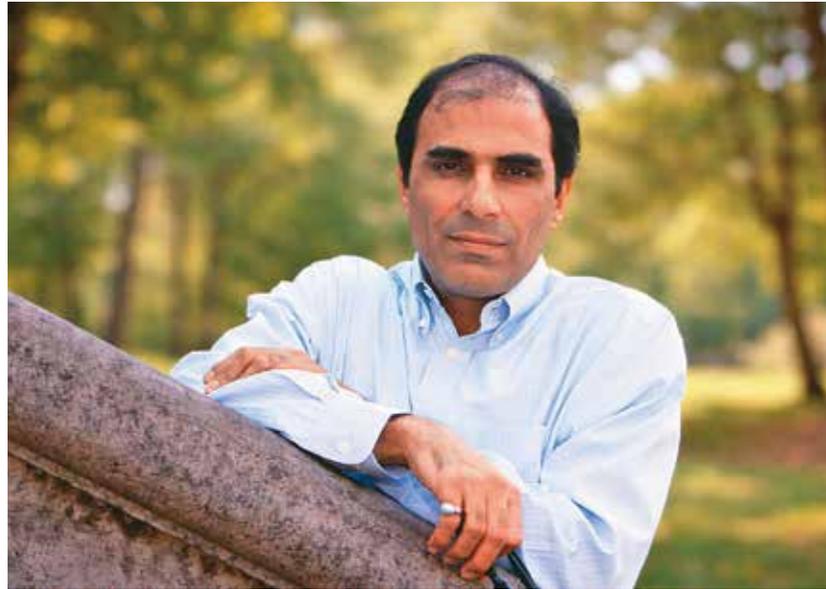
Growth, Legacy and Nation-Building

CCL Products has built a strong reputation for technological excellence and consistent product quality. Its manufacturing plants use some of the world's most advanced instant coffee processing technologies, enabling the company to deliver high-quality products at scale. Innovation, quality, and operational efficiency remain the core pillars of its success.

The company produces more than a thousand customised coffee blends using select Arabica and Robusta beans handpicked from renowned coffee-growing regions across the world.

In recent years, the company has expanded its production capacity significantly, including a ₹400-crore spray-dried coffee facility in Tirupati. Strong global demand has supported robust financial performance, with revenue growth exceeding 30 per cent YoY. By early 2026, CCL's market capitalisation crossed \$1 billion, reflecting growing investor confidence and a widening global footprint.

Founder Challa Rajendra Prasad also served on the Coffee Board of India and received the International Instant Coffee Manufacturers' Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019. Today, CCL continues to align with a "Make in India" vision by generating jobs and driving economic growth while bringing premium coffee experiences to Indian consumers.



Hafeez Contractor, AIIAGD Arch, MS Arch & UD (USA), Doctor of Architecture Honoris Causa

Excellence in Every Edifice

Hafeez Contractor redefining India's urban landscape through bold, large-scale designs

Hafeez Contractor's name is as iconic as his designs that play a significant part in the transformation of modern India's skyline. Over three decades, he has emerged as one of the country's most influential architects, designing at-scale urban landscapes from soaring skyscrapers to expansive townships while blending aesthetics with functionality.

Dreams to Designs

Born in Mumbai, Hafeez Sorab Contractor started his journey into architecture early. After studying at the Academy of Architecture in Mumbai, he graduated from Columbia University in the late 1970s. He started off as an apprentice with T Khareghat, where he gained valuable hands-on experience. In 1982, he founded Architect Hafeez Contractor (AHC), which would become India's largest

architectural firm.

AHC has evolved as a powerhouse of design and execution, employing over 550 professionals, including architects, planners, engineers, and designers. With more than 2,500 clients and projects spanning over 100 cities and five countries, the firm exemplifies a rare combination of scale and efficiency in its domain. AHC's diverse portfolio covers a wide spectrum from residential developments and commercial complexes to airports, hospitals, and educational institutions.

Among Contractor's most iconic projects are the Imperial Towers in Mumbai, which rank among the tallest residential buildings in India, and the 23 Marina in Dubai, one of the tallest residential towers in the world. As are the ONGC headquarters in Dehradun, DLF Cybercity in Gurugram, and the Infosys

corporate headquarters in Pune, as well as numerous complexes and townships across cities, including the modernisation of key airports in Mumbai and New Delhi and the design of the renowned DY Patil Stadium, considered one of the finest cricket stadiums globally.

Shaping a Sustainable Future

Hafeez Contractor believes architecture must respond to the "spirit of the time", balancing innovation with the realities of urban living. For decades, he has advocated for compact, vertical cities as a practical solution to India's growing cities, which would help preserve land for forests, agriculture, and open space. He has consistently designed buildings that reduce material and energy waste, with minimised service loads, tightly planned cores and prefabricated construction.

"The Earth is not ours to exhaust but belongs to the generations after us." Contractor emphasises the future not as an afterthought, but as the natural next step in responsible design.

The Art of Purposeful Space

Beyond commercial success, Contractor has shown a deep commitment to social impact. He has actively worked on solutions for Mumbai's housing challenges, particularly through slum rehabilitation initiatives. His proposals, such as the Western Waterfront Development, aim to create greener public spaces while improving urban infrastructure. These efforts underline his vision of architecture as a tool for social transformation, not just physical construction.

His contributions have earned him widespread recognition, including over 75 national and international awards. The Government of India honoured him with the prestigious Padma Bhushan in 2016, cementing his legacy as a pioneer in the field.



Vivek Singh Rathore
Partner and Principal Architect
Salient



Anuradha Puri Rathore
Co-founder and Landscape Principal
Salient

Transforming Architecture as a Living Ecosystem

From master plans to heritage-inspired developments, Salient evolves contextually, blending architecture, art, and ecology to create human-centred, sustainable spaces

In an evolving landscape of Indian architecture, Salient stands resolute with its design practice rooted in the interconnectedness of people, culture, and nature. Founded in 2005 in Kolkata by architect Vivek Singh Rathore and landscape architect Anuradha Puri Rathore, the multidisciplinary studio has built a reputation for crafting spaces that celebrate India's diversity while embracing sustainable and inclusive design principles.

Discovery through Design

At the core of Salient's philosophy lies a simple yet powerful belief: *our creations are modifications of our relationship with nature*. Rather than treating nature as a backdrop, the studio views it as a collaborator. Vivek Singh Rathore, a gold medallist from IIT Roorkee, emphasises, "Our design process begins by understanding the living systems of a place: its ecology, culture, climate, and community. Architecture is not merely about constructing buildings but about creating environments that nurture life. This approach often

leads to designs where built form dissolves into landscape, allowing communities to engage with nature in meaningful ways."

An Indian Thali of Design

Salient describes its design ethos as a rich combination of diverse influences that come together to form a harmonious whole. Much like the varied dishes of a traditional thali, their projects integrate multiple materials, cultural references, and design ideas. Brick, stone, metal, vegetation, and water coexist within their projects, reflecting both regional craftsmanship and contemporary performance-driven architecture. Large-scale public and mixed-use developments are particularly meaningful for the team because they bring together diverse groups of people, creating spaces where architecture becomes a shared cultural experience. Inclusivity plays a central role in the studio's practice. For example, projects like the Jagannath Temple Complex in Digha, West Bengal, illustrate how cultural identity and sustainable design

principles can coexist. This approach not only celebrates India's material heritage but also ensures durability, climate responsiveness, and ecological balance.

Orchestration with Nature

One of the studio's defining strengths is weaving nature into spaces, led by Anuradha Rathore. A graduate from IIT Roorkee and a gold medallist in M Arch in Landscape Architecture from CEPT, Ahmedabad, she plays a pivotal role in ensuring that every project integrates ecological systems into its core design. "Green corridors, water-sensitive planning, carefully curated plant palettes and integration of traditional Indian values with sustainability transform buildings into living ecosystems." Anuradha highlights the organisation's commitment to green architecture: "The landscape is not an afterthought but a guiding element that shapes spatial experience and environmental performance."

Recognised among India's top architectural firms, with more than 100 awards and over 200 publications, the studio's work across master planning, hospitality, museums, and urban design reflects a thoughtful blend of tradition, research, and innovation.

Salient has delivered Eastern India's most significant green buildings, such as Swabhumi, Kolkata's 13-acre heritage plaza, with Raajkutir, a boutique hotel adaptively reimagined with 19th-century Bengal architectural style and intricate craftsmanship. Milan Mela, a 22-acre trade fair complex integrates modular, recyclable design with biophilic, tech-enabled, and community-centric spaces hosting 250,000 visitors daily. BIOWONDER, a LEED Gold-rated corporate park embodies biophilic design integrating nature with offices and hospitality. Green terraces and daylight-optimised spaces enhance well-being, performance, and sustainability.



Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google

From Chennai Roots to Global Tech Power

Sundar Pichai's journey exemplifies quiet brilliance, ethical leadership and technology's transformative power at global scale

Sundar Pichai's rise reflects a rare blend of technical brilliance, steady leadership and commitment to inclusive technological progress.

Pichai Sundararajan — globally known as Sundar Pichai — stands today as one of the most influential technology leaders of the 21st century. As the CEO of Alphabet Inc. and Google, he occupies a rare space in global corporate leadership: a visionary who has shaped the everyday technological lives of billions while retaining a reputation for humility, restraint and thoughtful decision-making. His rise from modest beginnings to the helm of one of the world's most powerful tech conglomerates remains among modern India's

most celebrated success stories.

Born in 1972 to a middle-class family in Tamil Nadu, Pichai grew up in an environment that placed a premium on discipline, perseverance and academic excellence. His father, an electrical engineer at GEC, introduced him early to the world of technology. Family accounts highlight his unusual ability to remember long strings of numbers — an early glimpse of the analytical acuity that would later define his engineering career.

After completing his schooling and graduating with a degree in metallurgical engineering from IIT Kharagpur, Pichai's academic achievements earned him a scholarship to Stanford University. A subsequent

management degree from the Wharton School — where he was recognised as a Siebel Scholar and a Palmer Scholar — equipped him with a rare blend of technical depth and business insight.

Pichai joined Google in 2004, at a time when the company was expanding from a search engine into a global suite of digital products. His early work on the Google Toolbar quickly drew the attention of senior executives. But it was his leadership of Google Chrome, launched in 2008, that reshaped both his career trajectory and the company's future. Chrome rapidly became the world's most widely used browser, paving the way for Google's dominance in cloud-based computing.

From there, Pichai's responsibilities grew swiftly. He oversaw major products such as Gmail, Google Maps, Google Drive, Android and ChromeOS, playing a crucial role in streamlining Google's sprawling ecosystem. His ability to break down complex engineering challenges into simple, user-focused solutions earned him deep respect across the organisation.

In 2015, during Google's restructuring under the newly formed Alphabet, Pichai was appointed CEO of Google. Four years later, he succeeded Larry Page as CEO of Alphabet, placing him in charge of ventures spanning Search, YouTube, Android, DeepMind, Waymo and multiple AI-driven research initiatives.

Known for his consensus-building approach, quiet confidence and long-term focus, Pichai has led Google through major advances in artificial intelligence, sustainability efforts and global internet access initiatives. Despite his global stature, he frequently emphasises his Indian roots, the power of education and the importance of technology that serves society.

Scaling Green Skills for India

Manav Subodh is a trailblazer in AI, Net Zero, and green skills, building scalable skilling ecosystems that empower youth to drive AI-enabled, community-led climate solutions

How are you driving sustainable impact in the green economy, green jobs, and climate action?

I founded 1M1B (One Million for One Billion) in 2014 with the belief that young people can be the most powerful drivers of social and economic transformation. Over the past decade, our work has increasingly focused on preparing youth to participate in the green economy through climate action, green jobs, and AI-enabled skills.

Our approach is simple: climate action must translate into livelihoods and economic opportunity for young people. Through our skilling programs and IBM SkillsBuild partnerships, 1M1B has already enabled over 12,000 youth to secure meaningful employment and jobs, many of them from rural and semi-urban regions. One of the most encouraging outcomes is that 70–80% of these young people are able to find employment close to their communities, helping strengthen local economies while addressing migration pressures.

To accelerate the green transition, we are building Green Skills and Applied AI Centres of Excellence, including a Green Skills Academy in Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh in collaboration with Salesforce, and a Center of Excellence on Green Skills and Applied AI with Microsoft and MeitY Startup Hub. These initiatives enable young graduates and engineers to work on real-world sustainability challenges, applying AI to areas such as climate resilience, sustainable supply chains, and energy efficiency.

Through these efforts, we are working to build a nationwide ecosystem where rural and urban youth can become innovators, entrepreneurs,

and professionals in India's green economy. Through this work, 1M1B is helping lay the foundations for what many see as one of the early movements to build India's green workforce.

How is 1M1B contributing to national priorities?

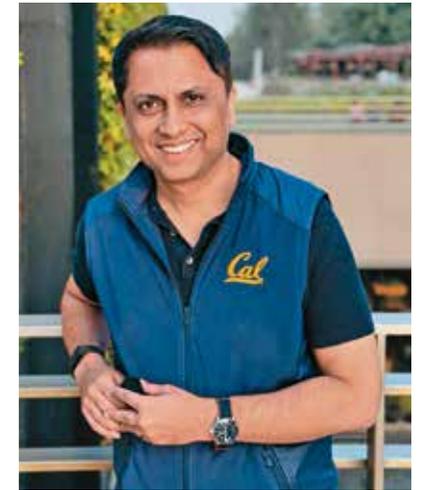
India's climate transition must also become a jobs and innovation transition, and that is where 1M1B's work aligns closely with national priorities.

Our initiatives focus on building skills pipelines for emerging sectors such as climate technology, sustainability, and applied AI, ensuring that young people are prepared for industries shaping India's future economy. By working with partners such as IBM, Microsoft, Salesforce, Meta, EY, Godrej, and Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail, we connect youth talent with industry needs while strengthening India's digital and green workforce.

At the same time, we are collaborating with state governments in Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka to develop scalable skilling and innovation ecosystems, particularly in districts where economic opportunities are limited.

Our goal is to establish many Green Skills and Applied AI Centres of Excellence across India, creating a framework where education institutions, industry, and government collaborate to accelerate climate innovation and job creation.

By aligning skills, technology, and sustainability, 1M1B aims to ensure that India's progress toward net zero also becomes a pathway for inclusive economic growth and youth empowerment.



Manav Subodh

Founder and CEO of 1M1B (One Million for One Billion), Expert-AI & Green Skills, Columnist

How are you fostering change at a macro level?

At a macro level, our work focuses on connecting grassroots innovation in India with global policy platforms, ensuring that young changemakers are not only beneficiaries of climate policy but active contributors to it.

Through partnerships with global institutions and United Nations platforms, 1M1B showcases India's youth-led climate innovation and AI talent, positioning India's demographic strength as both a climate dividend and an innovation dividend for the world.

We are also nurturing a new generation of climate and AI leaders through initiatives such as the "1.5 Matters" movement and the Youth Diplomacy program, which trains Climate Fellows to advocate for keeping global warming within 1.5°C while developing practical climate solutions on the ground.

By connecting grassroots action, youth innovation, and international collaboration, 1M1B is helping shape a model where India's young people can act locally, innovate nationally, and influence globally, contributing to a more sustainable and climate-resilient future.



Ritesh Agarwal, Founder & CEO of OYO

Setting New Standards in Hospitality

Redefining budget travel, Ritesh Agarwal has built OYO into a global hospitality empire

Few entrepreneurs have reshaped India's hospitality landscape as swiftly as Ritesh Agarwal, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of OYO. Building one of the world's largest hotel chains at a young age, his journey reflects a blend of ambition, calculated risk-taking, and sharp market insight.

Born in 1993 in Bissam Cuttack, Odisha, Agarwal displayed entrepreneurial instincts early. His growing interest in travel and business led him to explore budget accommodations during his teenage years. In the process, he encountered a recurring challenge—the lack of consistency in pricing, hygiene, and service quality across hotels. This gap would eventually shape his entrepreneurial vision.

Building on these early insights, he launched Oravel Stays in 2012 when he was just 18, as a platform for affordable accommodation tailored to

Indian travellers. Initially inspired by global platforms like Airbnb, the venture soon evolved. Agarwal realised that the real problem was not just discovery, but the absence of standardisation in budget hospitality. For travellers, affordability often came at the cost of reliability.

This realisation marked a turning point. In 2013, after being selected for the Thiel Fellowship, Agarwal gained access to mentorship and funding that helped him refine his model. Oravel was rebranded as OYO—"On Your Own"—with a clear strategic shift towards partnering with small and mid-sized hotels. The focus moved to upgrading infrastructure, introducing standardised amenities, and delivering a uniform customer experience.

From here, the idea began to scale rapidly. The concept—offering affordable, reliable, and standardised accommodation—resonated strongly

in a fragmented market. By leveraging technology, OYO enabled real-time bookings, dynamic pricing, and customer feedback, bringing much-needed transparency to the sector. This, in turn, created value for both travellers and hotel owners, accelerating adoption.

As the model strengthened, expansion followed. Within a few years, OYO grew from a domestic start-up into a global hospitality brand, establishing a presence across Asia, Europe, and the United States. Agarwal's rise drew global attention, positioning him among the youngest self-made billionaires.

This growth has been accompanied by significant recognition. He has featured in Forbes "30 Under 30 Asia" list and received awards such as the TiE-Lumis Entrepreneurial Excellence Award and the Business World Young Entrepreneur Award, reflecting his impact on the industry.

However, rapid expansion also brought challenges. Regulatory complexities, operational pressures, and competition tested the model, while the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the global travel sector. In response, Agarwal steered OYO towards restructuring, focusing on profitability, cost optimisation, and an asset-light strategy—ensuring resilience in a changing environment.

What distinguishes Agarwal's approach is his emphasis on scaling with standardisation. By bringing uniformity to budget hotels, he not only enhanced customer trust but also integrated small hotel owners into a larger, technology-driven ecosystem.

Today, OYO stands as a testament to how a simple idea—rooted in everyday observation—can evolve into a global enterprise. Ritesh Agarwal's journey highlights the power of innovation, persistence, and the ability to identify and address gaps in traditional industries, making him one of India's most notable entrepreneurial success stories.

From Vision to Vanguard

A family-led vision transforms CGC Jhanjeri into a multidisciplinary university, blending legacy, innovation, and global ambition to shape future-ready professionals

The evolution of Chandigarh Group of Colleges, Jhanjeri into CGC University, Mohali represents one of the most notable higher education success stories to emerge from North India in recent decades. At the centre of this transformation is Rashpal Singh Dhaliwal, Father of Education and Chancellor, CGC University, Mohali, whose vision has created an educational ecosystem that today educates more than 35,000 students across campuses spread over 100 acres of academic infrastructure.

Dhaliwal was born in the village of Lapon in Punjab's Moga district, where educational opportunities were limited and students often studied with minimal resources. His early education in government institutions exposed him to the challenges faced by students in rural India, shaping his belief that quality higher education should be accessible and affordable for young people from modest backgrounds.

In 2001, this belief translated into action when he established Chandigarh Group of Colleges near Mohali. Beginning with a modest campus and limited resources, the institution initially offered programs in computer applications such as MCA and BCA. Over time, the institution expanded into engineering and other professional

disciplines, gradually developing into a prominent educational hub known for strong industry partnerships, career-oriented programs, and high placement outcomes.

As the institution continued to grow in scale and reputation, the vision evolved into creating a multidisciplinary university. This led to the transformation of Chandigarh Group of Colleges, Jhanjeri into CGC University, Mohali, designed as a modern academic ecosystem aligned with global academic standards and industry expectations. The university today offers programs across diverse fields including engineering, management, sciences, law, commerce, and emerging technology disciplines, while maintaining a strong focus on innovation, research, and employability.

The continued growth of the institution is now being shaped by the next generation of the Dhaliwal family. Arsh Dhaliwal, the Managing Director of CGC University, Mohali, completed his postgraduate studies at California State University, Bakersfield in the



S. Rashpal Singh Dhaliwal, Chancellor, CGC University, Mohali, with his son Managing Director, **Arsh Dhaliwal**

United States. Bringing international academic exposure and a global outlook to the institution, he is actively leading the next phase of its development.

Under his leadership, the university is evolving into North India's first Gen Z-centred, AI-powered university, with a strong emphasis on technology-integrated learning, industry-driven programs, digital innovation, and future-ready skills designed for a rapidly transforming global workforce.

At the same time, Simran Dhaliwal leads the university's international engagement initiatives through the Department of International Affairs, strengthening global collaborations and expanding opportunities for international academic exchange.

From its beginnings as Chandigarh Group of Colleges, Jhanjeri to its emergence as CGC University, Mohali, the institution's journey reflects a powerful story of vision, perseverance, and family-led institution building. Guided by Rashpal Singh Dhaliwal's founding philosophy of accessible and high-quality education, and propelled by the global outlook of the next generation, CGC University, Mohali continues to emerge as a forward-looking institution preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.





Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft

Shaping AI For Humanity

Satya Nadella's cloud vision and empathetic leadership transformed Microsoft, making it a global leader in AI

When Satya Nadella took over as CEO of Microsoft in 2014, the iconic tech giant was struggling under the weight of its own history. Once the most powerful software company in the world, it had grown too large to adapt quickly, too tied to the fading Windows era and too internally competitive to innovate at the speed modern technology demanded. A decade later, the story could not be more different. Today the company stands at the forefront of cloud computing, artificial intelligence, gaming, cybersecurity and enterprise transformation — valued at more than USD 3 trillion. And a significant part of this remarkable turnaround bears the unmistakable imprint of Nadella's leadership.

Born in Hyderabad and trained as an engineer, Nadella's rise from

India to the top of one of the world's most influential companies is often hailed as a tale of intelligence, humility and relentless learning. But those who have worked closely with him point to something deeper: his rare ability to "listen intensely," cut through complexity and take decisive action without unnecessary noise. Nadella brought empathy — an unusual quality in the high-pressure tech world — into the center of corporate decision-making and turned it into a strategic advantage.

One of his boldest and most defining moves was pivoting the company decisively toward cloud computing. At a time when competitors were racing ahead, Nadella pushed Microsoft to rethink its identity, its products and its partnerships. Azure, once an underdog, grew into the fastest-

expanding cloud platform in the world. Under his leadership, the company shed its reputation for insularity, embraced open-source ecosystems and welcomed collaboration rather than rivalry. Nadella reinforced this shift with a now-famous line: "Our industry does not respect tradition — only innovation." Every major transformation under his tenure reflects that philosophy.

In the realm of artificial intelligence, Nadella has emerged as one of the most influential global voices. The company's sweeping partnership with OpenAI placed it at the epicentre of the AI revolution, shaping tools that are redefining productivity, creativity and enterprise systems across the world. Yet even as he pushes the boundaries of innovation, he consistently advocates for responsibility and ethics, reminding the industry that AI must be not only powerful, but beneficial to society.

Beyond strategy and technology, Nadella's leadership carries a deeply human dimension. His worldview has been shaped by personal experiences, including raising a child with disabilities, which infused his leadership with empathy and emotional intelligence. He often speaks of empathy not as a soft skill, but as a catalyst for innovation, inclusion and organisational resilience.

Under Nadella, the company has transformed from a traditional software giant into a culture-led, cloud-first, AI-powered global powerhouse. Quietly but decisively, he has reshaped its purpose and direction. If the 20th century belonged to Gates' Microsoft, Nadella has ensured that the 21st belongs to a reinvented, faster, humbler and unmistakably future-ready version of the company.



Anisha Chandy Eckardt, Managing Director, HOSMAT Hospitals, Bengaluru

Leadership Rooted in Trust

Anisha Chandy Eckardt reshapes HOSMAT Hospitals with trust-driven leadership, blending technology, empathy and preventive vision to redefine modern healthcare in India.

in Health Administration and Health Education from Saint Joseph's University, an MBA in Marketing from Christ University, and a Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt in Healthcare, she blends clinical systems thinking with strategic growth. She integrates global healthcare frameworks into the Indian context, strengthening clinical governance, advancing digital patient platforms, and driving data-led care—while keeping the human experience at the centre.

Under her leadership, HOSMAT has expanded to oncology, reconstructive surgery, pain management, preventive health, maternity, neonatal services, and advanced cardiac sciences. However, growth here is philosophical as much as infrastructural. The shift is clear — from reactive treatment to proactive wellness.

Preventive screening, structured lifestyle counselling, and community outreach are now core pillars of the hospital's framework. It positions itself not for episodic intervention, but as a long-term partner in health.

This philosophy is most evident in the partnerships she builds—each designed with people at the centre and driven by clear intent.

In sports medicine, HOSMAT moved beyond injury treatment to focus on performance optimisation, prevention, rehabilitation science, and long-term musculoskeletal health. If orthopaedics is its legacy, preventive sports care is its

future—engaging athletes early and embedding evidence-based rehabilitation to champion mobility, strength, and active living, not just surgical excellence.

Strengthening cardiac services through advanced cath lab enhancements reflects a broader preventive vision. Beyond enabling interventions, these capabilities create a seamless pathway from early detection to life-saving treatment and recovery.

This ensures cardiovascular care remains integrated, not fragmented. These initiatives are not standalone expansions but part of a unified strategy that views healthcare as a continuum—where orthopaedics links to sports science, cardiology to preventive screening, and maternity to neonatal care.

Accessibility remains another defining priority. Plans to expand bed capacity and extend into tier-2 cities reflect a decentralised vision for healthcare delivery. The focus is not solely on metropolitan growth but on equitable access, bringing structured, high-quality care closer to emerging urban populations.

What defines Anisha Chandy Eckardt is not visibility but vision—scaling systems responsibly, strengthening purpose through partnerships, and ensuring expansion never compromises empathy. Under her leadership, HOSMAT stands as an integrated, patient-centric healthcare ecosystem—forward-looking, cohesive, and deeply human.



Commander Navneet Bali, Executive Director & CEO, ClearMedi Healthcare Pvt Ltd, Co-founder, MedML

Compassion meets Expertise

Commander Navneet Bali is playing a pivotal role in building India's future-ready healthcare system

Commander Navneet Bali has redefined how care is delivered, managed, and scaled in India's rapidly evolving healthcare ecosystem. With a distinguished 25-year career in the Indian Navy followed by impactful leadership roles in leading healthcare organisations, his journey reflects discipline, strategic foresight, and an unwavering commitment to innovation.

Since assuming charge in September 2023, Cdr Bali has driven extraordinary growth, expanding the organisation's capacity from 250 beds to over 1,000 within just 18 months. This rapid scale-up is not merely about numbers but also an improved access to quality healthcare for thousands of patients across India, particularly in underserved regions where such expansion is most critical.

What sets Cdr Bali apart is his ability to blend operational excellence with

forward-thinking innovation. Under his leadership, ClearMedi is evolving into a technology-driven healthcare powerhouse. A landmark achievement has been the launch of the world's first agentic AI-enabled hospital chain, positioning India at the forefront of global healthcare innovation. This initiative signals a paradigm shift, where artificial intelligence is not just supporting but actively orchestrating healthcare delivery, improving efficiency, accuracy, and patient outcomes.

Further reinforcing his role as a pioneer, Commander Bali is also the co-founder of MedML, an AI-driven SaaS platform transforming insurance and payment management in healthcare. By leveraging AI to streamline complex payer systems, he is addressing one of the most critical bottlenecks in healthcare, which is financial accessibility and efficiency. His work in this space

reflects a deep understanding that the future of healthcare lies at the intersection of clinical excellence and intelligent systems.

Commander Bali's leadership philosophy is rooted in inclusivity, innovation, and empowerment. He has fostered a culture where teams are encouraged to think creatively, act decisively, and prioritise patient-centric care. His influence extends beyond organisational boundaries, as he actively engages with the broader healthcare community through digital platforms, thought leadership, and mentoring initiatives. Recognised as a Top LinkedIn Voice, he continues to inspire professionals across industries with his insights on leadership and transformation.

His contributions have not gone unnoticed. Being honoured as "CEO of the Year" at the 16th MT India Healthcare Awards 2026 is a testament to his impact and vision. Yet, what truly defines him as a game-changer is not just recognition but his ability to consistently translate vision into action.

In a country where healthcare accessibility and quality remain pressing challenges, Commander Navneet Bali stands out as a leader who is not only addressing these issues but also reshaping the entire narrative.

In a country where healthcare accessibility and quality remain pressing challenges, Commander Navneet Bali stands out as a leader who is not only addressing these issues but also reshaping the entire narrative. Commander Navneet Bali continues to contribute holistically in building a more resilient, inclusive, and future-ready healthcare system for India. Through innovative leadership, strategic partnerships, digital transformation, and patient-centric initiatives, he continues to bridge gaps, empower communities, strengthen infrastructure, and inspire sustainable reforms across urban and rural healthcare ecosystems nationwide.



Dr (Prof.) Anil Arora Chairman & HOD Robotic Knee & Hip Replacement Surgery & Orthopaedics, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Patparganj, Delhi.

In India's journey toward becoming a Viksit Bharat, health Surgery leaders who seamlessly blend innovation with compassion are redefining the future of medicine. Among them stands Dr (Prof.) Anil Arora, one of the country's most distinguished Robotic Knee and Hip Replacement Surgeon.

With over three decades of Excellence Spanning Clinical Practice, Research, and Teaching, Prof. Arora has established himself as a leading International authority in Knee and Hip Replacement Surgery, particularly in Advanced 3D-Robotic Knee & Hip Resurfacing (Replacement) procedures.

In 2018, he was awarded Guinness World Record (2018) for organising the largest gathering of joint replacement patients. Earlier, he was recognised in the Limca Book of Records (2017).

Currently serving as Chairman & Chief Surgeon, Head of Robotic Knee and Hip Replacement & Orthopaedics at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Patparganj, Delhi, he also leads Prof. Arora's Knee & Hip Surgery Clinics, Delhi NCR and serves as Chairman of Avee Multispecialty Hospital, Vaishali. Through these institutions, he has built Centres of Excellence delivering world-class Advanced Robotic Knee & Hip Replacement Surgeries.

What truly sets Prof. Arora apart as

Redefining Knee and Hip Replacement

Dr (Prof.) Anil Arora A Visionary Transforming Knee & Hip Replacement Surgery Through Innovation, Precision and Compassion

a pioneer in Robotic Knee and Hip Replacements is his unwavering passion for adopting cutting-edge technologies to enhance surgical outcomes for the benefit of his patients. At the forefront of innovation, he utilizes two Advanced Knee Replacement Robots—one image-based and the other imageless—to deliver highly customized knee replacement solutions tailored precisely to each patient's anatomical needs.

Rooted in a strong academic foundation, Prof. Arora completed his MS (Orthopaedics) and DNB, along with a Diploma from SIROT (USA), followed by Advanced International Fellowships and Training across Leading Global Centres. These include the Commonwealth Fellowship in Joint Replacement at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, London (UK), as well as fellowships with IGOF (Germany), FAPOA (Korea), and FJOA (Japan).

Over the years, Prof. Arora has been honoured with numerous prestigious awards recognising his outstanding contributions to Knee and Hip Replacement Surgery. His early recognitions include the SIROT Award at the SICOT Triennial World Congress, San Diego, USA (2002) and the Weller Gold Medal at the Indo-German Orthopaedic Foundation Conference (2003).

These were followed by several distinguished honours such as the A.A. Mehta Gold Medal of the Indian Orthopaedic Association (2001), the Silver Jubilee Oration of the Indian Orthopaedic Association (2004), and recognition as "Most Inspiring



Orthopaedic Surgeon of India" by The Economic Times (2018). He was also conferred the title of "Legend in Orthopaedics" by the Times of India Group (2018), "Top Knee & Hip Replacement Surgeon of the Year" by The Economic Times (2022), "Excellence in Robotic Knee & Hip Replacement Surgeries" at the ET Health Conclave (2024).

In recent years, his contributions have been further recognised through the Vishisht Chikitsa Ratn Puraskar (2025) awarded by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi for excellence in Robotic Knee and Hip Replacement Surgeries, along with the honour of being named a "Healthcare Pioneer of Delhi" by the Hon'ble Health Minister of Delhi. He has also received the "Scroll of Honour" by the Rajasthan Orthopaedic Surgeons Association (2026) and the Dr. N.C. Joshi Memorial Oration Award by the Delhi Medical Association (2019) along with "Most Loved Doctor" award by Max Healthcare (2015 & 2016).

For countless patients, he is not just a surgeon—but a catalyst of mobility, independence, and renewed life—truly a Gamechanger in modern Knee & Hip Replacements.



Falguni Nayar, Founder and CEO, Nykaa

Breaking Barriers Building Brands

Falguni Nayar's bold and inspiring rise at 50, reshaped India's beauty landscape through Nykaa

A father is the daughter's best friend. At least in the case of Falguni Nayar, the Nykaa promoter and chief executive officer and India's richest self-made woman promoter with a net worth of nearly Rs 56,600 crore.

She never fails to highlight that her father laid the foundation for her success in her early years. He ensured that his introverted daughter knew ways to network effectively by meeting different people. He also taught her the importance of making small talk, which helped her during her banking stint and later as an entrepreneur.

Falguni, an IIM Ahmedabad graduate, consulted with A.F. Ferguson & Co. She then spent 18 years at the Kotak Mahindra Bank, helming several businesses and was the Managing Director of Kotak Mahindra Investment Bank, and was a director at Kotak Securities – the

bank's institutional equities division. Around the time she celebrated her 50th birthday, in 2012, when most professionals look forward to retired life, the dormant entrepreneur in her sprouted in the form of Nykaa.

This was the beginning of a women entrepreneur's story. The rest is history. She had the vision of creating a multi-brand omnichannel beauty-focused retail business. According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, her net worth surged to \$6.5 billion. Nykaa is listed at an over 70% premium on the stock market. Falguni and her family handle over 50% share of this company.

Falguni and Sanjay Nayar were classmates at IIM Ahmedabad. They dated for a few years and, in May 1987, got married. Nayar is the CEO of KKR and the country head in India. When Falguni wanted to start Nykaa, Sanjay chipped in with

investment in Nykaa.

"He is another pillar of my life. He taught me the values of discipline and hard work," she says. It helped that he never harboured any unreasonable expectations from her," she told Outlook Business.

Falguni feels that a supportive spouse is always good for an entrepreneur. In Sanjay, she found a friend with whom she could brainstorm as a banker and an entrepreneur. He has been supportive, critic and guide, apart from being a loving husband, people known to the family. Sanjay is committed to Falguni's dream, and he is the first point of reference whenever she has any doubt about her decision.

Nykaa has emerged as India's leading beauty retailer playing a critical role in developing India's beauty market. Nykaa has ventured into new verticals like Nykaa Fashion – a fashion first, style led curated fashion platform. It also offers a wide range of accessories, appliances, fitness and activewear, sourced directly from the brands. In 2021, it acquired jewellery brand Pipa Bella and skincare brand Dot & Key.

An entrepreneur for women empowerment, Falguni Nayar is committed to helping young women realise their dream, as she has by setting up a successful venture in Nykaa.

She looks for the same level of commitment from her team. "We hire a lot of women in our organisation. I always encourage women to be committed to their work and take on more responsibility. Often, what is lacking in women is commitment. When I see them committed, I try to provide them with much-needed support..." she told Outlook Business in an interview.

Today, heading a team of over 1600 staff, Falguni has built beauty and lifestyle retail empire with a portfolio of 1500+ brands, including its private label, available online and across 68 stores in India.

Visionary Voice of Transformative Decade

Dr Syed Muhammed Ali Al Hussaini is widely regarded as a steadfast, inclusive and visionary leader shaping the course of India's transformative growth journey.

Dr Syed Muhammed Ali Al Hussaini, Chancellor, Khaja Bandanawaz University, Karnataka has emerged as one of the game changers of the decade – a visionary voice advocating steady progress, inclusive growth and a balanced pathway for India's future. His ideas go beyond conventional discourse, offering a transformational framework rooted in long-term thinking, social responsibility and national resilience.

At a time when India stands at a critical juncture of rapid technological change and demographic advantage, Dr Hussaini emphasises the importance of building strong foundations rather than chasing short-term gains. Growth, in his view, is meaningful only when it reaches the grassroots and uplifts communities across regions and social strata.

A defining element of his thought process is the seamless integration of ambition with empathy. He consistently underscores that India's rise should not be measured merely in numbers but in the quality of opportunity available to its citizens. By advocating policies and practices that expand access – particularly for underserved populations – he reinforces the idea that inclusive progress is the bedrock of a strong nation.

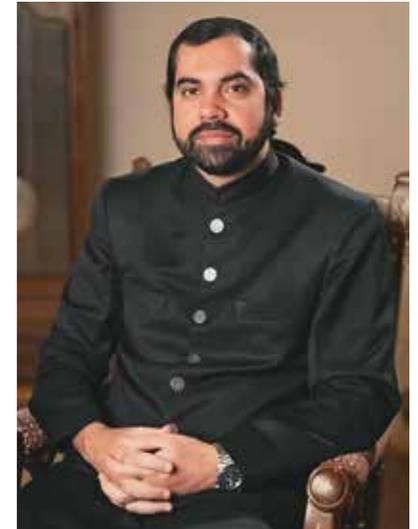
Education lies at the heart of Dr Hussaini's transformational outlook. He views investment in learning ecosystems, research infrastructure and skill development as central to

India's long-term prosperity. Preparing youth for emerging industries, digital economies and innovation-led sectors is essential, he believes, for positioning India as a competitive global force. His emphasis on nurturing young innovators and researchers reflects his conviction that intellectual capital is the nation's greatest asset.

Healthcare remains equally integral to his mission. Under his leadership, the Khaja Bandanawaz Teaching and General Hospital is being developed into a modern and advanced institution aimed at upgrading medical infrastructure and promoting innovation in healthcare delivery. He recognises that accessible and high-quality healthcare is fundamental to human development and economic productivity. Strengthening medical education, research capabilities and patient care systems, he believes, enhances both community well-being and institutional excellence.

Dr Hussaini also champions gender equity as a structural priority. Encouraging young women to pursue careers in science, technology and leadership is not merely about representation; it is about unlocking immense untapped potential. Empowerment through education, mentorship and institutional support strengthens the socio-economic fabric and ensures balanced advancement across society.

Entrepreneurship and grassroots enterprise form another important dimension of his vision. Recognising the dynamism of small businesses

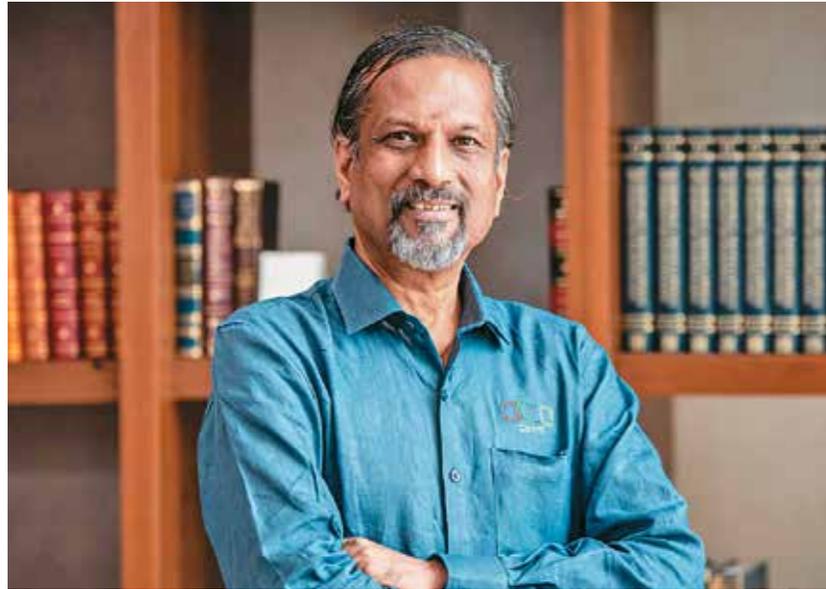


Dr Syed Muhammad Ali Al Hussaini, Chancellor, Khaja Bandanawaz University, Karnataka and Chairperson of the Karnataka State Waqf Board

and start-ups, he advocates skill enhancement, innovation-driven growth and self-reliance. For him, local enterprise is a powerful driver of employment generation and inclusive prosperity.

His holistic outlook extends to sports, youth engagement and cultural vitality. Nation-building, he believes, transcends economics; it involves nurturing discipline, confidence and collective pride. His plans to invest in playgrounds, cricket facilities and allied physical education initiatives reflect his belief that academic excellence must be complemented by physical development.

What distinguishes Dr Syed Muhammed Ali Al Hussaini as a game changer of the decade is his balanced and forward-looking philosophy. By combining scale with sensitivity and ambition with accountability, he articulates a steady yet transformative vision. His thoughts offer not just commentary but a roadmap – one that inspires confidence in India's journey toward a resilient, equitable and prosperous future.



Dr Sridhar Vembu, Chief Scientist & Co-founder, Zoho Corporation

Smart Tech for a Digital Age

Dr Sridhar Vembu leading self-reliant (Swadeshi) tech transformation locally, nationally and globally

While many tech billionaires chase venture capital and headlines, Sridhar Vembu chose to bypass the “American Dream” and build his startup in the quiet town of Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu, which grew into a global software empire.

Dr Sridhar Vembu, an alumnus of IIT-Madras, completed his Master’s degree and PhD at Princeton University and started his professional journey with a brief stint at Qualcomm in the United States. He co-founded AdventNet in 1996, which later evolved into Zoho Corporation, one of India’s most successful homegrown technology companies. He served as the company’s CEO from 2000 to 2024. According to Forbes’ 2024 list, he is the 39th richest person in India with a net worth of \$5.85 billion.

One of the first Indian

entrepreneurs to bet big on SaaS, Dr Sridhar Vembu started the Zoho brand for cloud products as early as 2005. Under his leadership, Zoho Corporation, with brands like ManageEngine and Zoho, grew into a global technology powerhouse, serving over 130 million users across more than 150 countries, all without relying on external venture capital funding.

In 2025, he assumed the role of Chief Scientist to focus on deep-tech R&D, particularly in AI development. Zoho Corporation has emerged as the largest software product company in India while pursuing a unique set of choices that span hiring, training, product strategy, location and customer satisfaction, all driven by a holistic philosophy that puts contentment and humility as key virtues.

Dr Vembu champions the idea that “true innovation comes from

deep, sustained research rather than short-term scaling.” His focus on research and development (R&D) has been central to Zoho’s success, with the company investing heavily in developing its own technology stack and building products completely in-house. Today, Zoho offers over 55 products that span across business functions from CRM, finance, HR, productivity and AI solutions, all built on its proprietary platforms. For example, Zoho’s messaging app Arattai is being made popular as our “desi WhatsApp killer”. Dr Vembu has been a strong proponent of developing deep-tech capabilities in India, especially for critical sectors like healthcare and defence. He has also invested in several companies that are aligned with the same mission of developing this sovereign tech.

Through Zoho’s rural development (RD) efforts, he has set up offices and R&D centres in villages and small towns like Tenkasi, Tharuvai, Kottarakara and Renigunta, enabling engineers to work on world-class technology without leaving their communities. In fact, Zoho opened its first rural office in Tenkasi in 2011 and developed and launched Zoho Desk from there in 2016. Dr Vembu has made immense contributions to India by spearheading the SaaS industry, promoting rural technology development, and pioneering “rural empowerment” by building software hubs in villages.

For his contributions, he was presented with the Padma Shri in 2021. He has previously served on the National Security Advisory Board. Dr Vembu’s leadership blends business success with social purpose, redefining what it means to build for both global markets and rural India.

Insights to Industry Impact

Raj Prabhu speaks of Mercom’s role in advancing clean energy in India and globally, influencing policy, and shaping industry decisions

Q How did you begin your entrepreneurial journey?

My journey began as I started recognizing opportunities through my management and turnaround experience and working in investment banking.

While consulting for a semiconductor company, I realised that renewable energy, specifically solar, would shape the future of power generation, which led to the launch of Mercom.

It all started with industry newsletters to keep clients informed with timely, high-quality insights. The response was immediate, and our market analysis quickly spread across the industry. Timing also mattered. The United States was ramping up investments in renewables, and India soon launched the National Solar Mission. From the outset, my vision was to build a comprehensive platform powered by research, market intelligence, and timely exclusive insights to help stakeholders make informed decisions, with U.S. and India becoming central pillars of that vision.

Q What differentiates Mercom’s research and insights from other market analysis platforms?

Mercom’s key differentiator is its deep connections with the market. Interaction with hundreds of companies weekly gives us real-time insights into policy impact, project execution, capital flows, and industry bottlenecks. Another strength is our

extensive, proprietary datasets in renewable energy, tracking nearly every sector data point and enabling granular market analysis unmatched in India. Founded during the industry’s formative years, we have witnessed every major cycle. We connect policy, manufacturing, trade, financing, and project execution, delivering integrated insights that are both strategic and actionable for stakeholders.

Q How has Mercom directly influenced industry decisions, policy dialogue, and collaboration?

Over the years, Mercom’s data has become widely trusted reference points across the sector. When investors, developers, manufacturers, media, and policymakers are working from the same credible, data-driven insights, it moves the industry forward. Platforms like the Mercom Renewables Summit bring together stakeholders to foster dialogue on the industry’s future.

Mercom has directly influenced policymaking. An early example was when the company published data on the scale of Chinese government funding supporting private manufacturers and how it affected costs and global market dynamics. The analysis was widely cited by media and later used by the US government in a trade case against China. When the Indian government considered imposing antidumping duties on imported solar equipment despite limited domestic



Raj Prabhu
Co-Founder & CEO
Mercom Capital Group

manufacturing capacity, Mercom argued the move could slow industry growth. The industry asked Mercom to speak up. And after a series of op-eds and research reports, the government ultimately reversed its position.

Q What is your vision for Mercom as India accelerates its transition to renewable energy?

My vision is for Mercom to serve as the central platform for the next phase of India’s energy transition, driven by insight, market intelligence, and collaboration. Our role will become even more important as renewable energy becomes far more integrated with the broader energy markets, and new demand drivers, such as large-scale data centers.

India is evolving into a complex ecosystem where policy, capital, manufacturing, storage, transmission, and execution must move in sync. In markets of this scale, the most valuable platforms are those that can identify change early, connect the dots, and help stakeholders make better decisions. Through our expertise and insights, Mercom will enable this shift by providing a clear, forward-looking view on where the industry is headed and what needs to happen next.



Bhavish Aggarwal, Founder & CEO, OLA Cabs

Holistic Urban Mobility Solutions

Leading the electric vehicle revolution from India with a global perspective while bringing ease and comfort

Bhavish Aggarwal founded OLA cabs and made it famous across the globe. Whether it's rushing to the airport at dawn, hailing a ride home after midnight, or seeking urgent transport during an emergency, OLA Cabs has been the lifeline for countless commuters across India and beyond.

An alumnus of IIT Bombay, he graduated with a BTech in computer science in 2008 and had a short stint at Microsoft as an assistant researcher, where he authored three papers in international journals and filed two patents.

In 2010, during a trip from Bangalore to Bandipur, his cab driver stopped midway and started haggling over the fare. This frustrating experience gave birth to a killer idea: the need for a reliable, efficient, and user-

friendly cab service! That year, Bhavish co-founded Ola with his college friend Ankit Bhati and pivoted from a small travel-planning company, OLATrip.com, into a full-fledged cab aggregation platform. The brainchild of Bhavish Aggarwal, Ola has not only transformed urban transportation but has also written a story of entrepreneurial grit, innovation, and futuristic vision.

Setting up the business had its own challenges while finding investors, drivers, and even customers to trust his business model. Ola faced stiff competition from well-established players like the Radio Taxi Services and FastTrack. Initially, the customers booked taxis over the phone, but by 2012, it launched a smartphone app that revolutionized the entire

industry. With Ola's entry, India's ride-hailing market changed forever. It wasn't just a cab service; Ola was an inclusive platform offering auto-rickshaws, two-wheelers, and more recently, electric vehicles (EVs). They aimed at making transportation easier, more affordable, and eco-friendly.

In 2021, Bhavish ventured into the evolving electric vehicle (EV) space with Ola Electric. Ola Electric sold over 364,261 electric scooters in 2024. Ola's aggressive expansion into this space set it up as a pioneer, not only in India, but across Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Europe. Next in line were electric bikes, further strengthening his commitment to sustainability by reducing carbon emissions and promoting eco-friendly solutions, which is reflected in innovation. Ola Electric launched 3,200 new stores around the country on Wednesday, December 25, 2024 along with its exclusive S1 Pro Sona Edition electric scooter.

Ola's journey faced massive challenges of regulatory hurdles, intense competition from global giants like Uber, and the constant pressure of raising capital to scale the business. Ola has transcended the boundaries of just cab services, offering food delivery, auto-rickshaws, and even electric vehicles.

In 2013, Bhavish Aggarwal received 'South Asia's mBillionth Award' for digital innovations. His name graced Time magazine's '100 Most Influential People list' in 2018. He has been recognized by Forbes India's '30 Under 30' and Fortune India's '40 Under 40.' He doesn't let success affect him and continues his passion for photography, cycling, and a game of squash. Bhavish mentors innumerable startups and inspires countless budding entrepreneurs across the country.

Insight in India – Driving Global AI Innovation

Led by Mohan Subrahmanya, Insight Enterprises is expanding its India operations as a strategic hub developing AI, cloud, and cybersecurity solutions globally



Mohan Subrahmanya, Country Leader & Executive Director – India & member of Board of Directors, Insight India.

As global enterprises accelerate their digital transformation journeys, Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in India are rapidly evolving from traditional support units into strategic engines of innovation. Insight Enterprises is among the organisations actively leveraging this shift, positioning its India hub as a critical centre for artificial intelligence, cloud, and cybersecurity solutions serving clients worldwide.

India operations are led by Mohan Subrahmanya, Country Leader and Executive Director – India and a member of Board of Directors, Insight India. With over 27 years in the global IT industry, Mohan has helped shape the company's growth and strategy, strengthening India's role as a high-value innovation and enterprise transformation hub.

The impact of this strategy is visible in performance metrics. Over the past three years, productivity in Insight's India operations has risen nearly 2.5 times, while the workforce has grown 2.3 times. The region now plays a key role in delivering enterprise solutions integrating cloud infrastructure, artificial intelligence and advanced data

analytics.

Insight has also expanded its geographical footprint across India. From a single delivery location in 2023, it has evolved into a network of five technology hubs located in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Noida, Pune and Thiruvananthapuram. This allows the company to tap into diverse regional talent pools while ensuring seamless service delivery for global customers.

At the heart of this transformation is a strong focus on artificial intelligence. A core pillar of Insight's technology strategy revolves around developing AI-driven solutions that help enterprises move from experimentation to real business outcomes.

Beyond technology, organisational culture has emerged as another important pillar of growth. Insight in India has earned back-to-back Great Place to Work certifications in 2024 and 2025 and has been recognised among India's Top 100 IT companies.

Talent development and upskilling remain central to Insight's long-term strategy. Programmes such as AI Flight Academy provide employees with opportunities to develop advanced technical capabilities

through micro-learning modules, hands-on projects and training in responsible AI practices.

Diversity and inclusion are also integral to the organisation's workforce philosophy. Initiatives such as Career Reboot support professionals, particularly women returning to the workforce, by enabling them to re-enter the technology sector and build sustainable careers.

These efforts have also earned industry recognition. Insight India received the Minsky Award for Excellence in AI at Cypher 2025 and was named Best Firm for Diversity & Inclusion in Tech by Analytics India Magazine (AIM). Collaborations with organisations such as NASSCOM, Dun & Bradstreet, AIM, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), further highlight the company's engagement with India's broader technology and innovation ecosystem.

With its expanding talent base, distributed delivery network, and strong emphasis on AI-led innovation, Insight in India is steadily emerging as a key driver of the company's global digital transformation journey.



Neeraj Chopra, Javelin Thrower

From Obscurity to Olympic Glory

Turning javelin throw into a beacon of national pride, Neeraj Chopra redefines the landscape of Indian athletics

There are athletes who win medals, and then there are those who expand the very horizons of a nation. Neeraj Chopra stands firmly in the latter league—a trailblazer who lifted the javelin throw in India from the margins to the mainstream, turning it into a symbol of national pride.

Born on December 24, 1997, in Khandra village in Haryana's Panipat district, Chopra's journey to global acclaim is as remarkable as it is inspiring. Growing up in a farming family, he initially took up sports as a means to improve his fitness. What began as a routine effort soon revealed an extraordinary natural talent for the javelin. Under the guidance of dedicated coaches and through rigorous training, Chopra steadily honed his craft, combining raw power with technical finesse.

His early breakthrough came at

the 2016 World U20 Championships in Bydgoszcz, where he not only clinched gold but also set a world junior record with a throw of 86.48 metres. This achievement announced his arrival on the global stage and marked him as a prodigious talent to watch. Soon after, Chopra joined the Indian Army as a Junior Commissioned Officer, a move that provided him the institutional support and stability needed to focus on elite sport.

Chopra's defining moment came at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, where he etched his name into history by winning India's first-ever Olympic gold medal in athletics. His winning throw of 87.58 metres not only secured the top podium position but also ended a long-standing wait for an athletics gold, a feat that resonated deeply across the

country.

What sets Chopra apart is not merely his achievements, but the composure with which he approaches competition. Unlike many high-profile athletes, he exudes a calm, almost understated demeanour. His focus remains unwavering, whether he is competing at the highest level or training away from the spotlight. In doing so, he has not only raised the bar for Indian athletics but also inspired an entire generation to aim higher, dream bigger, and push beyond limits.

In the years following his Olympic triumph, Chopra has continued to build on his legacy. He secured a silver medal at the World Athletics Championships and went on to achieve further glory by winning gold at the 2023 edition, establishing himself as one of the finest javelin throwers in the world.

Beyond the field, Chopra has emerged as a cultural icon. His journey has also prompted greater investment in sports infrastructure and training, signalling a broader shift in India's sporting ambitions.

In recognition of his achievements, he has been honoured with some of India's highest sporting awards, including the Arjuna Award, the Khel Ratna, and the Padma Shri.

Yet, despite the fame and accolades, Chopra remains grounded. He often credits his family, coaches, and support system for his achievements, reflecting a humility that endears him further to millions. In doing so, he has not only raised the bar for Indian athletics but also inspired an entire generation to aim higher, dream bigger, and push beyond limits.

GLA University's decade of excellence

GLA University achieved remarkable growth under the leadership of SH. Narayan Das Aggarwal ji over the past decade



Narayan Das Aggarwal
Chancellor- GLA University, Mathura

Over the past decade, GLA University has witnessed remarkable growth and transformation under the visionary leadership of Narayan Das Aggarwal. His unwavering commitment to quality education, innovation, and student-centric development has been instrumental in shaping the university into a prominent institution in India's higher education landscape.

One of the most significant achievements of GLA University in the last ten years has been the expansion and diversification of its academic programs. It has opened its off-campus in Greater Noida, marking the first off-campus of any private university in India.

The university has introduced a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral courses across disciplines such as engineering, management, pharmacy, law, and education. This expansion has been carefully aligned with industry requirements and global academic trends, ensuring that students receive relevant and future-ready education.

Infrastructure development has been another major area of progress. The university campus has evolved into a modern, well-equipped educational hub with advanced

laboratories, digital classrooms, innovation centers, and extensive library resources. Residential facilities, sports complexes, and recreational areas have also been enhanced, creating a vibrant and inclusive campus environment. These developments reflect Narayan Das Aggarwal ji's vision of providing world-class facilities to support both academic and personal growth.

GLA University has also made notable strides in strengthening industry connections and improving placement outcomes. Over the years, the university has built strong partnerships with leading national and multinational companies. Regular industry interactions, internships, skill development programs, and placement training have significantly improved students' employability. As a result, the university has consistently achieved impressive placement records, with many students securing positions in reputed organizations.

Research and innovation have become key pillars of the university's growth strategy. Faculty members and students have actively engaged in research activities, resulting in numerous publications, patents, and funded projects. The university has established research centers and encouraged interdisciplinary

collaboration, fostering a culture of inquiry and innovation.

In addition to academics, GLA University has emphasized holistic development. Students are encouraged to participate in cultural festivals, technical competitions, sports events, and community service initiatives. These activities help in developing leadership skills, teamwork, and social responsibility, aligning with the broader educational philosophy promoted by Narayan Das Aggarwal ji.

Furthermore, the university has gained recognition through improved rankings, accreditations, and positive feedback from stakeholders. These achievements highlight its commitment to maintaining high academic standards and continuous improvement.

In conclusion, the last decade has been a period of significant achievement for GLA University. Guided by the dynamic leadership of Narayan Das Aggarwal ji, the institution has successfully enhanced its academic excellence, infrastructure, research capabilities, and student outcomes. Today, it stands as a symbol of quality education and continues to contribute meaningfully to the development of skilled professionals and responsible citizens.



Virat Kohli, Cricketer

The Relentless Pursuit of Cricketing Greatness

From Delhi's cricket grounds to the pinnacle of world sport, Virat Kohli has built a magnificent legacy

Beyond stars and superstars stands Virat Kohli—a league of his own in modern cricket. Known for his intensity, discipline, and unmatched consistency, Kohli has emerged as one of the finest batsmen in the history of the much-sought after game in the world, redefining standards across formats while inspiring a generation of young athletes.

Born in Delhi in 1988, Kohli's journey began in the city's competitive cricketing circuits. His early promise was evident when he led India to victory in the 2008 ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup, a moment that marked the arrival of a future star. Soon after, he made his debut for the Indian national team, steadily establishing himself with a combination of technical skill and mental resilience. What sets Kohli apart is his ability to perform under pressure. Whether chasing daunting

targets in One Day Internationals or anchoring innings in Test cricket, he has consistently delivered match-winning performances. His aggressive yet controlled batting style, coupled with exceptional fitness levels, has made him a benchmark for modern cricketers.

Kohli's achievements are both prolific and historic. He is among the fastest players to score over 8,000, 10,000, and 12,000 runs in ODIs, and has amassed more than 70 international centuries across formats. As captain, he led India to numerous landmark victories, including a historic Test series win in Australia in 2018–19. Under his leadership, India also became the number one ranked Test team for an extended period, reflecting his emphasis on fitness, discipline, and a winning mindset.

In May 2025, the stylish right-handed batsman brought the curtain

down on a remarkable Test career, finishing with 9,230 runs at an average of 46.85, including 29 centuries—marking the end of one of modern cricket's most accomplished journeys.

With a relentless appetite for runs, Virat Kohli has climbed to become the second-highest run-scorer in One-Day Internationals, surpassing Kumar Sangakkara's tally of 14,234 and now steadily narrowing the distance to the towering benchmark of Sachin Tendulkar's 18,426.

His contributions have been recognised with several prestigious awards. Kohli is a recipient of the Padma Shri (2017) and the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna (2018), India's highest sporting honour. He has also been named ICC Cricketer of the Year and has featured multiple times in global rankings as the world's top batsman.

Beyond statistics, Kohli's influence extends to his immense fan following. With hundreds of millions of followers across social media platforms, he is one of the most followed athletes globally. His appeal transcends cricket, making him a global sporting icon and a leading face of endorsements and brand collaborations. His fitness-driven lifestyle and outspoken personality have further strengthened his connection with fans.

Off the field, Kohli has been actively involved in philanthropy through the Virat Kohli Foundation, which supports underprivileged children and promotes sports development. His commitment to fitness and mental strength has also helped redefine professionalism in Indian cricket.

Despite the pressures of international cricket and public life, Kohli has maintained remarkable consistency, evolving his game with time while continuing to set new benchmarks. His journey reflects determination, adaptability, and an unwavering hunger for excellence.

Grounded Beginnings, Sky-High Ambitions

From Call Centre Job to Private Aviation Venture Abhishek Kulkarni Charts His Own Flight Path with Urbane Jets



Abhishek Kulkarni, Chairman & Managing Director Urbane Aerospace Private Limited

India's most compelling entrepreneurial journeys often begin far from capital and connections. They are built instead on necessity, resilience, and a quiet refusal to settle. The founder of Urbane Jets embodies that spirit — a first-generation entrepreneur whose rise from modest beginnings to India's private aviation sector is as much about grit as it is about vision.

Born and raised in the small town of Belgaum, he completed his schooling at St. Xavier's before life demanded an early confrontation with responsibility. After his parents' separation, he moved to Pune with his mother, where financial constraints forced him to pause his undergraduate education. For many, that might have been a setback. For him, it became the beginning of self-reliance.

He started small — running an internet café and an STD/ISD booth, ventures that kept the household afloat and taught him the fundamentals of business: customer service, cash flow, and accountability. A call centre job followed, offering stability and exposure to global clients. Yet the routine never replaced his childhood dream of entrepreneurship.

In April 2013, he made the leap,

leaving his job to build something of his own. He entered real estate broking, learning the art of negotiation and trust-building. By 2017, he expanded into publishing with Just Urbane, a lifestyle magazine that catered to an aspirational urban audience. But aviation remained his true calling. Though becoming a pilot wasn't financially viable, he found another path to the skies — creating an aviation company itself.

In 2018, Urbane Jets took flight, transforming a lifelong passion into a fast-growing enterprise.

Urbane Jets: Building India's New-Age Aviation Ecosystem

Headquartered in Pune with offices in Mumbai, Delhi, Dubai, London and Singapore also. Expanding its footprint, Urbane Jets recently secured a \$143 million debt infusion to strengthen its aircraft and helicopter charter fleet. Urbane Jets has quickly emerged as a credible name in India's private aviation charter market. What began as an aviation brokerage has evolved into a semi-operator model, reflecting a deeper commitment to operational control and service quality.

A significant milestone came in October 2024, when the company secured security clearance from

the Ministry of Home Affairs — enabling it to operate leased aircraft and helicopters directly. Today, Urbane Jets manages a growing fleet of private jets and rotary aircraft, offering bespoke charter services for corporates, high-net-worth individuals, and time-sensitive travelers.

The company's strategy extends beyond aircraft access. Urbane Jets operates a dedicated helipad facility in Pune, complete with five helipads, hangar space for three helicopters, and MRO capabilities — infrastructure that strengthens reliability and turnaround efficiency. Plans are already underway to expand into allied aviation services, supported by MoUs with private airports, airstrips, and upcoming helipad projects.

The results have been striking: triple-digit year-on-year growth over the last two financial years, with continued double-digit expansion projected as India's private aviation demand accelerates.

Much like its founder, Urbane Jets is pragmatic, ambitious, and built from the ground up. In a country where time is becoming the ultimate luxury, the company isn't just chartering flights — it's charting a new course for how India moves through the skies.



Prof (Dr) Shakti Kumar Gupta
Honorary Distinguished Professor at IIM Jammu

From Healing Systems to Shaping Leaders

Prof Dr Shakti Kumar Gupta leading a new chapter in healthcare management education at IIM Jammu

Prof Dr Shakti Kumar Gupta, former Executive Director and CEO of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Jammu, has joined the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu as an Honorary Distinguished Professor to strengthen the institute's academic and healthcare management ecosystem.

Dr Gupta is an alumnus of Government Medical College, Jammu, and holds a master's degree in hospital administration from AIIMS, New Delhi. A distinguished healthcare leader, he has demonstrated exceptional expertise in healthcare infrastructure development, medical education, research, technology-driven operational systems, and strategic planning.

During his tenure at AIIMS Jammu, Dr Gupta played a transformative role in building the institution into a

modern healthcare and academic centre. Under his leadership, AIIMS Jammu established Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) laboratory facilities, patient assistance services, and the implementation of the guiding philosophy of "Patient First" and the "Pain Free AIIMS" initiative. In addition, 43 major buildings were completed within a record time of three and a half years despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pioneering initiatives AIIMS Jammu included the introduction of a patient navigation system, collaborative MBA programmes with premier institutions such as IIT and IIM, joint PhD programmes with IIT, and comprehensive faculty development programmes.

Dr Gupta is a Fellow of the National Academy of Medical Sciences, the International Medical Sciences

Academy, the Academy of Hospital Administration, and the Institute of Hospital Engineering. He has also been awarded a WHO Fellowship to study accident and emergency services in the United States and has completed a Management Development Programme at the National University of Singapore.

He has served on several prestigious national and international committees. His recommendations led to the establishment of 150 trauma centres across the country. He also served as Chairperson of the expert committee responsible for formulating the National Ambulance Code for emergency care under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Dr Gupta is the Founder President of the Research Foundation of Hospital and Healthcare Administration (RFHHA), President of the Academy of Hospital Administration, Editor of the Journal of the Academy of Hospital Administration, and Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of RFHHA.

His contributions have been widely recognised with numerous honours, including the FICCI Healthcare Personality of the Year Award (2025), Pratibhashi Samman, Chikitsa Ratan, Shram Sree, and the International Partner of the Year Award from the Institute of Rescue Engineering and Civil Protection, University of Applied Sciences, Germany. The Government of Jammu and Kashmir also conferred upon him the State Award for Meritorious Public Service.

With the appointment of Dr Gupta, IIM Jammu further reinforces its commitment to advancing excellence in healthcare management education, research, and policy advisory, positioning itself as a leading centre of thought leadership in the region and across the nation.

Building healthcare on trust, ethics and access

Founded by Dr. S. Chandrakumar, Kauvery Group of Hospitals has grown from a modest 30-bed facility in Tiruchirappalli into a leading healthcare network in South India



Dr S Chandrakumar, Founder & Executive Chairman
Kauvery Group of Hospitals

Hospitals may begin with infrastructure, but they endure only when built on trust, ethics and patient outcomes. This belief has shaped the vision of Dr. S. Chandrakumar, Founder & Executive Chairman, Kauvery Group of Hospitals, whose journey reflects a long-standing commitment to expanding quality healthcare beyond India's metropolitan centres.

An anaesthesiologist and critical care specialist by training, Dr. S. Chandrakumar entered the healthcare sector at a time when access to specialised treatment in smaller towns remained severely limited. His experience as a practising doctor during the early 1990s exposed him to the structural gaps in India's healthcare system, particularly outside large cities.

Having grown up in a village and practised medicine, he saw how smaller towns lacked adequate healthcare infrastructure. Specialist doctors were few, paramedical support was limited, and hospitals often struggled to manage trauma and critical illnesses, exposing significant gaps in emergency and surgical care.

Many patients from smaller towns were compelled to travel hundreds of kilometres to metropolitan hospitals for specialised treatment, often losing precious time in the process. The need

to build advanced healthcare facilities closer to such communities became the driving force behind his entrepreneurial journey.

In 1999, Dr. S. Chandrakumar, along with his colleagues established a modest 30-bed hospital in Tiruchirappalli. The initial focus was on strengthening trauma care and critical care services in the region.

Over time, the hospital steadily expanded its services and capacity. Today, Kauvery Hospitals in Tiruchirappalli performs nearly 6,000 cardiac interventions, almost 1,000 cardiac surgeries, along with an array of kidney and liver transplants annually. From a modest start, the group has scaled up into a multi-city healthcare network with over 2,500 beds across South India.

However, building high-quality medical institutions in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities has not been without challenges. One of the most persistent obstacles remains the shortage of trained specialists willing to practise outside major metropolitan areas. Many doctors prefer large cities where infrastructure, research exposure and lifestyle opportunities are more readily available.

Addressing these challenges requires a combination of sustained investment and supportive public policy. Expanding medical

infrastructure in smaller cities is essential, but Dr. S. Chandrakumar believes that targeted incentives are also needed to encourage specialists to work in these regions.

Technology is increasingly expected to play an important role in bridging these gaps. Telemedicine platforms, digital health systems and responsible applications of artificial intelligence have the potential to extend specialist expertise to remote and underserved areas. By enabling consultations, monitoring and diagnostics across distances, such tools can help reduce geographical barriers in healthcare delivery.

Yet, despite rapid advances in technology and medical science, the foundation of healthcare remains rooted in trust. According to Dr. S. Chandrakumar, hospitals sustain their credibility only when they consistently demonstrate ethical practices and positive patient outcomes. Trust develops when doctors communicate transparently with patients and their families, clearly explaining diagnoses, treatment options and potential risks.

For Dr. S. Chandrakumar, expanding healthcare access is therefore not only about building hospitals but also about nurturing trust, strengthening ethical practices and ensuring that quality medical care reaches the communities.



Raghuram Rajan, Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor
Chief economist of the International Monetary Fund
Professor of Finance at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business

Insights on Building a Resilient Indian Economy

From predicting crises to shaping reforms, Raghuram Rajan calls for resilience amid geopolitical tensions

World-renowned economist Raghuram Rajan is known for accurately predicting the 2008 financial crisis led to the global recession. His fame stems from his tenure as the 23rd RBI Governor (2013-2016), where he reduced inflation, stabilised the rupee, cleaned up bank balance sheets and inaugurated the pilot launch of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) on April 11, 2016. Under his leadership, the RBI fostered the NPCI-developed system, emphasising the inclusion of non-bank players to drive digital payment adoption.

Observing the current geopolitical trends, Raghuram Rajan has raised the red flag on the global economic fallout of

the ongoing US-Israeli war against Iran, cautioning that a prolonged conflict could trigger an unprecedented oil shock, destabilise financial systems, and leave oil-dependent economies like India particularly exposed. Rajan underlined that the trajectory of the global economy now hinges critically on how long the conflict persists. He suggested that while there are short-term stabilisers, India needs long-term structural resilience rather than relying solely on subsidies to combat this crisis.

In 2023, Raghuram Rajan co-authored a book with economist Rohit Lamba, "Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future", in which he talks of the importance of

determining the future direction for India's growth, especially considering that the demographic dividend the country currently enjoys will diminish after 2050. He explains how to accelerate economic development by investing in our people's human capital, expanding opportunities in high-skilled services and manufacturing centred on innovative new products, and making India a ferment of ideas and creativity.

Rajan emphasises India must prioritise education and healthcare to achieve developed status by 2047. A decentralised, "bottom-up" approach in education is essential to strengthen human capital. Pandemic-affected students have fallen behind, requiring urgent remedial measures across all Indian states. Improving college quality, especially in engineering, will enhance employability and global competitiveness. Investments in workers' health, education, and skills are critical for moving up the value chain. Strengthening public services will ensure a capable workforce. Initiatives focused on grassroots issues like education in underserved areas and skill development will address inclusive growth and high-value production. Thereby accelerating India to realise its full potential and support sustainable economic progress.

Over the last decade, Raghuram Rajan acknowledges India's growth in infrastructure but stresses the need for further efforts in local manufacturing and job creation. He highlights the importance of easing business operations, addressing the 'Make in India' initiative, and aiming for sustained economic growth.



Sharad Baid, Managing Director, Utkal Builders

Building More Than Buildings

For Sharad Baid and Utkal Builders, two stories have always been one: a leader who grew into his vision, and a company that grew into a legacy

In India's real estate landscape, trust is a rare currency. Markets have boomed and crashed, promises made and broken, and buyers have learned to approach builders with reflexive wariness. Which is precisely what makes Sharad Baid's story so remarkable. Over two decades as Managing Director of Utkal Builders, Baid has done something that eludes most developers: made the company's name synonymous with delivery. Not aspiration. Not ambition. Delivery. What he built, project by project, was an institution, defined by the compounding power of a promise well kept.

Utkal Builders today stands as one of the most trusted real estate brands in Odisha, its reputation ratified by Forbes India, CNBC Awaaz, Economic Times, and the Times Business Awards- multiple times over.

The Architecture Of Accountability
Sharad's academic formation was

deliberately global. An MBA from Bond University, Australia, gave him a vocabulary his market had not yet developed: governance frameworks, capital discipline, risk-adjusted planning. Embedding that rigour into Utkal Builders- tighter project timelines, prudent financial structuring, transparent documentation, was prescient. As RERA reshaped buyer expectations, Utkal Builders was already operating at those standards, navigating every cycle without a single stalled project- a record both impressive and unprecedented in Odisha.

"IN REAL ESTATE, REPUTATION COMPOUNDS FASTER THAN RETURNS. IF YOU GET TRUST RIGHT, GROWTH FOLLOWS."

A Decade Of Industry Firsts
If accountability defines Sharad Baid's operating philosophy, innovation defines his strategic ambition. Utkal Builders has been the consistent first-mover in Odisha's real estate evolution, with a sequence of firsts that reads like a timeline of the state's own urban maturation.

From Utkal Heights, Odisha's first high-rise residential development to Utkal Signature, the state's first 2.5 lakh sq ft commercial landmark with an energy-efficient glass facade, each project raised the bar. Utkal iSquare introduced smart home technology to Odisha years before it became mainstream in metros, a deliberate signal that the state's buyers deserved the same aspirational product. Utkal Kanika Galleria, the first premium business arcade in a prime city-centre location, is now Bhubaneswar's favourite retail destination spanning 2.4 lakh sq ft. Utkal Reserve extended this trajectory with large-scale terrace landscaping at scale, design-thinking previously reserved for luxury projects in far larger metros.

Each was a vision made concrete, a statement about what Odisha's real estate could be, delivered precisely when the market was ready to receive it; by a leader who reads demand curves as carefully as he reads balance sheets.

The Gamechanger Principle
If the first two decades proved that governance-led development could work, that trust could be built where none existed, the next chapter is about scale. Utkal Builders' pipeline of seven million-plus square feet backed by smart buildings, sustainable construction and mixed-use developments is a vision for urban Odisha by decade's end.

Baid's most consequential contribution may not be any single building, but the proof that profitability and trust are not a trade-off. As India enters a new phase of urban expansion and cities like Bhubaneswar step into spotlight, the model he has spent twenty years building looks less like regional success and more like a national blueprint.

Prestige University: Redefining Higher Education

Dr. Davish Jain's stewardship of PIMR demonstrates how vision, autonomy, and disciplined growth can build an institution of National repute.

“Game changers are not those who follow reform — they institutionalize it.”

Over the past decade, India's higher education system has undergone its most consequential transformation in a generation. What was once constrained by rigid curricula, limited autonomy, and uneven access has evolved into a far more flexible, multidisciplinary, and globally aspirational ecosystem. At the center of this shift stands the National Education Policy 2020, a reform blueprint that aims to raise India's Gross Enrollment Ratio in higher education from about 27 percent in 2019–20 to 50 percent by 2035, while promoting research, academic autonomy, and multidisciplinary learning.

Yet policy declarations do not transform systems on their own. Institutions do. And institutions change when leadership converts reform into structure, culture, and measurable outcomes.

In central India, Dr. Davish Jain — Chancellor of Prestige Institute of Management and Research (PIMR), Indore, and Chairman of the Prestige Education Foundation — has emerged as one such institutional architect. His stewardship has culminated in PIMR being granted Deemed-to-be University status by the University Grants Commission — a milestone that signals regulatory

trust, academic maturity, and institutional credibility.

India today hosts over 1,100 universities and more than 40,000 colleges, making it one of the largest higher education systems in the world. Expansion, however, has intensified the debate around quality. Deemed university status is not expansion — it is validation. It confers academic autonomy: the ability to design curricula, launch innovative programs, strengthen research frameworks, and collaborate internationally without procedural constraints. For an institution that began as a regional management college, this transition marks a decisive shift from local relevance to national standing.

What distinguishes Dr. Jain's leadership is not scale alone, but alignment — with industry, with policy, and with emerging global benchmarks.

Over the last decade, institutions under the Prestige Education Foundation have expanded across

Decentralized excellence is reshaping education, as visionary leadership transforms regional campuses into nationally competitive, future-ready institutions driving access, quality, and innovation.

multiple cities in Madhya Pradesh, serving thousands of students in management, commerce, law, engineering, and allied disciplines. Placement outcomes have strengthened through structured internships, live industry projects, corporate mentorship programs, and deepened industry interface — addressing a long-standing criticism of management education in India: the theory-application gap. Alumni footprints across corporate India increasingly reflect this applied learning approach.

Entrepreneurship has been another pivot. As India has grown into one of the world's largest startup ecosystems — with tens of thousands of recognized startups — higher education institutions have been compelled to evolve from talent suppliers to innovation catalysts. Under Dr. Jain's guidance, entrepreneurial thinking has been embedded into academic culture through incubation support, industry engagement, and innovation-led exposure. The result is a visible shift in student aspiration — from job seeking to job creation.

Equally significant is the social mobility dimension. Central India has historically lagged behind metropolitan education hubs in perception and infrastructure. By strengthening institutional quality within the region, PIMR has enabled students to access



Dr. Davish Jain
Chairman of the Prestige Education Foundation & Chancellor of Prestige University, Indore

nationally competitive education without migrating to metros. For many first-generation learners, higher education has shifted from distant aspiration to attainable opportunity. Scholarships, mentoring ecosystems, and structured academic guidance have widened participation — quietly contributing to the broader national goal of GER expansion.

The last decade has also been shaped by digital acceleration. The pandemic compressed years of technological adoption into months. Institutions that adapted quickly preserved continuity; institutions that integrated digital delivery strategically improved resilience. Under Dr. Jain's leadership, digital integration has not remained an emergency

response but has evolved into a structural pillar — supporting hybrid learning models and future-ready delivery frameworks.

Calling someone a “game changer” is not about celebration; it is about consequence. Over the past ten years, India's education narrative has shifted from rote to research, from rigidity to flexibility, and from exclusivity to expansion. Leaders who anticipated this trajectory and repositioned their institutions accordingly have influenced outcomes beyond their campuses.

Dr. Davish Jain's contribution lies in disciplined institution-building — balancing continuity with reform, and ambition with accountability. The transition of PIMR into a deemed university is not merely an

Institutions like PIMR are redefining India's higher education landscape through autonomy, innovation, and leadership rooted in vision and accountability.

administrative elevation; it represents a redefinition of educational geography, where excellence is no longer confined to metropolitan centers.

The forward trajectory now becomes even more consequential. The ambition is clear: evolve into a research-driven university with stronger global partnerships, multidisciplinary program expansion, and deeper digital university integration. In an era where knowledge economies reward innovation and cross-disciplinary fluency, the next chapter will test whether autonomy translates into sustained academic leadership.

India's aspiration to emerge as a global knowledge powerhouse will depend not only on central reforms but on decentralized excellence. It will depend on institutions that understand autonomy as responsibility, and on leaders who believe that education must produce not just employable graduates, but ethical, innovative, and globally competent citizens.

If a game changer is one who alters the direction of play rather than merely performing within it, then Dr. Davish Jain's decade-long stewardship — expanding access, institutionalizing reform, and securing national recognition — places him firmly within that definition.

From the heart of Indore rises a university reborn — not by accident, but by anticipation.