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3rd edition of **INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC CONCLAVE 2025**

on the occasion of BCC&I 171st Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Theme: 'Indo-Pacific Cooperation: Towards
New Horizons of Maritime Partnership'



18TH & 19TH SEPTEMBER 2025

KOLKATA

BCC&I's Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave 2025

Indo-Pacific Cooperation: Towards New Horizons of Maritime Partnership

Annexure 1 – Framing the Future: Vision, Mission, and Strategic Roadmap for Indo-Pacific Maritime Cooperation

Vision:

The vision for the Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave (IPEC) 2025, themed "**Indo-Pacific Cooperation: Towards New Horizons of Maritime Partnership**," is to foster a secure, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific through deeper collaboration and economic integration. With a strong focus on connectivity, trade and resilient supply chains, IPEC 2025 will bring together key stakeholders to explore innovative solutions, strengthen institutional partnerships, and drive sustainable growth. By encouraging dialogue and cooperation across sectors, the Conclave aims to create new opportunities for trade, investment, and technological advancements, contributing to a more inclusive and forward-looking Indo-Pacific.

Mission:

The mission of BCC&I's Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave 2025, themed "**Indo-Pacific Cooperation: Towards New Horizons of Maritime Partnership**," is to align with India's strategic vision of fostering a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. Through this Conclave, BCC&I aims to strengthen regional partnerships by promoting economic integration, sustainable development, and security collaboration. In line with India's goal of becoming a pivotal maritime hub, IPEC 2025 seeks to enhance trade connectivity, champion the blue economy, and advance technological innovation in maritime sectors. By fostering dialogues and

collaborations among governments, businesses, and thought leaders, we aim to contribute to a prosperous Indo-Pacific region, reinforcing India's role as a key driver of regional stability, economic growth, and maritime leadership.

Objectives

The Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave 2025 (IPEC 2025), organized by BCC&I, aims to serve as a pivotal platform for fostering strategic, economic, and technological collaboration across the Indo-Pacific region. In alignment with India's vision of a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific, the Conclave sets forth the following key objectives:

- 1. Strengthen Regional Cooperation:**
To promote deeper partnerships among Indo-Pacific nations through structured dialogues that address mutual concerns related to maritime security, economic resilience, and geopolitical stability.
- 2. Enhance Maritime Trade Connectivity:**
To explore ways of improving sea-based trade routes, port infrastructure, and integrated transport networks to ensure smoother, more efficient, and secure maritime trade across the region.
- 3. Promote Economic Integration and Sustainable Development:**
To encourage policy alignment and joint initiatives that support inclusive growth, green shipping, environmental sustainability, and equitable economic opportunities in the region.
- 4. Champion the Blue Economy:**
To drive investment and innovation in sustainable ocean-based industries, including fisheries, marine biotechnology, renewable ocean energy, and eco-tourism, thereby unlocking the full potential of the blue economy.

5. Foster Resilient and Secure Supply Chains:

To develop collaborative frameworks that ensure supply chain security, adaptability, and transparency, reducing vulnerabilities to global disruptions and geopolitical uncertainties.

6. Advance Maritime Technology and Innovation:

To facilitate the exchange of cutting-edge technological solutions, including digital maritime infrastructure, port automation, and climate-resilient maritime practices.

7. Institutional Capacity Building:

To encourage capacity-building programs, knowledge-sharing, and cross-border cooperation among maritime institutions, regulatory bodies, and industry stakeholders.

8. Policy and Strategic Recommendations for the Region:

To deliberate on actionable policy measures and strategic initiatives that can guide governments, businesses, and international organizations in shaping a more secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Rationale

In an era marked by shifting geopolitical dynamics and rapid technological transformation, the Indo-Pacific region stands at the forefront of global economic and strategic importance. As nations seek to navigate complex maritime challenges while unlocking new growth frontiers, the Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave 2025 emerges as a timely and vital platform to foster deeper regional cooperation. Anchored in the theme "**Indo-Pacific Cooperation: Towards New Horizons of Maritime Partnership**," the Conclave aims to catalyze dialogue among policymakers, industry leaders, and strategic thinkers to shape a more connected, secure, and sustainable maritime future. By addressing critical issues such as resilient supply chains, maritime security, blue economy development, and technological innovation, the Conclave will lay the foundation for actionable solutions and enduring partnerships—driving collective progress across the region and reinforcing India's vision of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

In the context of "**Indo-Pacific Cooperation: Towards New Horizons of Maritime Partnership**," the third edition of the Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave aims to focus on the following:

- ❖ **Identifying Maritime Trade Opportunities:** What specific areas should exporters focus on to capitalize on the opportunities presented by India's vision for strengthening maritime partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, particularly in sectors like sustainable fisheries, marine energy, and eco-friendly maritime logistics.
- ❖ **Industry's Role in Maritime Infrastructure:** How can industries, particularly those in the maritime, logistics, and infrastructure sectors, drive economic progress and foster collaboration within the Indo-Pacific region.
- ❖ **Chambers of Commerce and Maritime Partnerships:** How can Chambers of Commerce and Industry Associations contribute to establishing an effective cross-border platform for maritime trade, fostering B2B partnerships, and encouraging collaboration on maritime security, resource management, and sustainable growth in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ❖ **Exploring Maritime Economic Cooperation:** What opportunities exist for enhancing economic cooperation and trade relations within the Indo-Pacific region, with a focus on maritime sectors such as port development, marine technology, and sustainable resource management, digital shipping corridors, and logistics integration between nations.
- ❖ **Build Multilateral Alliances:** Deliberations to strengthen mechanisms like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), ASEAN, QUAD, or BIMSTEC to address regional issues collectively.

BCC&I's Role:

- ❖ **Facilitate Strategic Dialogues:** BCC&I will act as a key platform to facilitate high-level dialogues among policymakers, industry leaders, and maritime experts to explore innovative solutions for enhancing Indo-Pacific maritime cooperation, aligning with the theme "Indo-Pacific Cooperation: Towards New Horizons of Maritime Partnership."
- ❖ **Promote Maritime Trade Connectivity:** BCC&I will focus on promoting initiatives that strengthen trade connectivity through maritime routes, aligning with India's strategic objective of deepening its economic ties within the Indo-Pacific region.
- ❖ **Support Maritime Security Cooperation:** BCC&I will play a crucial role in addressing regional maritime security challenges, emphasizing India's mission for a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific through multilateral collaborations on maritime law enforcement and security infrastructure.
- ❖ **Encourage Technological Innovation:** The Conclave will serve as a launchpad for discussions on leveraging emerging technologies—such as digital transformation, smart ports, and maritime automation—to enhance efficiency, security, and sustainability in maritime operations.
- ❖ **Facilitate Knowledge Exchange on Resilient Supply Chains:** BCC&I will promote knowledge-sharing initiatives to build resilient maritime supply chains that can withstand global disruptions, aligning with India's goal of enhancing economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
- ❖ **Promote Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):** BCC&I will facilitate the establishment of key PPPs that drive investments in maritime infrastructure, sustainable shipping practices, and environmental stewardship within the Indo-Pacific region.
- ❖ **Foster Global Maritime Collaborations:** As part of its role, BCC&I will work towards expanding India's leadership in multilateral platforms by creating collaborative opportunities with QUAD nations, ASEAN, and other Indo-Pacific countries, aligning with India's diplomatic vision for maritime partnerships.
- ❖ **Convene the 4th Meeting of the AIPCC (Association of Indo-Pacific Chambers of Commerce):** During the Conclave, BCC&I will host the 4th meeting of the AIPCC, a critical forum that strengthens regional cooperation among industry chambers in the Indo-Pacific, fostering joint efforts towards maritime development and economic collaboration.
- ❖ **Promote Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Maritime Ecosystems:** BCC&I will highlight India's leadership in aligning maritime development with global SDGs, focusing on clean oceans, responsible resource utilization, and the preservation of marine biodiversity, which will be integral to the discussions at the Conclave.



BCC&I had the privilege of having the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) as a Conclave partner at the 1st edition of Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave in September 2023 in Kolkata, where a key outcome was the establishment of the Association of Indo-Pacific Chambers of Commerce (AIPCC). We were also honoured to have Ms. Paramita Tripathi, IFS, (the then) Joint Secretary, Indo-Pacific and Oceania Divisions, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India deliver an address at last year's Conclave and Smt. Neelam Rani, IFS, (the then) Director, Branch Secretariat, Kolkata, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, deliver an address in this Conclave in 2023, which greatly enriched the discussions. We sincerely hope to have the MEA's continued association in the 2025 edition of the Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave.

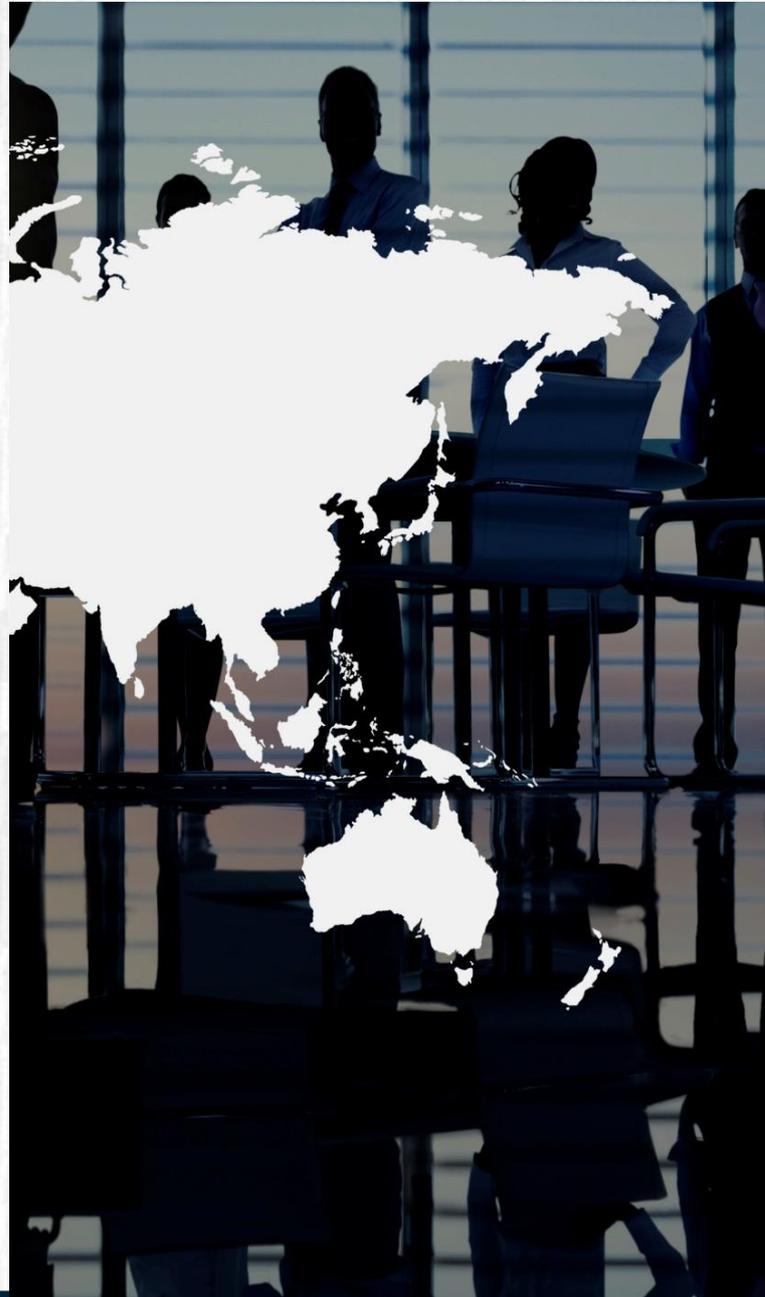
The upcoming two-day Conclave will focus on fostering economic stability, enhancing trade connectivity, and promoting sustainable growth in the Indo-Pacific. With an emphasis on strengthening regional cooperation, optimizing supply chains, and advancing collaborative policies, the discussions will highlight strategies to create a resilient and integrated economic framework that supports long-term development.

Additionally, the programme will emphasize the importance of institutional cooperation and policy frameworks that foster stability, economic integration, and sustainable development, reinforcing a shared vision for a prosperous and resilient Indo-Pacific.

The Indo-Pacific region stands at the crossroads of global trade, technological advancement, and strategic collaboration, emerging as a decisive force in shaping the 21st century world order. Amid evolving geopolitical realignments, climate imperatives, and the acceleration of digital economies, nations across the Indo-Pacific are seeking deeper cooperation to navigate complex transitions and unlock shared prosperity.

As one of the principal stakeholders in the region, India has demonstrated increasing leadership in fostering economic integration, enabling innovation-led partnerships, and reinforcing a stable, rules-based regional architecture. The Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave 2025 seeks to build upon this momentum by bringing together a distinguished cohort of policymakers, strategic thinkers, business leaders, and multilateral institutions to deliberate on actionable frameworks for inclusive growth, resilient supply chains, digital transformation, and sustainable connectivity.

With a forward-looking agenda, the Conclave will serve as a platform to identify synergies, catalyze strategic partnerships, and co-create solutions for a future-ready Indo-Pacific—where cooperation drives progress, and shared values underpin development



The Indo-Pacific Landscape: Strategic Priorities, Economic Dynamics, and Investment Opportunities Shaping the Dialogue

Why The Indo-Pacific Matters ?

60%

of global GDP is concentrated in this region.

80%

of global maritime trade flows through key Indo-Pacific Sea

90%

of India's trade and 80% of its critical freight transit through these waters.

India's strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific is deeply rooted in **fostering economic stability, enhancing trade connectivity, and driving sustainable growth through** maritime cooperation. India seeks to enhance regional trade efficiency, strengthen supply chains, and create a more resilient economic framework by leveraging its maritime resources and fostering collaborative policies that drive commerce and sustainable growth.

A key pillar of India's Indo-Pacific strategy is strengthening economic linkages through major connectivity initiatives. India is at the forefront of transregional projects such as the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway (IMTT)**. These corridors aim to enhance market access, integrate supply chains, and facilitate seamless movement of goods, reinforcing India's role as a trade enabler in the region. Additionally, **India has extended financial support, including a \$4 billion package to Sri Lanka, to ensure economic stability and resilience among its neighbours.**

India's role as a first responder in times of crisis further reinforces its commitment to economic and humanitarian security. Whether addressing natural disasters, oil spills, or regional conflicts, India has consistently stepped up through rapid response mechanisms and disaster cooperation initiatives like the **QUAD, strengthening its partnerships across the Indo-Pacific.**

Recognizing the importance of resilient trade and commerce, **India continues to invest in port infrastructure, logistics networks, and digital connectivity.** Its leadership in institution-building through platforms such as **the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), BIMSTEC, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS),** and the Colombo Security Conclave further enhances regional cooperation. India's advocacy for a free, open, and rules-based maritime order aligns with its broader vision of economic integration and sustainable development.

Technology also plays a crucial role in India's approach to economic and trade security. The country has made significant advancements in trusted digital communication, ensuring secure data flows through global consortiums. By integrating AI-driven tools, satellite surveillance, and smart logistics, India enhances the efficiency of maritime trade while ensuring transparency and security in supply chain networks. The IT spending in India towards various segments of the IT and BPM industry, including software, IT services, devices, and communications services has recorded a double-digit growth of 11.1% in 2024, totaling to ₹ 11,89,560 crores¹.

1 - <https://www.ibef.org/industry/information-technology-india>

At the heart of India's Indo-Pacific engagement is its commitment to fostering inclusive growth while upholding environmental sustainability. Through strategic investments in marine biodiversity conservation, climate resilience efforts, and collaborative economic policies, India is shaping a future-ready Indo-Pacific that prioritizes prosperity, stability, and ecological balance.

“India envisions the Indo-Pacific as a region of stability, security, and shared prosperity, where respect for international law, open and inclusive partnerships, and sustainable economic growth shape the future. As a steadfast advocate for connectivity, maritime security, and resilient supply chains, India remains committed to fostering cooperative frameworks that uphold regional stability and economic integration. By strengthening institutional engagements, advancing technological collaboration, and acting as a responsible partner in times of crisis, India continues to play a pivotal role in shaping an Indo-Pacific that is secure, prosperous, and inclusive for all.”

- Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Honorable Union External Affairs Minister, Government of India²

THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION



I. The Indo-Pacific: Strategic, Economic, and Investment Significance in 2025

□ Economic Importance:

➤ Trade:³

- ❖ Over **50% of India's trade** passes through the Indo-Pacific, including critical energy imports from the Middle East.
- ❖ India's trade with ASEAN countries reached **\$160 billion in 2025**, making ASEAN one of India's largest trading partners.

➤ Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)⁴:

- ❖ India received over **\$100 billion in FDI** in 2025, with significant contributions from Indo-Pacific countries like Japan, Singapore, and the US.
- ❖ Japan alone has invested **\$40 billion** in India's infrastructure and manufacturing sectors under the **India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership**.

□ Strategic Importance:

➤ Maritime Security:

- ❖ India's **Act East Policy and Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)** initiative emphasize maritime security and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
- ❖ India has partnered with the US, Japan, and Australia under the **Quad** to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific, with investments in maritime surveillance and disaster response.

➤ Energy Security:

- ❖ The Indo-Pacific region is a major source of energy for India, with over **80% of India's oil imports** coming from the Middle East and Africa.
- ❖ India is investing in strategic assets like the **Chabahar Port** in Iran to secure energy supply routes.



3- [Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India](#)

4- [Reserve Bank of India](#)

□ Key Investment Areas:

➤ Infrastructure Development:

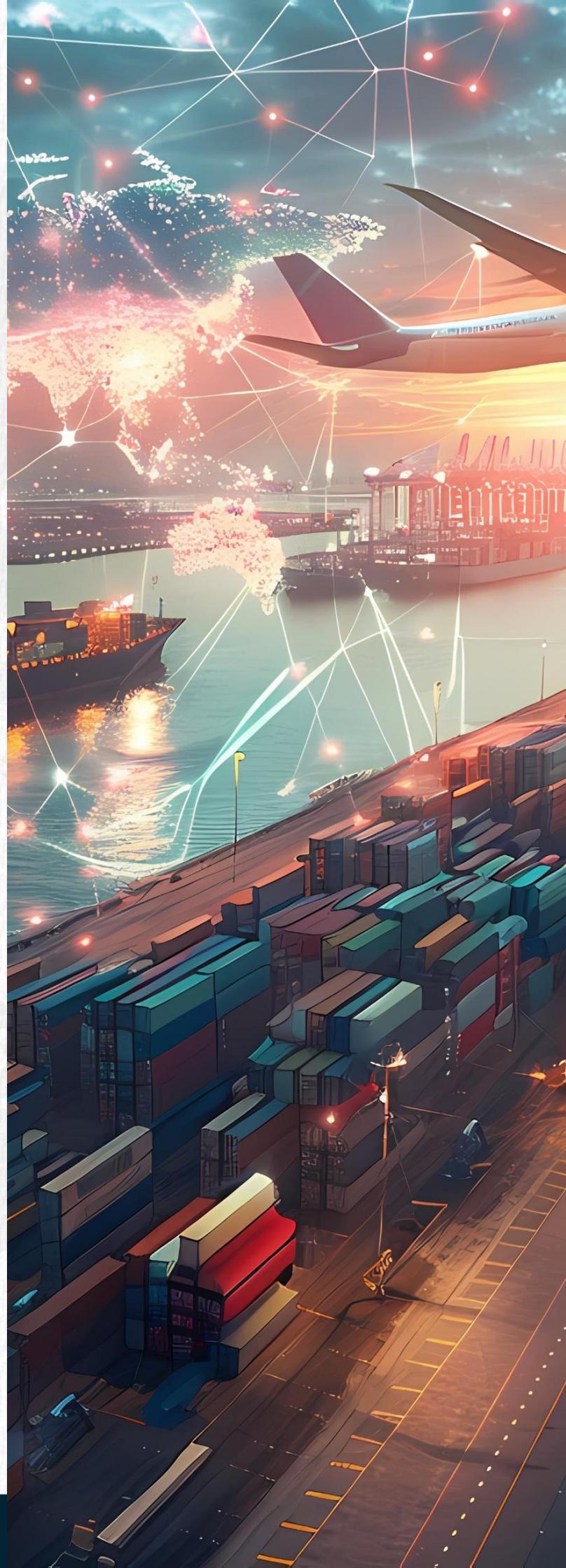
- ❖ The Indo-Pacific region requires an estimated **\$1.5 trillion annually** in infrastructure investments to meet its growing needs.
- ❖ Initiatives like the **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII)** and **Blue Dot Network** have mobilized billions of dollars for infrastructure projects.
- ❖ China's **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** has invested over **\$1 trillion** in the region since its inception, though India has been cautious about participating due to sovereignty concerns.

➤ Renewable Energy and Sustainability:

- ❖ The Indo-Pacific is a hub for renewable energy investments, with over **\$500 billion** committed to solar, wind, and green hydrogen projects by 2025.
- ❖ India is a key player, with its **National Hydrogen Mission** aiming to produce **5 million tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030**.

➤ Digital Economy and Technology:

- ❖ The digital economy in the Indo-Pacific is projected to reach **\$3 trillion by 2025**, driven by investments in 5G, AI, and cybersecurity.
- ❖ India's **Digital India Initiative** and partnerships with Quad countries (US, Japan, Australia) are boosting regional digital connectivity.



➤ **Maritime Security and Trade:**

- ❖ Over **\$200 billion** has been invested in port infrastructure and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific by 2025.
- ❖ India's **Sagarmala Project** aims to modernize ports and boost maritime trade, with investments exceeding **\$120 billion**.

II. Key Initiatives and Projects in the Indo-Pacific (2025)

❑ **India-Led Initiatives:**

➤ **Sagarmala Project³:**

- ❖ Investment: **\$120 billion**
- ❖ Aim: Modernize ports, enhance connectivity, and boost maritime trade.

➤ **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):⁴**

- ❖ Investment: **\$25 billion**
- ❖ Aim: Connect India with Central Asia, Russia, and Europe via Iran.

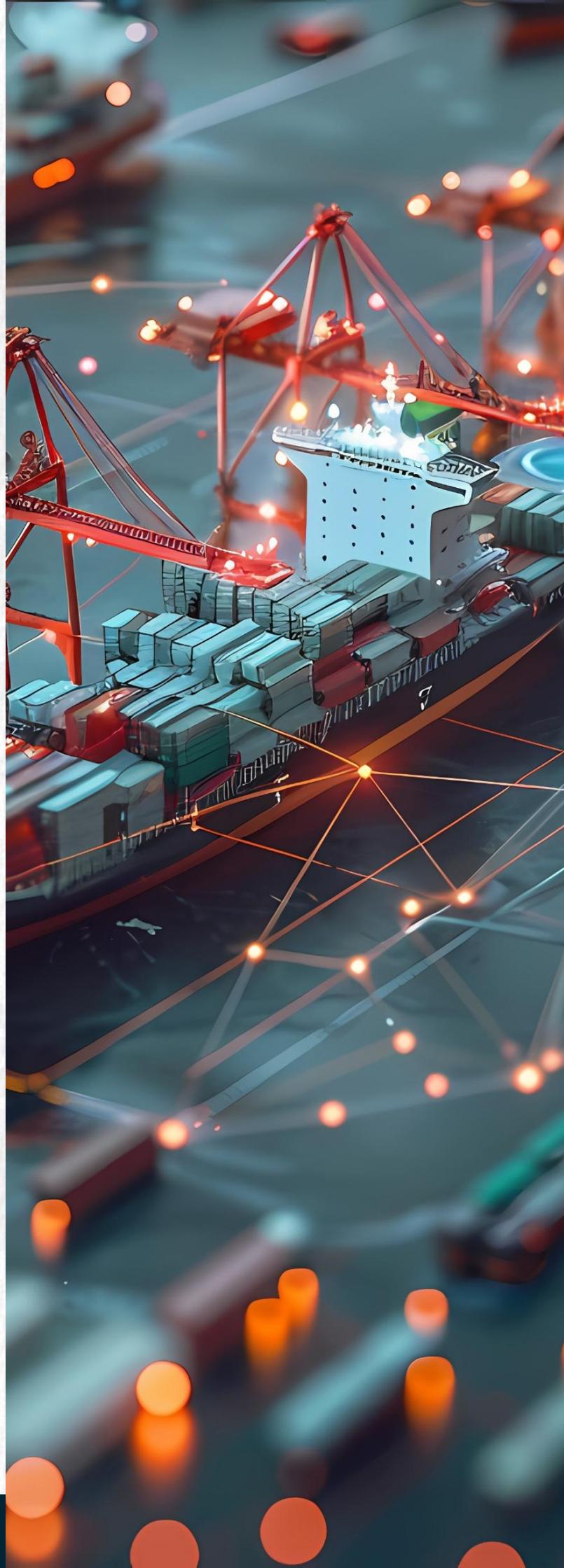
➤ **Quad Infrastructure Fund⁵:**

- ❖ Investment: **\$50 billion**
- ❖ Aim: Finance infrastructure projects in the Indo-Pacific to counter China's BRI.

➤ **Global Initiatives⁶:**

➤ **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII):**

- ❖ Investment: **\$600 billion** (global, with significant focus on the Indo-Pacific).
- ❖ Aim: Fund sustainable infrastructure projects.



3 - [Sagarmala Project](#)

4 - [Ministry of External Affairs, India](#)

5 - [The White House](#)

6 - [The White House](#)

➤ **Blue Dot Network⁷:**

❖ Investment: **\$30 billion**

❖ Aim: Certify and finance high-quality infrastructure projects.

❑ India is actively engaged in regional and bilateral trade negotiations to diversify and expand its export markets while ensuring access to the raw materials, intermediates, and capital goods needed to stimulate domestic manufacturing. Presently, India shares preferential market access and economic cooperation through trade agreements with over 50 countries.

❑ The following table lists the major bilateral and regional agreements that India has signed and implemented⁸.

Category	Agreement	Objective
Bilateral Agreements	India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)	Deepen economic ties and facilitate trade and investment between India and Singapore.
	India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)	Foster economic cooperation and trade liberalization between India and Japan.
	India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)	Strengthen economic ties and facilitate trade and investment between India and the UAE.
	India-Australia Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement	Deepen economic ties and facilitate trade and investment between India and Australia.
Regional Agreements	ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA)	Eliminate tariffs on goods traded between ASEAN, Australia, and New Zealand.
	Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA)	Hasten economic development among Bangladesh, India, Lao, China, Mongolia, South Korea, and Sri Lanka.
	India-ASEAN Agreements	Focus on trade, investment, and economic cooperation between India and ASEAN countries.
Other Trade Agreements	India-Mongolia Trade Agreement	Facilitate trade and investment between India and Mongolia.
	India-South Korea Trade Agreement	Foster economic cooperation and trade liberalization between India and South Korea.
	India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement	Facilitate trade and investment between India and Sri Lanka.

In recent years, the Indo-Pacific has emerged as the geopolitical and economic fulcrum of the 21st century, uniting regional and global powers around shared interests. With evolving maritime dynamics, infrastructure ambitions, and multilateral engagements, the region now emphasizes connectivity, security cooperation, resilient supply chains, and blue economy partnerships. India, as a key player, is actively shaping the regional architecture through strategic bilateral ties, trade pacts, and infrastructure-led outreach. Under the theme *"Indo-Pacific Cooperation: Towards New Horizons of Maritime Partnership,"* the region is deepening collaboration in maritime domain awareness, digital transformation, sustainable development, and strategic defense. Current dialogues and summits in 2025 highlight a collective resolve to promote inclusive growth, secure sea lines of communication, and uphold a rules-based maritime order.

7 - [US International Development Finance Corporation](#)

8 - <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/india-trade-agreements>

III. The Ongoing Dialogues in this Region:

□ 27th ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting (March 12, 2025)⁹

Shri Jaideep Mazumdar, Secretary (East), co-chaired the 27th ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting (AISOM), with H.E. MA. Theresa P. Lazaro, Philippine SOM Leader, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, in Manila today. Philippines is the Country Coordinator for ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations. The meeting was attended by Senior Officials and representatives of all ASEAN Member States and Timor Leste which holds Observer Status in ASEAN, and Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN.

- ❖ **Strengthening ASEAN-India Relations:** The 27th AISOM reviewed cooperation across political-security, economic, and socio-cultural pillars; emphasized swift implementation of the 10-Point Proposal from the 21st Summit, including designating 2025 as the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism.
- ❖ **Trade and Connectivity:** Strong push for early completion of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) review, along with collaboration on digital transformation, maritime cooperation, and enhanced connectivity.
- ❖ **Health, Innovation & Tourism:** Focus on regional partnerships in health, innovation, development, and tourism promotion, aligning with India's Act East Policy.
- ❖ **Health, Innovation & Tourism:** Focus on regional partnerships in health, innovation, development, and tourism promotion, aligning with India's Act East Policy.
- ❖ **Trade and Investment:** Goal to double U.S.-India bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030 through a new Bilateral Trade Agreement, increased market access, and greenfield investment promotion.
- ❖ **Energy & Technology Partnership:** Boosted energy security through expanded U.S. crude and LNG exports to India, plus strategic cooperation in AI, space, semiconductors, and critical mineral supply chains.
- ❖ **Multilateral and People-to-People Engagement:** Deeper U.S.-India coordination in the Indo-Pacific through Quad, Indian Ocean initiatives, undersea cable projects, counterterrorism, and educational and legal mobility partnerships.

➤ Implications of Reciprocal Tariffs on India

□ Boost to Indian Exports (Strategic Diversification & Competitiveness):

- ❖ Encourages Indian exporters to **diversify markets** beyond the US, reducing overdependence on a single trade partner.
- ❖ Drives Indian industries to **enhance competitiveness**, quality, and innovation to tap into emerging markets like Africa, Latin America, and ASEAN.
- ❖ Promotes **value-added exports** and sectoral upgradation, especially in pharmaceuticals, IT services, and specialized textiles.

□ Catalyst for Trade Policy Reforms & Resilience:

- ❖ Reciprocal tariffs can serve as a **wake-up call for trade policy recalibration**, encouraging India to streamline export procedures and improve logistics.
- ❖ Pushes India to build a more **resilient and self-reliant trade ecosystem**, fostering deeper engagement in regional trade pacts and FTAs.

⁹ - <https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/39165/27th-ASEANIndia-Senior-Officials-Meeting-March-12-2025>

➤ Implications of Reciprocal Tariffs on India

□ Strengthening Domestic Industries:

❖ Higher tariffs on US imports can **create space for domestic producers** to expand market share in sectors like electronics, agriculture, and automobiles.

❖ **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** may benefit from reduced competition, enabling growth and employment generation.

□ Acceleration of 'Make in India' and Aatmanirbhar Bharat:

❖ Reciprocal tariff actions align with national goals of **enhancing local manufacturing** and reducing import dependency.

❖ Encourages **import substitution** in key sectors such as electronics, defense equipment, and machinery, leading to technology adoption and innovation.

□ Leveraging Strategic Partnerships:

❖ With challenges in US-India trade, India may **accelerate trade agreements** with the EU, Australia, and ASEAN, opening new channels for commerce and investment.

❖ Opportunity to reposition India as a **trusted partner in global supply chains**, especially in sectors where geopolitical shifts are prompting Western diversification away from China.

□ Consumer and Innovation Benefits:

❖ Increased tariffs on US luxury and non-essential imports may **promote consumption of locally made alternatives**.

❖ Could spur **R&D and innovation** in Indian manufacturing to fill the quality gap and match global standards.

IV. India in the Indo-Pacific: Building Alliances, Securing Technologies, and Driving Sustainable Growth

□ Strengthening Indo-Pacific Partnerships¹⁰

❖ **Sustaining India's Strategic Ties with Key Powers:** Over the past years, India's relationships with key Indo-Pacific players, particularly the United States, have seen significant advancements in defense, technology, and security cooperation. Key agreements focusing on defense collaboration and emerging technologies have laid the foundation for enhanced interoperability and trust-building. The progress in areas like AI, quantum computing, 5G/6G, biotechnology, and space exploration has been significant. Maintaining and deepening these collaborations will be essential as India continues to position itself as a central technology partner in the Indo-Pacific.

❖ **Securing Technological Edge:** India has seen emphasis on securing its technological edge in critical areas such as cybersecurity, defense, and AI. India aims to bolster its defense capabilities by advancing local technological innovation while securing partnerships that drive the region's digital future. This will also serve to strengthen India's global positioning in areas like green energy, cybersecurity, and AI-driven defense systems, ensuring it remains competitive in the Indo-Pacific's technology landscape.

□ Economic Integration and Trade Dynamics

❖ **Revisiting Regional Trade Agreements:** As India looks to secure its position in the Indo-Pacific economy, it is reassessing its decision to withdraw from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

❖ **Addressing Global Economic Shifts:** India positions itself in global economic frameworks such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF). The forum will explore strategies to address the lack of momentum in global economic frameworks and the impact of external tariffs on India's trade policies. India's response to global economic trends, including the rise of protectionism, will be a key area of focus.

10 - <https://southasianvoices.org/geo-f-in-r-india-indo-pacific-2024-12-31-2024>

□ Future-Focused Indo-Pacific Strategy

❖ Building India's Technological Edge for the Future:

India's technological focus in the Indo-Pacific is centered around securing a competitive edge in areas such as 5G, artificial intelligence, and defense technologies. Through initiatives like Digital India, the country is scaling up local technological innovation and promoting regional digital integration. IPEC 2025 will showcase India's leadership in driving the Indo-Pacific's technological future, positioning the country as a key player in cybersecurity, digital infrastructure, and green energy technologies.

❖ Expanding India's Influence in Regional Economic and Security Arenas:

IPEC 2025 aims to elevate India's role in regional economic integration and security dynamics, particularly by advancing collaborations that support sustainable economic growth and security. The forum will explore how India's "Neighbourhood First" policy and regional leadership through initiatives like BIMSTEC contribute to strengthening the Indo-Pacific's strategic architecture.

❖ Acknowledgment of Changing Global Order:

The Indian Ocean region is experiencing global shifts in production, consumption, and connectivity, making it a vital global lifeline.

❖ Middle East/West Asia Maritime Challenges:

Ongoing conflicts are disrupting global shipping and raising questions about partnerships and responses.

❖ Indo-Pacific Tensions:

The region faces growing tensions involving respect for international law, concerns over unilateral changes, and the need for adhering to agreements for stability.

❖ Common Indian Ocean Challenges:

- Resource constraints and economic pressures.
- Debt concerns, including unviable projects.
- Need for rebuilding disrupted connectivity through transparent, consultative initiatives.

East and North-East India – The Strategic Gateway to Indo-Pacific Prosperity

As the global economic and strategic focus steadily pivots eastwards, the Eastern and North-Eastern Region of India—situated at the crossroads of South Asia and Southeast Asia—emerges as a critical bridge in the evolving Indo-Pacific landscape. With their unique geography, dynamic policy shifts, and rapidly evolving connectivity to play a pivotal role in shaping a prosperous infrastructure, the East and North-East are set to be a connected, and secure Indo-Pacific region.

□ Strategic Geo-Economic Location: India's Natural Gateway to the East

The Eastern and North-Eastern states form the frontline of India's engagement with Southeast Asia. Their borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Myanmar provide direct access to ASEAN economies, making the region central to India's Act East Policy.

- ❖ Ports and Maritime Access: Key eastern ports, including Kolkata, Haldia, and the emerging Sagar Island and Sittwe Ports (via the Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Project), offer seamless trade corridors extending towards Thailand, Vietnam, and other Indo-Pacific partners.
- ❖ Maritime and Regional Cooperation: The Bay of Bengal region connects the East and North-East to strategic platforms such as BIMSTEC and QUAD, enabling both maritime security collaboration and economic integration.

❑ The Economic Heartbeat of the East

The Eastern and North-Eastern region is rapidly establishing itself as a high-growth zone with strategic industries, agricultural strength, and expanding trade potential.

- ❖ **Diverse Economic Base:** From being India's top rice and tea-producing region to supporting large agro-industrial clusters, the East and North-East are key contributors to India's food and industrial exports.
- ❖ **Post-Pandemic Resilience:** Several states in this region have shown strong economic recovery, backed by investments in logistics, agri-processing, and digital infrastructure

❑ Industrial and Technological Growth.

- ❖ **Emerging IT & Digital Ecosystem:** New-age infrastructure hubs in states like Assam and Odisha are attracting investments in IT, digital services, and electronic manufacturing.
- ❖ **MSMEs as Growth Engines:** With thousands of micro, small, and medium enterprises thriving across sectors such as textiles, food processing, leather, and handicrafts, the region contributes significantly to employment and exports.

❑ Driving a Sustainable Future

- ❖ **Renewable Energy Expansion:** The Eastern and North-Eastern states are investing in solar and hydroelectric power, aiming to become renewable energy leaders aligned with India's sustainability goals.

❑ Business-Friendly Environment

- ❖ **Improved Ease of Doing Business:** State-level reforms, digital governance, and industrial corridor development are creating a conducive environment for investors and entrepreneurs.
- ❖ **Start-up and Innovation Support:** Focus on Agri-Tech, FinTech, and green enterprises is nurturing innovation and attracting talent back to the region.

❑ Connecting India to ASEAN: The Eastern Economic Spine

- ❖ **Access to ASEAN Markets:** The region is integral to trade corridors like the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) initiative.
- ❖ **Integration with Global Value Chains:** With improved logistics and border infrastructure, the East and North-East serve as India's economic and logistical bridge to Southeast Asia.

❑ Tourism & Cultural Soft Power

- ❖ **Tourism Hubs:** From the Himalayas to the Sundarbans and tribal heartlands, the region offers unmatched natural and cultural diversity, attracting millions of tourists annually.
- ❖ **Cultural Diplomacy:** Rich heritage, festivals, music, and literature from the region play a vital role in India's soft-power outreach in the Indo-Pacific.

❑ Education, Research & Human Capital

- ❖ **Centres of Learning:** The region is home to premier academic and research institutions, nurturing top-tier talent.
- ❖ **Skill Development Initiatives:** Large-scale government programs are skilling youth across manufacturing, technology, and green economy sectors, creating a future-ready workforce.

The Eastern and North-Eastern region of India, with its strategic geography, robust human capital, and growing economic dynamism, is more than a passage—it is a catalyst for India's engagement with the Indo-Pacific. As India builds an inclusive, resilient, and secure regional framework, the East and North-East will continue to anchor its connectivity, commerce, and cooperation agenda across Asia and beyond.

Convergence

The Indo-Pacific region, encompassing some of the world's most vibrant and dynamic markets, is witnessing unprecedented growth and development. From its flourishing trade routes to its strategic geopolitical importance, the region is rapidly emerging as a global economic powerhouse. The Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave 2025 aims to harness this momentum by bringing together key stakeholders, policymakers, and industry leaders to explore avenues for collaboration and innovation. With a focus on integrating advanced technologies, strengthening trade networks, and fostering cross-border partnerships, the Conclave will showcase the region's potential as a thriving hub for commerce and innovation. The expected outcome is a strengthened, interconnected Indo-Pacific region that leads the global agenda on sustainable development, economic resilience, and technological advancement.



Brief About Our Past Conclaves

The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry's "India-Pacific Economic Conclave" is an annual signature forum which focuses on pertinent economic issues by bringing together thought leaders, policymakers, economists, business leaders to discuss the roadmap for transforming India's economic Aspirations to Action. This will be the 8th edition of this Conclave on the occasion of the 171st AGM of BCC&I.

Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave 2024



Dr. Amit Mitra, Hon'ble Principal Chief Advisor to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal and Finance Department (in Cabinet Minister Rank), Government of West Bengal



Ms. Paramita Tripathi, Joint Secretary, Indo-Pacific and Oceania Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India



Picture of full panel of the Inaugural Session, Day 1: 26th September



Snapshot of the full panel of Special Session I, Day 1: 26th September



Snapshot of the panel of Special Session II, Day 1: 26th September



Snapshot of Inaugural Session, Day 2: 27th September, 2024



Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran, Chief Economic Adviser, Government of India



Snapshot of the Interactive Session, Day 2: 27th September



Snapshot of the Experts' Roundtable Panel, Day 2: 27th September



Esteemed audiences present in the Conclave

Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave 2023



Address by Mr. Subir Chakraborty, President, BCC& and Managing Director & CEO, Exide Industries Ltd.,



Address by **Shri Sanjeev Sanyal**, Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)



Left: **Dr. Devyani Uttam Khobragade**, Ambassador, E/I, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
 Right: **Smt. Neelam Rani**, IFS, Director, Branch Secretariat, Kolkata, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India
 Center: **Shri Sanjeev Sanyal**, Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)



Glimpses from the special session on "The East India's Act East & Common Charter Development"



SHRI AJAY SETH

Shri Ajay Seth during his special address on "India leads towards 3rd largest economy"



SHRI T RABI SANKAR

A glimpse from keynote address by Shri T Rabi Sankar



Inaugural Address by Chief Guest, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar



Virtual Address by Shri Suneet Mehta



Inaugural Address by Chief Guest, Shri Mayank Joshi



DR. V. ANANTHA NAGESWARAN

Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran speaking about India's growth story

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THE BENGAL CHAMBER

**INDIA
ECONOMIC
CONCLAVE**
Since 2018...

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In the past Conclaves, we have had luminaries of national stature joining this forum. Some of them are:



Shri Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles, Government of India

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THE BENGAL CHAMBER
**INDIA
ECONOMIC
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2022**

**DECODING \$5 TRILLION :
THE ROADMAP FOR INDIAN ECONOMY**

1st FEBRUARY, 2022

SHRI TARUN BAJAJ
Sponsors

Shri Tarun Bajaj, IAS, Secretary, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.



Dr. Ashok Lahiri, Member, fifteenth Finance Commission, India

Dr. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)



Mr. K V Kamath, Former Chief, New Development Bank of BRICS and Former Chairman, Infosys and Former Non-Executive Chairman, ICICI Bank



The conclave also provides an opportunity for participants to network and exchange ideas with other industry leaders and experts. The Conclave is widely covered by the media and is attended by a diverse range of stakeholders from the local and national business community.

WHO IS THE CONCLAVE FOR:

- ✓ Exporters
- ✓ Export Promotion Councils & Trade Bodies
- ✓ Shipping and Logistics company
- ✓ Policy Makers
- ✓ Senior Government Officials
- ✓ Industry Associations & Chambers of Commerce (Domestic & International)
- ✓ Corporate Leaders & CEOs
- ✓ Bankers
- ✓ Development Finance Institutions
- ✓ Academia
- ✓ Manufacturing Sector Companies
- ✓ Engineering Sector Companies
- ✓ Agriculture Sector Companies
- ✓ Services Sector Companies
- ✓ MSMEs
- ✓ Trade Economists
- ✓ Maritime Economists
- ✓ Sustainability Experts
- ✓ Skill Development Institutions
- ✓ Think Tanks
- ✓ Technology Providers
- ✓ Digital Trade Enablers

SPEAKERS COULD BE FROM:

- ✓ Notable Economists
- ✓ Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council
- ✓ Ministry of External Affairs (Indo-Pacific, Oceania, Trade & Maritime Divisions)
- ✓ Ministry of Commerce & Industry
- ✓ Ministry of Finance
- ✓ NITI Aayog
- ✓ Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- ✓ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
- ✓ Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways
- ✓ Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)
- ✓ World Trade Organization (WTO)
- ✓ World Bank
- ✓ BIMSTEC Secretariat
- ✓ Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER)
- ✓ Nautical Army of Volunteer Yeomen (NAVY), Government of India
- ✓ Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)
- ✓ Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC), Government of India
- ✓ Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)
- ✓ Corporates focused in MSMEs, supply chain management, logistics etc.
- ✓ Leading Public Sector and Private Sector Banks
- ✓ Global and Indian Technology Firms (AI, Blockchain, Digital Trade)
- ✓ Maritime Sector Leaders (Port Authorities, Shipping Corporations)
- ✓ Export Promotion Councils
- ✓ Chambers of Commerce from Indo-Pacific Countries
- ✓ Top Corporates from Agriculture, Manufacturing, Engineering, and Services
- ✓ Prominent MSMEs and Indian Unicorns
- ✓ ESG and Sustainability Experts
- ✓ Skilling and Workforce Development Institutions

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- ❖ Understanding the role of emerging technologies in transforming Indo-Pacific diplomacy and trade.
- ❖ Emphasizing maritime security, freedom of navigation, and regional peace.
- ❖ Learning about the importance of infrastructure and digital transformation for regional connectivity.
- ❖ Taking stock of the global economic outlook and India's evolving leadership role in the Indo-Pacific economy.
- ❖ Deep diving into international trade dynamics, resilient global supply chains, and navigating geopolitical challenges.
- ❖ Strengthening trade and investment relations with Indo-Pacific nations and regional blocs.
- ❖ Recognizing the need for job creation, skilling, and fostering an innovation-driven startup ecosystem.
- ❖ Gaining insights into recent government initiatives and the evolving policy ecosystem for export promotion.
- ❖ Exploring innovative financial systems, fintech, and digital payments architecture across borders.
- ❖ Promoting collaborative approaches to cybersecurity, AI governance, and digital trust.
- ❖ Advocating for a cooperative, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific framework.
- ❖ Leveraging India's strategic geography, economic potential, and diplomatic partnerships.
- ❖ Promoting people-to-people connectivity, education exchanges, and cultural collaboration.
- ❖ A networking platform uniting policymaker, diplomats, industry leaders, multilateral institutions, and startups.
- ❖ Recognizing the Indo-Pacific as a pivotal region in a multipolar, interconnected world.