



THE IDEA OF INDIA, SEEN FROM THE FRONTIER

As the tricolour rises for the eightieth time, the North East offers the nation not distance but perspective — for those who live where Bharat ends know best what it means for Bharat to be free

At the stroke of the midnight hour on the fifteenth of August 1947, a nation long held in bondage stepped into freedom. Seventy-nine years have passed since; this August the tricolour rises for the eightieth time over a free India. It is a moment for the whole nation to pause — and for a frontier journal, a moment to lift its gaze from the border to the country that border was drawn to defend. For the idea of India looks different, and in some ways truer, when seen from its farthest edge.

To live on the frontier is to understand freedom without illusion. The citizen of the heartland may take the nation for granted, as one takes the ground beneath one's feet. The citizen of the border cannot. He lives where the map of India meets the maps of others, where sovereignty is not an abstraction but a daily fact defended by soldiers on cold ridges and fences through the hills. He knows, as few in the interior can, that freedom is not free — that it is held, every day, against pressures the mainland rarely sees. From the frontier, Independence Day is not merely a holiday but a vigil kept and, for one day, joyfully celebrated.

The India that turns eighty is a nation transformed from the one that dawned in 1947. Then, a country newly freed and freshly partitioned, impoverished and doubted, was given little chance of holding together. Today it stands among the largest economies on earth, the fastest-growing of the major ones, a space power and a nuclear power, a voice the world's great capitals must heed. The doubters who predicted its fracture have been answered by the simple, stubborn fact of its endurance: that a civilisation of a billion and a half souls, of every faith and tongue, has kept its unity and its democracy across eight decades. That endurance is the first miracle of modern India, and the frontier knows its worth better than most, for the frontier is where the nation's unity is most tested and most precious.

Nowhere is that unity more remarkable than in the North East. Here, in a region of a hundred tongues and countless communities, bound to the mainland by a corridor twenty-two kilometres wide, the idea of India faces its hardest and most beautiful test.

That the Naga and the Assamese, the Mizo and the Meitei, the Bodo and the Khasi are Indians — not by conquest but by belonging, not despite their distinctiveness but with it — is the living proof of what the Republic promised: not a uniform nation but a united one, not the erasure of difference but its embrace under a single flag. The frontier is where India's founding wager — that unity and diversity can coexist — is staked most boldly, and, for the most part, won.

This is not to pretend the journey is complete or the nation flawless. The frontier sees the unfinished work as clearly as the achievement. Manipur's wound is not yet healed; the border is pressed by a turbulent neighbourhood; development has reached some corners of the nation and skipped others; and the compact between the citizen and the state is tested, on the frontier as in the heartland, wherever that promise goes unkept. A patriotism worth the name does not deny these truths; it names them, and resolves to answer them. Love of country is not the belief that the nation is perfect, but the determination to make it so.

The nation has set itself a goal for its hundredth year: a developed India by 2047, prosperous, secure and confident. It is an ambition worthy of a great civilisation, and it will be built, or lost, in every part of the country — in the factories of the west and the fields of the south, in the ports of the coast and, yes, in the villages of the eastern frontier. A Viksit Bharat that leaves its frontier behind would be neither developed nor whole. The road to 2047 must run through the North East, or it does not truly run at all.

And so, as the flag rises for the eightieth time, the frontier offers the nation not distance but perspective — the clear sight of those who live where Bharat ends. They have kept the watch that made this freedom possible; they have held the line that keeps it safe; and they raise the tricolour on Independence morning with a pride the interior can scarcely match, because they know, in their bones, what it cost and what it means. Seventy-nine years on, the idea of India endures — one nation, many peoples, unbroken from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Kutch to the farthest hill of Arunachal where the country's first sunrise falls. That endurance is the achievement we celebrate this August. Guarding it, and completing it, is the task that remains.





FROM PERIPHERY TO POWERHOUSE

Once managed as a problem, the North East is being built as a partner. The New India is rewriting the region's place in the national story.

By Editorial Team

For too long the North East was spoken of, in Delhi and beyond, as a periphery — remote, restive, a security problem to be managed rather than a region to be built. That framing is, at last, being overturned, and the transformation is among the quieter achievements of the New India.

The change begins with connectivity, the oldest of the region's deprivations. New railway lines now reach capitals that trains never touched; new highways and the great bridges over the Brahmaputra have shrunk distances that once took days; new airports and air links have ended the isolation of the hills. Where the North East was once bound to the mainland by a single fragile thread, it is being woven in by many. And the Act East Policy has reframed the region's very geography — from a dead end against a closed border into a bridgehead toward Southeast Asia, the natural gateway of a nation looking east.

The peace dividend has been as important as the infrastructure. A string of accords has folded former insurgencies back into the constitutional fold, and vast stretches of the region that lived for decades under the shadow of the gun now know a normalcy their children will grow up taking for granted. The steady withdrawal of the disturbed-area provisions from district after district is the visible measure of a frontier turning from conflict to construction.

With peace and connectivity has come investment and ambition. The region's strengths — its hydropower potential, its horticulture and organic agriculture, its bamboo and its biodiversity, its tourism and its border trade — are being harnessed as never before. A generation of young Northeasterners, long forced to migrate west for opportunity, is beginning to find it at home, and to carry the region's talent onto national stages in sport, in the arts, in enterprise and in the services.

None of this is to declare the work done. The region still lags on many measures; jobs remain too few for its educated young; and the fruits of growth have reached some communities and bypassed others. The transformation is real but unfinished, and honesty about the gap is the condition of closing it.

But the direction has turned, and that is what matters. The North East is no longer being managed as a problem; it is being built as a partner. The nationalist significance of this is profound: a region integrated by prosperity and dignity is bound to the nation far more firmly than one held only by the soldier. Every road built, every accord signed, every young Northerner who finds a future at home is a thread that ties the frontier to the flag. From periphery to powerhouse is a long road, and the region is only partway down it. But it is, at last, unmistakably on the way.





THE NATION'S MOST COMPLEX FRONTIER

Five neighbours, every kind of threat, held in a single stretch of hills. The eastern border is a national concern the interior barely sees.

By Editorial Team

If the western border is the frontier the nation watches most closely, the eastern is the one it understands least — and it may be the most complex boundary India holds. Along the arc of the North East, the Republic meets five nations: China to the north, Myanmar to the east, Bangladesh to the south and west, Bhutan and Nepal along the shoulder of the hills. Nearly the entire perimeter of the region is international border. To guard it is to hold, in a single stretch, almost every kind of frontier challenge the nation faces.

To the north lies the contest with China — the disputed Line of Actual Control in Arunachal, the fantasy maps and the border villages, the great dam rising on the Tsangpo, the slow salami-slicing that no thaw has stilled. To the east, a collapsing Myanmar exports its war: insurgent sanctuaries in the Sagaing hills, refugees and drones, and the narcotics of the Golden Triangle. To the south, the pressures of the Bangladesh border — infiltration, the security of the Siliguri Corridor, and a neighbourhood in flux. Each of these would test a nation on its own. The North East holds all of them at once.

This is why the eastern watch is a national concern, not a regional one. The forces that keep it — the Army on the high ridges, the Assam Rifles along the Myanmar line, the Border Security Force on the riverine and Bangladesh stretches — carry a burden the mainland rarely weighs. The transition now underway, from soft borders managed by trust to hard ones managed by fence and pass, is among the most consequential shifts in the nation's security posture in a generation, and it is falling, first, on this frontier.

The nationalist reading insists that the eastern border be given the attention, the resources and the infrastructure its complexity demands — the roads and the surveillance, the fence completed with speed, the forces expanded and equipped, the alternative routes to the sea advanced. For decades the eastern frontier was the neglected border, guarded quietly while the nation's gaze fixed westward. That neglect is a luxury a rising India, in an age of Chinese assertion and Burmese collapse, can no longer afford.

But the deeper lesson of the eastern watch is the one this magazine returns to again and again: that a border of this complexity cannot be held by wire and rifle alone. It runs through the homes of communities who are kin to peoples across the line, and it can be secured only with their trust and their partnership. The soldier guards the border; the citizen who stands with him makes the guarding possible. On the eastern frontier, national security and national integration are not two tasks but one.

As the nation celebrates its freedom this August, it should spare a thought — and more than a thought, a commitment of resources and will — for the most complex watch it keeps. The eastern gate is held today by the quiet endurance of forces and communities the interior seldom sees. A grateful and prudent nation will ensure they never keep that watch alone.





INDIA AND CHINA: THE LONG CONTEST

Not a quarrel to be settled but a rivalry to be managed across decades. The gravest challenge of the eightieth year is also the most enduring.

By Editorial Team

Of all the challenges before the nation in its eightieth year, none is graver or more enduring than the contest with China. It is not a quarrel to be settled but a rivalry to be managed across decades — a contest of civilisations, economies and strategic wills, waged along a disputed Himalayan frontier and across the wider Indo-Pacific.

The frontier remains the sharpest edge. Since the deadly clash in Galwan in 2020, tens of thousands of troops have faced each other across the Line of Actual Control in a tense standoff. The disengagement agreement of 2024 and the cautious thaw that followed — resumed dialogue, some restored ties — have reduced the risk of another clash, but they have not resolved the dispute, nor achieved the full de-escalation India seeks. On the eastern sector, China presses its claim to Arunachal through fantasy maps and border villages, builds airbases and shelters within reach of the frontier, and raises the great dam on the Tsangpo that places a hand on the waters of the North East. The thaw is real, but so is the vigilance it demands.

Beyond the border, the contest is comprehensive. China's support for Pakistan, its inroads into India's neighbourhood — Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Myanmar — its Belt and Road ambitions and its naval reach into the Indian Ocean, all form a strategic encirclement India must answer. And the economic dimension is inseparable: a trade relationship deeply skewed in China's favour, a dependence on Chinese inputs that the drive for self-reliance is meant to reduce, and a technological race that will shape the century.

India's response has matured into a clear-eyed strategy of competition without needless provocation. It hardens the frontier with roads, tunnels and border villages; it deepens partnerships — with the United States, with the Quad, with like-minded powers — while guarding its strategic autonomy; it builds its own economic and military strength as the ultimate guarantee; and it contests China's influence in the shared neighbourhood. This is neither the naivety that would trust Beijing's smile nor the recklessness that would seek confrontation, but the patience of a rising power that means to prevail over the long run.

For the North East, the China contest is not abstract; it is the view from the front row. Arunachal is claimed; the Tsangpo is dammed; the LAC runs through the region's hills. What the nation debates in strategic terms, the frontier lives in daily fact. That is why the eastern border must be built and held as a national priority, and why the region's development is itself a strategic answer to Chinese pressure. The contest with China will define India's security for a generation. It cannot be won in a season or settled in a summit. It will be won, if it is won, by the steady accumulation of national strength — economic, military, technological and moral — and by the unity and resolve of a nation that refuses to be cowed. In its eightieth year, India faces its greatest rival with a confidence it did not have a decade ago. That confidence, tempered by vigilance, is the foundation of the long contest ahead.





AFTER SINDOOR, A NEW RED LINE

By Editorial Team

The strikes of last May declared a doctrine: terror and talks cannot go together, and the nuclear shield will not protect the terrorist.

If the eastern frontier tests the nation's patience, the western tests its resolve — and in the spring of last year, the nation showed the resolve it had. On the twenty-second of April 2025, terrorists murdered twenty-six innocents, most of them Hindu men, at Pahalgam in Kashmir, in an attack New Delhi traced to cross-border linkages. On the seventh of May, India answered. Operation Sindoor struck nine terrorist camps deep inside Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir — the headquarters of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed among them — in a precise, calibrated campaign that, in the government's account, killed more than a hundred terrorists.

What followed was a four-day conflict between two nuclear-armed neighbours, ended by a ceasefire on the tenth of May after, in India's account, Pakistan's military sought the halt. But the significance of Operation Sindoor lay less in its four days than in the doctrine it declared. India's message, delivered by its leaders in the weeks after, was unambiguous: that terror and talks cannot go together; that a terrorist attack from across the border will be treated as an act of war and answered in kind, deep inside the adversary's territory; and that if provocation is repeated, the operation will resume. A new red line had been drawn.

This is the doctrine of a nation that has run out of patience with the old grammar of restraint. For decades India absorbed cross-border terrorism and answered largely with diplomacy, wary of escalation between nuclear powers. Sindoor, following the surgical strikes of 2016 and the Balakot air strike of 2019, marks the consolidation of a new normal: that the nuclear threshold will not be allowed to shield the terrorist, and that the cost of exporting terror to India will be paid on the exporter's own soil.

The confrontation was not without its complications, and a candid journal notes them. Pakistan contested India's claims and sought to shape its own narrative; questions were raised about the ceasefire and about outside involvement in ending the fighting; and the underlying security environment along the western border remains, a year on, much as it was. Deterrence is not a single act but a standing posture, and it must be renewed by readiness rather than rested upon.

But the strategic direction is clear, and it is one a nationalist reading welcomes. India has established that it will defend its citizens with force when force is required, that it will not be deterred by nuclear blackmail, and that the initiative on the western front now rests, more than before, in its own hands. The armed forces demonstrated a capacity for precise, deep, calibrated action; the political leadership demonstrated the will to order it.

As the nation marks its eightieth Independence Day — its celebrations this year carrying the very emblem of Operation Sindoor — it does so with a western border secured not by the hope of the adversary's goodwill but by the certainty of its own response. That is the meaning of the new red line: that the blood of Indian innocents will be answered, and that the nation once thought to lack the will has shown that it does not. Deterrence, in the end, is built on credibility. In the skies over Bawalpur and Muridke, India made its credibility plain.



MADE IN INDIA, DEFENDED BY INDIA

*A nation is only as sovereign as its power to arm itself.
The drive to build India's weapons at home bore battle-
field fruit last spring.*

By Editorial Team

A nation is only as sovereign as its ability to defend itself, and for too long India — despite fielding one of the world's largest militaries — depended on foreign suppliers for the weapons in its soldiers' hands. That dependence was a strategic vulnerability, leaving the nation's security hostage to the politics and price of distant capitals. The drive to end it — to make the arms of India in India — is among the most consequential projects of the New India, and it bore visible fruit on the western front last year.

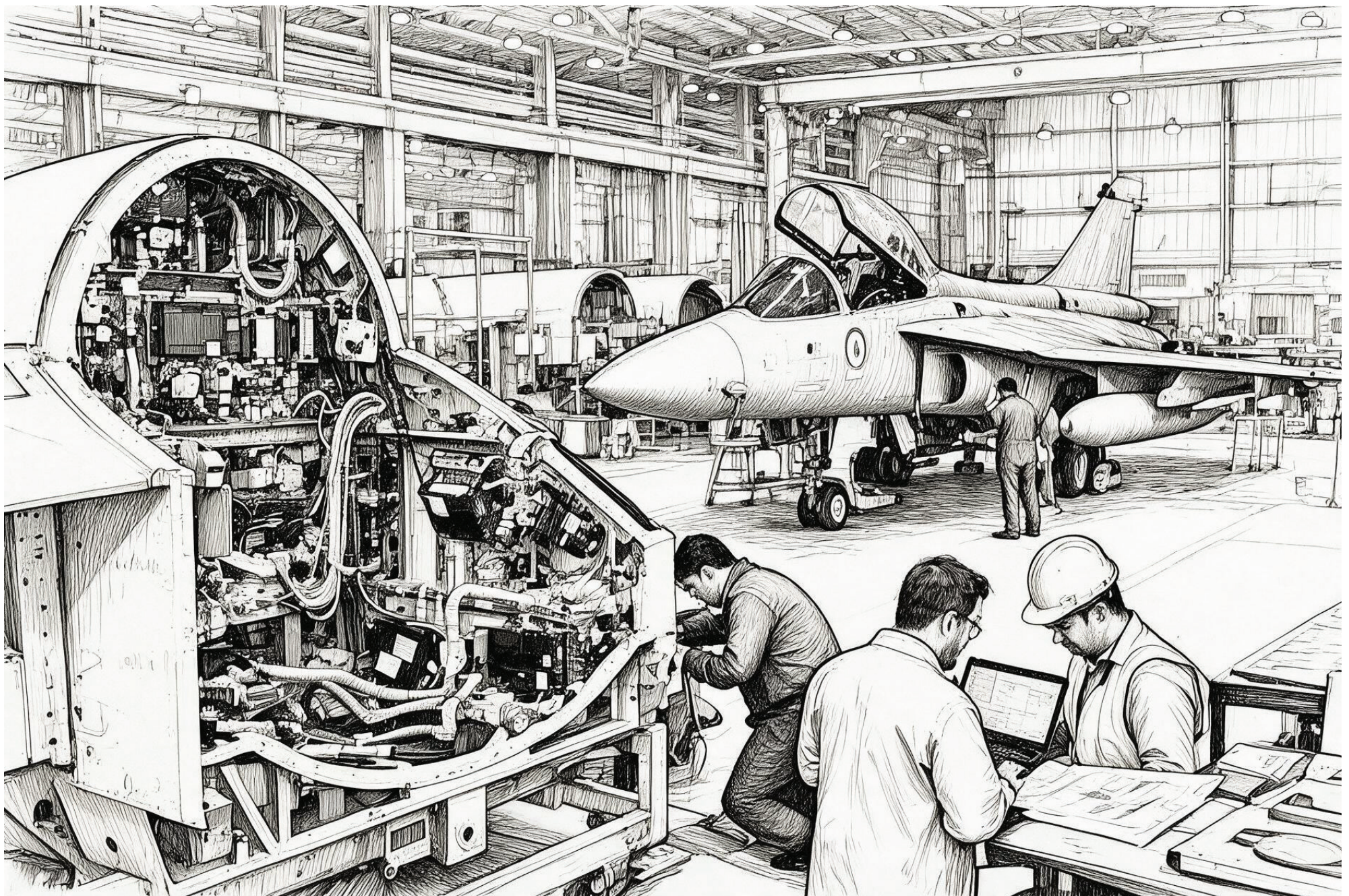
The transformation is well underway. Indigenous platforms that were once distant dreams now serve on the front lines: the Tejas light combat aircraft, warships and submarines built in Indian yards, artillery and missiles and air-defence systems of Indian design. Defence production has climbed to record levels, and — most tellingly — India, long the world's largest arms importer, has become a growing arms exporter, its defence exports rising many times over in a decade to reach buyers across the world. The nation that bought its weapons is beginning to sell them.

Operation Sindoor offered a demonstration in real conditions. Indian-made systems and platforms, alongside imported ones, performed in combat against a capable adversary, and the layered air defence that shielded Indian assets drew in good measure on indigenous design. Nothing validates a defence-industrial strategy like performance under fire, and the western campaign gave the self-reliance drive a battlefield endorsement no brochure could match.

The strategic logic is compelling. A nation that builds its own arms cannot be disarmed by an embargo or squeezed by a supplier's conditions; it keeps the know-how, the jobs and the industrial base at home; it can tailor its weapons to its own terrain and doctrine; and it earns the strategic autonomy that is the prize of self-reliance. The recent experience of partners withholding sensitive technologies from India — source codes, critical components — has only underscored the point: what a nation does not build, it does not fully control.

The task is far from finished. India still imports much of its most advanced weaponry; its research-and-development base must deepen; its private defence industry must be given room to grow alongside the public sector; and the long timelines and cost overruns that have dogged indigenous programmes must be tamed. Self-reliance in defence is a marathon, not a sprint, and honesty about the remaining dependence is the spur to ending it.

But the direction, once again, is clear and right. A rising power that means to hold its own against a stronger rival to the north and a hostile one to the west cannot forever depend on others to arm it. In its eightieth year, India is building, with growing confidence, the arms of its own defence — and in doing so, completing the meaning of the independence it celebrates. A nation defended by India, with the arms of India, is a nation whose freedom rests, at last, in its own hands.





ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT: THE ECONOMY OF A RISING POWER

A nation once written off is now among the largest economies on earth and the fastest-growing. Self-reliance is independence in material form.

By Editorial Team

The India that turns eighty this August is, by any long measure, an economic success story that its founders could scarcely have imagined. A nation written off at independence as too poor and too vast to survive has become one of the largest economies on earth — having surpassed Japan to rank, by the government's reckoning and international projections, among the top four, and standing as the fastest-growing of the world's major economies. In a single decade the size of the economy has roughly doubled; the trajectory points toward the third position by the late 2020s and, in the nation's stated ambition, toward a developed India by 2047.

The numbers, striking as they are, matter less than what underlies them. India's rise rests on a young population in a world that is ageing, on a vast and deepening domestic market, on a digital revolution that has made the country a world leader in real-time payments, and on macroeconomic and infrastructural foundations laid over years of reform and investment. Where once India exported its talent and imported nearly everything else, it now aspires to build at home — and increasingly does.

That aspiration has a name: Atmanirbhar Bharat, the self-reliant India. It is not the autarky of a closed economy, but the strategic resolve of a nation that has learned the perils of dependence — for critical goods, for defence equipment, for the technologies of the future. From semiconductors to solar cells, from mobile phones to medicines, from defence platforms to space systems, the drive is to make in India what India needs, to secure the supply chains a great power cannot afford to leave in rival hands, and to turn a market of a billion and a half into a manufacturing base for the world.

The honest reckoning acknowledges the distance still to travel. Per capita income remains modest; the fruits of growth are unevenly shared; jobs for the young remain too few; and external headwinds — trade tensions, currency pressures, a turbulent global economy — buffet the ascent. Rankings measured in dollars can rise and fall on the exchange rate, and a mature nation celebrates the trajectory more than any single year's league table. Economic greatness is measured not only in the size of the whole but in the dignity of the humblest citizen's life, and by that truer measure the work is far from done.

But the direction is unmistakable and historic. A nation is climbing, steadily and swiftly, from poverty toward prosperity, from dependence toward self-reliance, from the margins of the world economy toward its centre. For the frontier, this rise is not a distant abstraction: it is the source of the roads and the railways, the investment and the opportunity, that are binding the North East into the national story. A rising economy is the tide that can lift every region, if the nation wills it to reach the last village and the farthest hill.

In its eightieth year, India's economy stands as the surest foundation of its freedom — for a nation that can feed, employ and equip itself, and build what it needs, is a nation truly sovereign. Atmanirbhar Bharat is not merely an economic slogan. It is the material form of independence itself.





THE VOICE OF A CONFIDENT NATION

By Editorial Team

Eight decades ago, a newly free India stepped onto the world stage as a poor and untested nation, its independence hard-won and its future uncertain. Today it strides that stage as a power the world's great capitals court — a nation of a billion and a half, a major economy, a nuclear and space power, and increasingly the acknowledged voice of the Global South. The transformation in India's international standing is among the clearest measures of how far the Republic has travelled.

The hallmark of India's foreign policy in this era is strategic autonomy — the refusal to be any power's junior partner, the insistence on judging each question by the nation's own interests. India deepens its partnership with the United States and the Quad to balance China, yet keeps its long friendship with Russia and buys the energy its economy needs where it chooses; it engages the Arab world and Israel alike; it speaks to the West and for the South. In an age of sharpening blocs, India has kept its freedom of manoeuvre — multi-aligned, not non-aligned, a pole in its own right in an increasingly multipolar world.

Its distinctive claim is to speak for the Global South — the developing nations long spoken over by the powerful. India's presidency of the G20 gave that claim a platform, bringing the African Union into the grouping and pressing the concerns of the developing world onto the global agenda. In a world order that the South has long found unjust, India offers itself as a bridge — large enough to be heard by the powerful, close enough to speak for the many. There have been setbacks and hard lessons, as a candid account allows. India's narrative does not always carry the day; great powers pursue their own interests at India's expense; the neighbourhood remains turbulent, with China contesting India's influence in every capital around it. Standing in the world is never permanent; it is earned and re-earned. But the trajectory is unmistakable: a nation once at the margins now sits at the high tables, and is missed when it is absent.

For a nationalist reading, the meaning is a matter of pride tempered by purpose. India's rising voice is not vanity; it is the natural expression of a civilisation of a sixth of humanity taking its rightful place. And that voice is strongest when the nation is strongest at home — for foreign policy is the shadow that domestic strength casts. A united, prosperous, secure India commands respect abroad; a divided or faltering one would not. The frontier, too, has its part in this: a nation whose borders are secure and whose peripheries are content negotiates the world from strength.

As India marks its eightieth Independence Day, it does so as a nation the world can no longer ignore — confident without arrogance, independent without isolation, ambitious without illusion. The poor and doubted nation of 1947 has become a power that shapes its own destiny and speaks for millions beyond its borders. That voice, earned across eight decades, is one of the finest fruits of the freedom this August celebrates.

From the margins to the high tables: India strides the world stage as the acknowledged voice of the Global South, on its own strategic terms.





THE ROAD TO A DEVELOPED INDIA

By Editorial Team

A horizon for the hundredth year of freedom. And a frontier stake in it: a Viksit Bharat must be a whole Bharat, or it is not developed at all.



Every nation needs a horizon to march toward, and India has set itself a bold one: Viksit Bharat, a developed India, by 2047 — the hundredth year of its freedom. It is an ambition worthy of a great civilisation, and this eightieth Independence Day, whose theme summons the nation's youth to that mission, is a milestone on the long road toward it.

The vision is expansive. A developed India by 2047 means an economy many times its current size, prosperity that reaches the last citizen, and an end to poverty of the kind that still shadows too many lives. It means world-class infrastructure and education, a manufacturing and technological base among the world's finest, energy security built on a green transition, and a place among the foremost powers of the earth. It means, in short, the redemption of the promise made at midnight in 1947 — that freedom would bring not only political liberty but dignity and opportunity for all.

The foundations are being laid. The digital revolution has leapfrogged the nation into the front rank of the connected world; the drive for self-reliance is building the industries of the future; missions in semiconductors, green hydrogen, space and artificial intelligence are staking India's claim to the technologies that will define the century. And the nation's greatest asset is its youth — among the largest young populations on earth, a demographic dividend that, harnessed well, could power the ascent to 2047, and, wasted, could squander it.

For the honest reckoning is that the road is long and the obstacles real. To become developed by 2047, India must grow fast and steadily for two decades; it must create tens of millions of good jobs for its young; it must lift its human development — health, education, the condition of women — to match its economic ambition; and it must do all this while safeguarding its unity, its environment and its democratic soul. Ambition without delivery is only a slogan, and the gap between the vision and the ground is where the real work lies.

Crucially — and this is the frontier's stake in the national dream — a Viksit Bharat must be a whole Bharat. A developed nation cannot be built with a prosperous heartland and a neglected periphery; the road to 2047 must run through the villages of the North East as surely as through the cities of the plains. To leave the frontier behind would be to arrive at 2047 with a nation only half-developed, and therefore not developed at all. The measure of the dream will be whether it reaches the last hill and the farthest border.

The generation that will see India at a hundred is in its schools and colleges today — including in the border districts this magazine holds dear. To them the vision of 2047 is not a distant abstraction but the story of their own lives. This eightieth Independence Day, the nation lifts its eyes to that horizon. Seventy-nine years ago India won its freedom. In the years to 2047 it means to complete it — to become, at last, the prosperous, secure and confident Bharat of its founders' hopes. That is the road ahead. The nation, frontier and heartland together, must walk it with resolve.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This magazine keeps its watch on the frontiers of the North East. But once a year the whole nation pauses to remember what those frontiers are for — and in August, the frontier journal must lift its eyes from the border to the country the border defends. This is our Independence Day issue, and it takes, deliberately, a national canvas.

On the fifteenth of August, India marks its eightieth Independence Day — seventy-nine completed years since the tricolour first rose over a free nation at midnight. It is a fitting moment to ask not only how the North East fares, but how Bharat fares: the great Republic of which our frontier is the eastern gate. And so this issue ranges across the whole country — to the western border where the armed forces drew a new red line against terror, to the economy now counted among the largest on earth, to the arms India increasingly builds for itself, to the voice it has found on the world stage, and to the long road toward a developed nation by 2047.

We have not forgotten the North East — no frontier journal could. Four of these pages remain rooted in our own soil: the region's transformation from periphery to partner in the New India; the complex eastern watch our forces keep; the hard test that Manipur still poses to our unity; and the gifts — of sport, culture and nature — that the North East gives the nation in return. But we have set these, this month, within the larger frame to which they belong. For the truth this issue means to affirm is that the North East is not a place apart from India but a part of India — bound to its fortunes, sharing its rise, entitled to its promise.

Read from the frontier, the nation's story acquires a particular clarity. Those who live where the country ends understand, better than most, what it means for the country to be free, secure and whole. They know the price of the border and the worth of the flag. When the North East celebrates Independence Day, it does so not as a distant onlooker but as a sentinel who has kept the watch that made the celebration possible.

Our convictions run through these pages as ever: that the nation's unity is sacred and its diversity its strength; that sovereignty and self-reliance are the foundations of freedom; that security and development advance together; and that the eightieth year of freedom should be a year not of complacency but of resolve. India has travelled far from the midnight of 1947. The road to 2047 — to the developed, secure and confident Bharat of the nation's dreams — runs, as every road in this country does, through its frontiers as much as its heart-land.

To every reader, along the border and across the nation: a happy Independence Day. Let us keep the watch, and build the future, together.



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