



**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

*Date: 07-07-25*

## **LatAm Pivot**

***India must shed its protectionist mindset and trade more with resource-rich South America***

### **TOI Editorials**

That Modi's ongoing five-nation tour includes Argentina and Brazil isn't a trivia. These two key South American nations can be important fulcrums of a potential Indian pivot to the continent. While India-South America trade has been steadily growing, it's far below potential. This has much to do with our unambitious approach to the region. True, India has a preferential trade agreement (PTA) with MERCOSUR bloc that includes Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia. The idea was that the PTA would be gradually expanded and upgraded to a free trade agreement (FTA). However, progress has been really slow and India's exports to Latin America in FY2025 stood at just \$15.17bn – less than 2% of the region's total imports.

But trade is back on the agenda during Modi's visits, and rightly so. While one still hopes that an India-US trade deal can be clinched, New Delhi must be prepared for all eventualities. And with Trump keen on using tariffs as a strategic weapon to achieve geopolitical goals – take the Lindsey Graham proposed bill to hit countries buying Russian oil with 500% tariff – India must diversify its trade relations. South America is a natural resources powerhouse. With vast deposits of oil, gas, copper, lithium, rare earths etc it can power India's industrial growth, advance critical sectors like EV batteries, and bolster food security.

The key for GOI would be to expand its diplomatic bandwidth and take a courageous approach to trade. We must cast away the protectionist mindset and be ready to compete. That's the only way beneficial FTAs can be worked out. Vietnam, which recently worked out a trade deal with US, has been following precisely this strategy, having inked 20 FTAs, with 16 already implemented. China already has a huge presence in Latin America. So, the latter is looking for balance. This is the perfect time for India to step up.

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**THE ECONOMIC TIMES**

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## **Missing Children? Fix Root Causes**

### **ET Editorials**



They vanish quietly—from bus stops, crowded streets, even their own homes. And far too often, no one comes looking. How a nation protects its children speaks volumes about its moral compass. India, despite making progress in reducing child mortality and improving health and education outcomes, still has some recalibrating to do when it comes to protecting its young.

In 2024-25, nearly 45,000 children were rescued from exploitative conditions—90% of them were being used as child labour. In addition, over 47,000 children are listed as missing, according to the latest NCRB data, with 71.4% of these being minor girls. While most missing children are pushed into child labour, others are forced into begging or trafficked into sexual exploitation. Citizen-led platforms like Khoya Paya have helped trace and reunite some children with their families. And states are directed to transfer long-standing cases—where a child remains missing for more than

four months—to anti-human trafficking units.

These measures, though vital, are only a starting point. The real deterrent lies in the swift prosecution of individuals involved in such rackets and establishments where children are held and abused. While legal action has gathered pace in recent years, much more remains to be done. The persistent stream of missing children points to active, organised trafficking networks. Enforcement efforts to identify and dismantle these must be strengthened. Equally important is addressing the root causes—poverty, lack of supervision and systemic gaps. Building better law enforcement and community vigilance networks, along with coordinated action from civil society, is key to ensuring children don't go missing in the first place.



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## Common goals

### Editorial

On his way to Brazil to attend the ongoing BRICS summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made back-to-back bilateral visits to Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Argentina. Each stop was with a view to enhancing bilateral cooperation in fields which included some common themes on pharmaceuticals and vaccines, digital technology, food security and critical minerals. In Accra, India-Ghana ties were upgraded to a comprehensive partnership, with discussions on helping Ghana become a “vaccine hub” for West Africa. In the Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, there was a major MoU on “Indian pharmacopeia”, to improve access to quality and affordable generic medicines from India. In Buenos Aires, President Javier Milei agreed to enhance cooperation on critical minerals as well as Argentina’s vast reserves of shale gas and oil, while India pitched its pharma to Argentina. The three stops were in countries of the “developing world” or the Global South, and the onward journey to Brazil, and then to Namibia, also highlight India’s commitment to building alternative economic mechanisms to the “developed world” or Global North.

India's offer of cooperation for low-cost solutions to global challenges includes the promotion of India-led international organisations such as the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) to these countries. Mr. Modi also made his signature pitch to the Indian diaspora — his speech in the Port of Spain, where Indian labour was brought by British colonial ventures since 1845, is one to note. Referring to the Indian ancestry of President Christine Carla Kangaloo and Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Mr. Modi said that the 35 million Indian diaspora worldwide were India's "pride".

It is also impossible to escape the deep connections between India and the five nations in terms of political history. Each country shares a bond — colonies that suffered under British, Spanish, Portuguese and German forces — and why some of them joined the Non-Aligned Movement. They have all, at various points, committed to building South-South cooperation, and India and Brazil's role in founding the BRIC mechanism, along with Russia and China, and IBSA with South Africa, was an outcome, strongly pitching the interests of the Global South. None of the countries on the tour can be called “anti-West”, and New Delhi has had some differences with them over specific conflicts (Ukraine and Gaza). The motivating force behind the ties, however, and consequently Mr. Modi's nine-day itinerary, is more about a common desire to look beyond the present global order to one that is more equal, representative, and sensitive to the needs of developing and under-developed nations.

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## The 'Khelo Bharat Niti' as a beacon for Indian football

*The policy's five-pillar approach, in the context of football, and an alignment with the education policy are a part of a bold vision for indian sports*

**Kalyan Chaubey, [ is President, All India Football Federation ]**



Sports, as a whole, has gained immense priority under the leadership and the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and it is with great hope that we look forward to the next 10 years, when India, under this vision, could become one of the world leaders in the sporting arena. India has successfully expressed its interest in hosting the 2036 Olympics, and in preparation and anticipation of this, the nation will undoubtedly have the honour of hosting various other prestigious international sporting events as well.

## A significant policy point

The Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 (National Sports Policy), which was passed by the Union Cabinet on Tuesday, July 1, 2025, marks a policy milestone in transforming the role of sports in building a Viksit Bharat. There are several aspects of the policy that, in my view, should result in much appreciation for Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, particularly from the perspective of football.

There is the five-Pillar approach of the policy in the context of football. First, sports excellence — the importance of the national team's standing in the global arena and the work needed on that front. Second, sports for social development — the role of football in sports for development and inclusion. Third, sports for economic development — how football can contribute to industry and growth through events, manufacturing and jobs. Fourth, sports as a people's movement — community sports. Fifth, sports in education — football in schools.

When it comes to the performance of the national team, there is one area in the policy which we have worked on actively — access to talent in India's diaspora and I am happy that the policy has reference to the subject.

This is a positive statement of intent and the All India Football Federation (AIFF) will continue to work with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the government to do everything possible to strengthen the national team.

### **The subject of OCI talent**

For some years there has been a vociferous demand for the inclusion of players with Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cards in the national team. We have seen countries such as Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Middle Eastern Nations, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and those in Europe tap naturalised players with dual citizenship to strengthen their teams.

Some clarifications in the Indian context might be helpful at this stage. As in the FIFA Statutes, a player must hold a passport of a nation he or she wishes to represent and must produce it on match day. While an OCI card grants certain social and economic rights to an individual, it is not equivalent to an Indian passport. Given that India's laws do not provide for dual citizenship, it is for India to strategise how it could capitalise on the opportunity to access the talent within the diaspora and integrate these players into the national team according to FIFA regulations as well as Indian citizenship law. The policy direction provides a ray of hope and we are intent on exploring it to its logical conclusion.

### **Schools and football**

At the grass-root level, the AIFF has plans in place to ensure the progress of talented individuals from eight years of age right up to the senior level. At the lowest age category (eight to 10 years) football has been made accessible for children. When they progress to the age group of 12 to 13 years, they are introduced to competitions. As they further move on to the U17 and U18 levels, they get high performance training and then on to the U18 and U20 levels, where the transition from youth to professional level. Such processes would not be possible without the help of facilities of schools, and we thank the Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan, for having facilitated the alignment of the National Education Policy with the National Sports Policy.

Through the FIFA Football for Schools (F4S) programme, we have successfully made that link logistically feasible, bringing the beautiful game to over 1,53,000 schools — over 9,26,000 footballs are being distributed. This is how football is being made accessible at the U8 level.

I firmly believe that India's National Sports Policy aligns with National Education Policy which will catalyse a new era of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in Indian sports.

I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his vision to make Bharat a sporting nation.

## राष्ट्रीय सहारा

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### ये सूरत बदलनी चाहिए

#### संपादकीय

साहसिक स्वीकारोक्ति, सच्चाई का सामना या सरकार को आईना दिखाना कहें, या कुछ और लेकर सड़क परिवहन एवं राजमार्ग मंत्री नितिन गडकरी ने शनिवार को जो कहा उसे सरकार के रुख के विपरीत तो कहा ही जा सकता है। उन्होंने जो कहा उसका साफ-साफ अभिप्राय: यही है कि देश में गरीबों की संख्या बढ़ रही है, अमीर और अमीर होते जा रहे हैं। यह वयान ऐसे समय आया है जब संयुक्त राष्ट्र के हवाले से कुछ समय पहले कहा गया था कि देश में 33 करोड़ लोग गरीबी की रेखा से ऊपर उठ चुके हैं। संघ और अपने गढ़ नागपुर में एक कार्यक्रम में गडकरी ने कहा कि धन का विकेंद्रीकरण जरूरी है। उन्होंने कृषि, विनिर्माण, कराधान और बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास में सार्वजनिक निजी भागीदारी (पीपीपी) सहित कई मुद्दों पर बात की। उनका इशारा अमीरों के धन पर शिकंजा ढीला करने की तरफ था। उनके अनुसार अर्थव्यवस्था को इस तरह से विकसित होना चाहिए कि रोजगार पैदा हों और ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों का उत्थान हो। उदार आर्थिक नीतियां अपनाने के लिए उन्होंने पूर्व प्रधानमंत्रियों पीवी नरसिंह राव और मनमोहन सिंह की प्रशंसा की। उनके अनुसार ऐसे आर्थिक विकल्प पर विचार चल रहा है, जो रोजगार पैदा करेगा और अर्थव्यवस्था की वृद्धि को बढ़ावा देगा। केंद्रीय मंत्री सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) में क्षेत्रीय योगदान में असंतुलन से चिंतित दिखाई दिए। विनिर्माण क्षेत्र 22-24 फीसद, सेवा क्षेत्र 52-54 फीसद योगदान देता है, जबकि कृषि, ग्रामीण आवादी के 65- 70 फीसद हिस्से को शामिल करने के बावजूद केवल 12 फीसद योगदान देती है। कृषि क्षेत्र का योगदान अर्थव्यवस्था में और अधिक होना चाहिए। चार्टर्ड अकाउंटेंट्स (सीए) की पीठ ठोकते हुए केंद्रीय मंत्री ने उनमें अन्य क्षेत्रों में भी दखल बढ़ाने को कहा। वे अर्थव्यवस्था के वृद्धि इंजन हो सकते हैं। आयकर रिटर्न दाखिल करने और जीएसटी जमा करने तक ही सीमित न रहें। गडकरी ने अपने मंत्रालय के काम का हवाला देते हुए कहा कि सड़क विकास के लिए धन की कमी नहीं है। मैं कहता हूं कि मेरे पास धन की कमी नहीं है, बल्कि मेरे पास काम की कमी है। उन्हें इस बात पर भी विचार करना चाहिए कि जनता से पैसा वसूल कर खजाना भरना ही योग्यता नहीं है। गरीबों की बढ़ती संख्या और चंद लोगों के अमीर होते जाने की स्थिति को बदलने की आवश्यकता है।



## मन का मित्र एआई

### संपादकीय

कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता या आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस या एआई की दुनिया में नित नए शोध और खोज का सिलसिला जारी है। यह किसी खुशखबरी से कम नहीं कि जर्मनी की शोध संस्था हेल्महोल्ट्ज म्यूनिख ने सेंटों नाम के एक ऐसे एआई मॉडल का विकास किया है, जो न केवल इंसानों की तरह सोचता है, बल्कि प्रतिक्रिया भी देता है। अन्य एआई मॉडल से यह इसलिए अलग है, क्योंकि परिचित कामों में इंसानी व्यवहार का अनुमान लगाने के साथ ही यह पूरी तरह से नए हालात में भी इंसानी व्यवहार का आकलन करने में प्रायोगिक रूप से सफल साबित हुआ है। कहा जा सकता है कि यह एक तरह से मनोवैज्ञानिक सिद्धांतों को कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता से जोड़ने का प्रयोग है नेचर पत्रिका में छपे अध्ययन में कहा गया है कि इसे विकसित करने के लिए मनोविज्ञान से जुड़े 160 प्रयोगों का उपयोग किया गया, जिनमें 60,000 लोगों ने कई परिस्थितियों के संदर्भ में एक करोड़ से अधिक विकल्प तैयार किए। यानी, इस एआई मॉडल सेंटों के पास इंसानों द्वारा सोचे जा सकने वाले एक करोड़ से अधिक विचारों का संग्रह है, जिसका विश्लेषण करते हुए यह समाधान पेश कर सकता है।

जाहिर है, सेंटों का व्यावहारिक पक्ष काफी कारगर साबित होने वाला है। शोधकर्ताओं की मानें, तो इसका विशेष उपयोग अवसाद से जुड़ी बीमारियों के उपचार में किया जा सकता है। उनके मुताबिक, यह एआई मॉडल स्वास्थ्य अनुसंधान की दिशा में एक नई राह तैयार करता है, जिससे यह समझने में मदद मिल सकती है कि विभिन्न मनोवैज्ञानिक स्थितियों वाले लोग किस तरह फैसले लेते हैं। इससे मनोरोगियों के इलाज में काफी सहायता मिलने की उम्मीद है। डॉक्टर मार्सेल विंस और डॉ एरिक शुल्ज के नेतृत्व में शोधकर्ताओं की टीम पूरी तरह आश्वस्त है और उनका अनुमान है कि आने वाले दिनों में इसका उपयोग यह पता लगाने में भी किया जाएगा कि स्वस्थ व्यक्तियों और मनोरोगियों में फैसले लेने की आंतरिक दिमागी रणनीति किस कदर अलग होती है? यह प्रयोग जब आगे बढ़ेगा, तब मानव अनुभूति की हमारी समझ और बेहतर हो सकेगी।

अगर इस तरह के मॉडल विकसित होते हैं, तो भारत जैसे देशों के वे काफी काम आ सकते हैं। अनुमान है कि अपने देश में करीब 19.73 करोड़ लोग किसी-न-किसी मनोरोग से जूझ रहे हैं। विडंबना है कि ज्यादातर आवादी की पहुंच मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं तक नहीं है। आम लोगों तक मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को पहुंचाने के लिहाज से 1982 में राष्ट्रीय मानसिक स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत जरूर की गई, लेकिन इसे मनमाफिक सफलता नहीं मिल सकी है। भारतीय समाज में मनोरोगियों को आज भी अच्छी नजरों से नहीं देखा जाता है। जागरूकता का इस कदर अभाव है कि कई इलाकों में मानसिक स्वास्थ्य समस्याओं से जूझने वाले लोग सामाजिक कलंक और भेदभाव से पीड़ित रहते हैं। नतीजतन, अपने यहां मानसिक बीमारियों को भरसक छिपाने की कोशिश होती है। पढ़े-लिखे तबके तक में इसको लेकर उदासीनता पसरी हुई है। ऐसी सूरत में, नई तकनीकें हमारे काफी काम आ सकती हैं। सेंटों जैसे एआई मॉडल मनोरोगियों के दिमागी संतुलन या उनकी सोचने-समझने की क्षमता का आकलन कर उनके इलाज में मदद कर सकेंगे। चिकित्सा जगत में सेंटों जैसे एआई मॉडलों की बड़ी जरूरत है और उनका समय के साथ कारगर होते चले जाना मानवता के विकास के लिए बहुत जरूरी है।