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Advancing India's goal to double the economy by 2030

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Synopsis

India aims to double its economy to \$7 trillion by 2030 through a strategy focusing on infrastructure, innovation, and inclusive growth. Key points from the Public Affairs Forum of India emphasized the pivotal role of the private sector, the importance of upskilling, and strengthening international partnerships to avoid the middle-income trap and leverage global trade shifts.



[India's](#) ambition to double its economy to \$7 trillion by 2030 hinges on a broad strategy that includes reforms, infrastructure development, investment in human capital, a focus on innovation, and consistent investment in key growth sectors such as manufacturing, exports, and agriculture. Achieving this target requires collaboration between government, civil society, and the private sector.

In this background, [Public Affairs Forum](#) of India (PAFI) 11th Annual Forum was convened last month in New Delhi with three specific aims: to define required policies, understand crucial partnerships, and identify immediate priorities. The sessions pointed to multiple learnings for advancing India's ambition for sustainable and inclusive growth.

Here are 11 key points that emerged at the Forum.

First, the current strategy for India's growth is being carried out along four pillars: the first pillar involves investment in social, digital, and physical infrastructure; the second focuses on manufacturing and innovation; the third pillar involves simplification of laws and regulations; and the fourth pillar emphasises a focus on inclusive growth. All four must work in tandem to ensure the national objective of economic development is met.

Second, private sector will drive India's economic growth and it is crucial to recognise them as the primary driver and not just a contributor to India's growth story. Fostering an ecosystem that empowers domestic businesses to innovate and invest can create inclusive growth and job creation for India's vast workforce. Sectors including agriculture, manufacturing, technology and financial services, [healthcare](#), and renewable energy will be at the forefront of economic growth.

Third, India faces a less friendly global trade environment and needs to avoid the middle-income trap. As global supply chains reform, India must leverage this shift through targeted strategies, including reducing tariffs and embracing freer trade, to align India's exports with global demand. Foreign companies must be encouraged to invest in India to serve international markets rather than just the domestic market.

Fourth, technology disruption is in India's favour. The last decade has marked a surge in basic service provision, putting India at a crucial point in its growth trajectory. The rise of new technologies like AI has presented a leapfrogging

opportunity that must be used. This will require structural reform in India's education system to allow for problem-solving and creative thinking. The industry must work with policymakers to ensure fairness, transparency, and skilling opportunities.

Fifth, social development remains a critical issue for inclusive growth for India and the world. Countries in the Global South are facing challenges such as debt servicing, meeting citizens' fundamental needs, COVID-19-related stress, and geopolitical tensions. India serves as a test case for achieving Sustainable Development Goals, and its success will have a significant global impact. The public and private sectors must come together to ensure health, education, and basic infrastructure for all.

Sixth, upskilling and reskilling are imperative for the growth engine to fire on all cylinders. With advancements in technology and the emergence of new work areas such as the gig economy, industries will need to constantly identify required skills for the future and engage the government in providing skilling opportunities.

Seventh, rapidly urbanising India is crucial to economic growth. Urban areas contribute almost 70 % of India's GDP. Urbanisation is expanding beyond city limits, with 50%- 60% of built-up space now outside cities; in 25 years, India's urban areas will absorb an additional 400 million people, creating approximately 80-90 urban hubs across 450 cities. The infrastructure push to support urban growth and economic hubs is significant, but additional public-private partnerships are needed to make a difference on the ground.

Eighth, a partnership between the states and the central governments is essential for achieving our 2030 goals. The centre-state relationship is crucial not only to attract investment but also to sustain it. States are responsible for developing ecosystems that can absorb investments nationwide, enabling India to leverage its demographic dividend effectively.

Ninth, strengthening India's international partnerships is of utmost importance. In the neighbourhood, this means using the "Neighbourhood First" policy to meet the varied expectations of South Asian countries at their comfort levels. Elsewhere, coalitions like the QUAD, BRICS, the Mineral Security Partnership, and the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence must be utilised. Above all, India must see the multi-faceted and deepening partnership with the United States as what it is—its most consequential relationship currently.

Tenth, public-private partnerships to simplify compliances and regulations are a powerful tool for achieving India's economic and social objectives. The private sector should identify opportunities in sectors for industry and the government to collaborate on. There is an appetite in the government for this approach, and the industry should establish a step-by-step mechanism to measure the impact of steps taken for simplification of processes.

Eleventh, using Digital Public Infrastructure to democratise public services is at the core of India's strategy for inclusive growth. Nearly 500 million people who are still offline are being serviced by 5,00,000 service centres. Over 90% of India's 6,44,000 villages now have 4G coverage, with **BSNL** set to roll out **BharatNet** broadband service across gram panchayats. Additionally, Radio Access Networks (RANs) and BTS systems, including a fast 5G rollout, are planned to ensure digital access for those lacking devices or connectivity.

Public Affairs integrates government relations, policy advocacy, corporate communications, social responsibility, regulatory compliance, and risk management in today's corporate landscape. The function now requires expertise in business development, geopolitics, and stakeholder engagement while maintaining a long-term strategic vision. Public Policy and Public Affairs have evolved from a singular focus area to encompass multiple, interconnected roles within organisations.

Professionals in these fields today advise boards, CEOs, senior management, and investors. At the same time, they influence investment decisions and address critical business challenges. PAFI's core mission intersects this objective by building a network of individuals and corporations to enhance stakeholder engagement. As public affairs professionals play a bigger role in fostering collaboration, navigating global influences, and preparing for future challenges to contribute to a thriving economic landscape that meets corporate and national ambitions, PAFI aims to project, promote, and strategically position the profession of public affairs at the centre of these changes. The 11 learnings from this year's Annual Forum will be crucial in designing a roadmap to this end.

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