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Redefining Diplomacy, One State at a Time

Editor's Note

In recent years, paradiplomacy—where subnational governments directly engage in international relations—has gained traction in India, allowing states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala to forge foreign ties, attract investment, and participate in global networks on trade, climate, and public health. This decentralized approach is reshaping India's diplomatic landscape by enhancing economic profiles, fostering cultural exchange, and promoting development while complementing national objectives.

Therefore, to explore this exciting new world of international relations, the issue delves into the various dimensions of paradiplomacy within India—its origins, current dynamics, and future prospects. We explore how Indian states are leveraging paradiplomacy to foster new models and ideals for development and federalism.

We hope this edition provides a valuable perspective on the evolving landscape of paradiplomacy in India and encourages further dialogue on its implications for the country's global engagement.

Google's $15 Billion AI Bet on Visakhapatnam

At the India AI Impact Summit 2026, Google CEO Sundar Pichai announced a landmark $15 billion investment to transform Visakhapatnam into a global AI hub. Reflecting on his student days traveling through the city via the Coromandel Express to IIT-Kharagpur, Pichai noted its evolution from a quiet coastal city to a future powerhouse of technology. The project features a full-stack AI hub with gigawatt-scale compute power and a new international subsea cable gateway designed to provide cutting-edge AI and job opportunities to people and businesses across the nation.

On February 18, 2026, the Government of Andhra Pradesh finalized a revised allotment of 601.40 acres of land to Adani Infra (India) Limited, the notified partner of Google's subsidiary, Raiden Infotech, for a hyperscale AI data center near the port city. Responding to the news, IT & HRD Minister Nara Lokesh expressed immense pride, thanking Pichai for a strong vote of confidence and celebrating Visakhapatnam's new status as Google's largest AI hub.

Beyond the regional economic boost, this partnership signifies a shift in international geopolitics, as India positions itself as a democratic alternative to centralized AI superpowers

By hosting such massive compute infrastructure and subsea connectivity, India strengthens its "Digital Sovereignty" and elevates its role in the global supply chain for high-tech services. This move not only bolsters India's foreign policy by deepening ties with Silicon Valley but also establishes the country as a critical neutral ground for global data flows and AI ethics.

Source : https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/google-ceo-sundar-pichai-ai-progress-india-summit-2026/article70650504.ece

India and France strengthen ties during Innovation Forum in Mumbai

On February 17, 2026 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron displayed their personal alliance while sharing a car ride to the India- France Innovation Forum in Mumbai. This was followed by official talks and joint statements at the Lok Bhavan in order to strengthen bilateral cooperation in sectors regarding technology, trade and innovation. Modi later tweeted the moment on X highlighting the strengthened cooperation among India and France.

The visit was a significant milestone as both the leaders announced the 'Special Global Strategic Partnership' between India-France which was Modi described as a stabilising force between two important nations in this uncertain global order while Macron reaffirmed the shared commitment to having a stable international order.

This meeting included cooperation in technology, trade, innovation and security as well as a joint stance against coercive trade practices.

Macron also confirmed his participation in the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi and announced the inauguration of the joint Airbus-Tata Advance System Helicopter assembly line in Bengaluru. Most importantly, a revision of the India-France bilateral tax treaty was proposed in order to prevent double taxation.

This visit showcased deepening economic and cooperative ties between the two nations and showed the sustained engagement and alliance between the two leaders who are driven towards maintaining a stable international order.

Source :https://www.indianewsnetwork.com/en/modi-macron-strengthen-ties-during-mumbai-visit-innovation-forum-20260219

Emerging "Data City" plan to power India's AI revolution in Andhra Pradesh

As India is seeking to narrow the Artificial Intelligence gap with the United States and China, the state of Visakhapatnam, a city in Andhra Pradesh is being positioned to act as the cornerstone of India's AI push and centerpiece of the "Data City" initiative. Headed by the state's IT Minister Nara Lokesh, the project aims to create a comprehensive AI ecosystem within a 100 kilometre radius which is roughly the width of Taiwan in order to integrate it with data centres, server manufacturing, cooling systems and supporting infrastructure.

Mr. Lokesh emphasized that India must fully embrace the AI revolution, speaking ahead of the international AI summit to be held in Delhi. Andhra Pradhesh claims to have secured a $175 billion in investment agreements spanning across 760 projects including a $15 billion commitment from Google to help establish its largest AI infrastructure lab outside the United States. Further, a joint venture has taken place between Reliance Industries, Canada's Brookfield and US-based Digital Realty by investing $11 billion to help develop an AI data centre in Visakhapatnam.

Visakhapatnam is traditionally known for its cricket ground and port activities but is now being developed into a landing hub for submarine internet cables that link India to Singapore. The broader plan extends beyond connectivity as Andhra Pradesh is offering land at a nominal rate of one US cent per acre in order to attract major investors and is targeting companies that are involved in the entire data centre value chain from servers to air-conditioning and water-cooling systems. Mr. Lokesh highlighted that the state accounted for nearly 25% of India's total foreign direct investment in 2025 and he drew parallels with China's rapid poverty reduction through industrial clustering stating that Andhra Pradesh's model has been influenced by China's development strategy. India now ranks third globally in AI power, according to Stanford University's Institute for Human-Centred AI which is based on indicators such as patents and private funding. Having over a billion internet users, the country has attracted major investments such as Microsoft's announcement of a $17.5 billion investment to expand AI infrastructure.

Despite criticism that India lacks a proper advanced computing power and remains just a consumer rather than a creator of AI technology, Mr. Lokesh maintains that embracing the AI revolution will create more jobs than it displaces and that the long-term economic gains will justify the subsidised land incentives.

To meet the sector's heavy energy and water demands, Andhra Pradesh plans to use surplus monsoon water for cooling and has received in-principle approval for six 1.2-gigawatt nuclear plants at Kovvada. Targeting six gigawatts of data centre capacity half of which is already secured and the state aims to scale up rapidly and lead India's AI growth.

Source:https://www.dawn.com/news/1973380/india-plans-ai-data-city-on-staggering-scale-in-andhra-pradesh

Singapore Visit Secures ₹6,650 Crore Investment Boost for Uttar Pradesh

During his official visit to Singapore, Yogi Adityanath, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, secured investment commitments worth ₹6,650 crore through three Memorandums of Understanding signed with Universal Success Group. These agreements are aimed at strengthening urban infrastructure, logistics capacity, and digital development across the state, with officials projecting substantial employment generation and long-term economic growth.

A significant portion of the investment, ₹3,500 crore, has been allocated for an international theme-based township near Noida International Airport under the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority. Spread over 100 acres and targeted for launch in 2027, the township is expected to generate around 12,000 jobs while accelerating urban growth around the emerging airport hub. Additionally, a ₹650 crore logistics park will be developed across 50 acres along the Kanpur–Lucknow Highway, with an estimated 7,500 jobs once fully operational in 2027. The third project involves a ₹2,500 crore hyperscale data centre park in the Noida/Greater Noida region, designed with a 40 MW capacity and expected to create approximately 1,500 jobs by 2028, strengthening the state's digital infrastructure ecosystem.

These investment commitments indicate a calibrated shift in Uttar Pradesh's development strategy toward infrastructure-led and technology-driven growth. Rather than focusing solely on traditional manufacturing or agriculture, the state appears to be positioning itself within high-growth sectors such as logistics and digital infrastructure, while simultaneously expanding urban real estate around emerging connectivity hubs. The concentration of projects near the Jewar airport and in the Noida–Greater Noida belt reflects a corridor-based growth model, where transportation, housing, warehousing, and data services reinforce one another to create an integrated economic zone. This approach, if executed cohesively, could improve supply chain efficiency, attract ancillary industries, and strengthen the state's competitiveness within northern India.

However, the success of these initiatives will ultimately depend on governance capacity and implementation discipline. Large-scale infrastructure projects in India often face delays due to land acquisition challenges, regulatory bottlenecks, financing gaps, or coordination failures between agencies. Ensuring reliable power supply, digital connectivity, and transparent approval mechanisms will be critical, especially for the data centre project, which relies heavily on uninterrupted infrastructure support.

Furthermore, while projected employment figures are significant, the quality, skill level, and sustainability of these jobs will determine whether the benefits are broadly distributed or remain concentrated within specific sectors.

If delivered on schedule and supported by complementary policy measures, these investments could meaningfully reshape Uttar Pradesh's economic landscape by enhancing investor confidence, deepening urban-industrial integration, and embedding the state within India's expanding digital economy. If not, they risk becoming headline figures that signal intent but fall short of structural transformation.

Meet the Team

Professor Tridivesh Singh Maini

Prof. Tridivesh Singh Maini, currently Assistant Professor, has been a faculty member of the Jindal School of International Affairs (JSIA) since August 2014. He was also a Public Policy Scholar with The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy, Chennai (November 2013-March 2014), and an Asia Society India-Pakistan Regional Young Leaders Initiative (IPRYLI) Fellow (2013-2014). His research interests include — India's ties with its extended neighbourhood (with a focus on Gulf and Iran), Geo-economics in South Asia, The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the role of India's states in the country's external relations.

Sonakshi Garg

Sonakshi Garg is a Third - year law student at Jindal Global Law School. She is one of the hosts of The Interlinked Podcast and a leads the Conversations in Developmental Studies (CIDS). She is deeply passionate about the subjects of History, Psychology and Gender Studies and is an International Relations enthusiast.
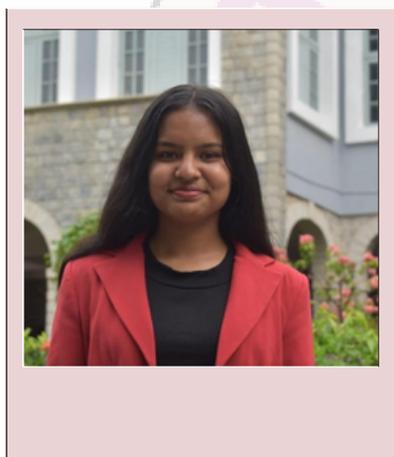

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