



PUNE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE



# SECURING INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

A blue globe with a white map of India is placed on a golden base, which is set on a large, detailed compass rose. A golden arrow points upwards and to the right, indicating growth and direction.

8<sup>th</sup> PDNS | Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023



# PUNE DIALOGUE ON NATIONAL SECURITY

27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023

CONFERENCE REPORT  
& RECOMMENDATIONS



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## SECURING INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

**P**une International Centre, in association with Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and Policy Perspectives Foundation (PPF), held the 8th Pune Dialogue on National Security (PDNS) conference on the theme **Securing India's Economic Growth**, on 27-28 November 2023. The conference was held at Hotel Pride, Pune.

Each session delved into specific facets of the theme and explored topics such as imperatives for high economic growth, critical materials and supply chains, understanding the impact of dissent on hinterland economies, and envisioning India's future economic landscape. Through enriching discussions, the sessions aimed at identifying challenges, opportunities, and strategic pathways to bolster India's economic resilience and prosperity in an increasingly complex global environment.

The Special Address was delivered by Gen. Manoj Pande, PVSM AVSM VSM ADC, Chief of the Army Staff. A number of eminent experts from across the country from fields of defence, national security, strategic affairs, and other domains participated in this conference. The conference sought to highlight and discuss the issues that hold gravity and importance of securing India's security in the turbulent world dynamic.



## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

**Lt. Gen Vinayak Patankar (Retd.)**, Trustee, PIC, was the Convener of PDNS 2023. Over the previous months, a high-level Planning Group at the PIC held deliberations on curating this conference. The members of this group were:

- Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, FRS  
President, PIC
- Dr. Vijay Kelkar, Vice President, PIC
- Lt Gen Shamsheer Singh Mehta
- Mr. Prakash Apte
- Prof. Ajay Shah
- Amb. Sudhir Devare
- Amb. Gautam Bambawale
- Mr. Madhukar Kotwal

- Mr. K. M. Singh
- Mr. Pradyot Haldar
- Air Marshal Bhushan Gokhale
- Lt Gen Raymond Noronha
- Lt Gen Shokin Chauhan
- Prof. Amitav Mallik
- Mr. Satish Pradhan
- Mr. Ravi Pandit
- Mr. Vikas Deshmukh

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### Monday, 27th November 2023 / Venue: HQ Southern Command Officers Mess

16:45 hrs	60 PIC Guests to assemble at Hotel Pride and Board 2 buses and head to HQ Southern Command Officers Mess. Two Liaison Officers from SC in both buses.
17:45 – 18:15 hrs	Tea/Coffee at HQ Southern Command Officers Mess
18:30 – 18:45 hrs	<b>Introduction to PDNS 2023</b> by <b>Lt Gen Vinayak Patankar</b> , Convener, PDNS
18:45 – 1900 hrs	<b>Welcome Address</b> by <b>Lieutenant General Ajai Kumar Singh</b> , AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM GOC-in-C, HQ Southern Command
19:00 hrs (45 mins)	Address by <b>General Manoj Pande</b> , PVSM AVSM VSM ADC Chief of the Army Staff
19:45 – 20:00 hrs	Gen Patankar to announce felicitation of award-winning student essay writers by COAS Presentation of PIC's Books to COAS by <b>Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar</b> , FRS
20:00 hrs onwards	Cocktails followed by Dinner

### Tuesday, 28th November 2023 / Venue: Hotel Pride, Shivajinagar

08:30 – 08:50 hrs	Assembly and Registration at Hotel Pride, Shivajinagar
<b>Inaugural Session</b> 08:55 – 09:05 hrs	Opening Remarks by <b>Lt Gen Patankar</b> (Retd), Convener, PDNS
09:05 hrs	Welcome Address by <b>Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar</b> , FRS, President, Pune International Centre



Tuesday, 28th November 2023 / Venue: Hotel Pride, Shivajinagar	
<b>Session-1</b> 09:30 – 11:00 hrs	<b>Imperatives for High Economic Growth</b> Chairperson: <b>Dr. Vijay Kelkar</b> , Vice President, Pune International Centre Speaker: <b>Dr. Surjit S Bhalla</b> , Chairperson, Ministry of Commerce High Level Advisory Group on Trade Panellists: <b>Dr. Ajit Ranade</b> , Vice-Chancellor, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics : <b>Dr. Ravi Pandit</b> , Co-founder & Group Chairman, KPIT Technologies and K&P Group
11:00 – 11:25 hrs	Tea/Coffee Break
<b>Session-2</b> 11:30 – 13:00 hrs	<b>Critical Materials, Minerals, Energy &amp; Supply Chains</b> Chairperson: <b>Mr. Gautam Chikermane</b> , Vice President, ORF Panellists: <b>Mr. Rishabh Jain</b> , Senior Programme Lead, Council on Energy, Environment and Water <b>Col Anurag Awasthi</b> , Vice President, India Electronics and Semiconductors Association : <b>Ms Jhanvi Tripathi</b> , Associate Fellow, ORF
13:00 – 13:55 hrs	Lunch Break
<b>Session-3</b> 14:00 – 15:30 hrs	<b>Understanding Dissent in Hinterland &amp; Impact on Economic Growth: Punjab Case Study</b> Chairperson: <b>Mr. Pradyot Haldar</b> , President, PPF Panellists: <b>Mr. Ramesh Inder Singh</b> , IAS (Retd), former Chief Secretary, Punjab : Mr. Praveen Swami, Journalist & Author (DID NOT ATTEND)
<b>Closing Session</b> 15:35 – 17:00 hrs	Valedictory Address <b>VISION 2047 for INDIA</b> Chairperson: <b>Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar</b> , President, Pune International Centre Closing Remarks: <b>Lt Gen SS Mehta</b> (Retd), Trustee, Pune International Centre Valedictory Address: <b>Shri Hardeep Singh Puri</b> , Hon. Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Vote of Thanks: <b>Abhay Vaidya</b> , Director, Pune International Centre
1700 hrs onwards	Tea/Coffee & Dispersal



# SECURING INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

8th PDNS 2023 • 28th November 2023 • Hotel Pride, Shivajinagar, Pune

## THEME AND CONDUCT

By Lt Gen Vinayak Patankar (Retd)  
Convener, PDNS 2023

### What Makes a Nation Secure?

1. It is axiomatic that the security of a nation lies not merely in the defence of its territorial integrity and sovereignty. There are many important non-military facets, such as economic security, political security, human security, energy security, cyber security, environmental security, food and water security and so on.
2. India's rise in recent years has been largely on account of our growing economy. From the well-being of our people, our internal governance and *Atmanirbharata* to our external interest, our global standing and the possibility of the leadership of the Global South, everything is dependent on the continued growth of our economy.
3. It follows, therefore, that any forces inimical to our economic growth will cause all-round damage to our national interests and security. Safeguarding economic growth by ensuring economic security must be given the highest priority. Interestingly, many of the other facets of security mentioned above are either closely related to or effectively complement and contribute to our economic activities and hence could be considered as aspects of economic security.

### Threats and Impediments to Economic Growth

4. Competitors or forces hostile to our economic growth could pose threats to it. Similarly, lack of adequate emphasis and deficiencies in our current policies could also act as impediments. Some of them may not be visible at present but would have the potential to emerge in near future to slow down our economic growth. Among them the more prominent ones could be:
  - (a) Lack of Technological Development Except for a few areas, we are lagging behind the developed world in terms of all-round technological prowess. We need to correct that with the utmost urgency. To begin with, we should identify and recognise those technologies that would make us more secure. We should simultaneously start creating an eco-system that would be conducive to the growth of modern technology. A step towards



achieving greater *Atmanirbharata* would be to obtain contemporary technology by getting into partnerships with countries that have it. However, that alone would not be enough to minimise our vulnerabilities. We should also take steps to encourage and promote building indigenous, state-of-the-art technology. We severely lack in R&D. The government and, particularly, the private sector must make substantial investments in R&D if we wish to be counted among the top economies of the world.

**(b) Dependence on Critical Imports** In the present situation, we are dependent on other countries for import or obtainment of minerals, materials, energy and modern technologies which are critical to maintain the trajectory of our economic growth. One way to reduce such dependency is to develop indigenous substitutes. However, that effort alone would not be sufficient for obvious reasons. We should explore possibilities for entering into bilateral or multilateral collaborations in which each participant would have a stake in its continuance, profitability and further development. Our foreign policy should also be suitably structured to be supportive of such endeavours.

**(c) Domestic Aspects** We are aware of our demographic advantage in having a large young population. To reap its full benefits, we need to lay greater emphasis on technical education, skill development, development of rural and urban infrastructure, social cohesion, to name but a few. Since the very objective of national security is the protection and well-being of our people, all such aspects are important. The good part is that, unlike in the case of the external dependencies, most of which are beyond our control, we can have much greater control over internal aspects. Thus, good governance, careful planning of domestic policies and their diligent implementation, strict adherence to the rule of law and ensuring social justice are vital. We need to find ways and means to see how those aspects can be improved upon.

**(d) Ongoing Wars** The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine has had a multi-dimensional impact. Apart from the inevitable impact on the economies of the two adversaries and their supporters, it has cast a long shadow on the global economy. It has also demolished some myths and shifted a few paradigms regarding the nature of modern warfare.

The recent conflagration between Israel and Hamas too has the potential to cause a major impact on the global economy in general and our economy in particular. Were the Arab-world to decide to take measures like placing restrictions on supply of oil or shipping through the Suez Canal to coerce the Western powers against their support to Israel, it could hit our economy adversely.

Thus, the short and long-term effects of ongoing conflicts in the world should be constantly

appreciated and adequate safeguards should be put in place quickly so as to minimise their impact on our economic growth.

### Theme

5. The theme for the PDNS 2023 was 'Securing India's Economic Growth'. The architecture of such a security arrangement could be based on 'layered security' to safeguard our economic growth against possible threats and impediments. Some of them have been mentioned in the previous paragraph. As an example, the outermost layer could deal with aspects like external interface and impact of developments (such as the Corona virus pandemic) on the global economy. A close watch on those aspects should be maintained to give us early warning of an impending threat to our economy.
6. A country's potential and capability are tested in crisis situations in which resources may be denied if restrictions or sanctions are imposed on it. We must make long-term investment in science and technology to build greater resilience through intrinsic strength and expertise. That would not only pre-empt any threats to our economic growth but would also enable us to overcome them, if they should manifest. Good technical education, vocational training, appropriate skill development, substantial investment in R&D and good infrastructure for manufacturing are some of the areas that need emphasis. Formulation of appropriate domestic and foreign policies are necessary to support and ensure that such a focus is maintained. They would, along with other regulations, constitute the inner layers of the security arrangement to maintain and enhance our economic growth.

### Conduct

7. PDNS 2023 was held over three sessions, apart from the inaugural and closing sessions. The sub-themes for the sessions were:
  - (a) Imperatives for High Economic Growth
  - (b) Critical Materials, Minerals, Energy & Supply Chains
  - (c) Understanding Dissent in Hinterland; Impact on Economic Growth: Punjab Model.

### Curtain-Raiser Research Paper Writing Competition

A special feature of PDNS 2023 was the Curtain-Raiser Research Paper Writing Competition for students organised by PIC in association with the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) on November 24, 2023.



The theme was 'Pole-vaulting to Economic Security for India' and this competition was conceived and executed by Mr. Vikas Deshmukh, PDNS Core Group Member, and Gen Patankar.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Ajit Ranade, Vice-Chancellor, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE), set the tone for the evening with insightful perspectives on the topic. After the students' presentations and dynamic discussions, the winners were announced and invited to be felicitated on day one of the PDNS at HQ Southern Command on November 27. The prize winners were: Ms. Snehali Jena (first prize); Mr. Vishal Jain and Sachi Khobragade (second prize); and Ms. Bhakti Rupika Anand (third prize).



## SESSION SYNOPSIS

### INAUGURAL SESSION

#### 'Securing India's Economic Growth: A Pole Vaulting Approach'

#### Session Summary

The 8th Pune Dialogue on National Security unfolded with great anticipation as the audience gathered for a session dedicated to 'Securing India's Economic Growth'. The collaborative effort of the Pune International Centre, Policy Perspectives Foundation, and the Observer Research Foundation brought together a diverse audience and featured Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar as the keynote speaker.

Lt Gen Vinayak Patankar, the convener, welcomed the attendees, expressing gratitude for their presence. He provided insights into the significance of the Pune Dialogue as an independent think tank and emphasised its role in addressing critical issues related to national security.

Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar took the stage, delving into the metaphorical concept of "pole vaulting" as a strategic approach for achieving rapid, inclusive, and exponential economic growth. With eloquence, he conveyed the essence of the term, emphasising the need for visionary leaps and a spirit of exponential thinking to propel India's economic development into new dimensions.

The keynote address focused on India's success stories, meticulously highlighting milestones in various sectors. Dr. Mashelkar celebrated the remarkable rise in mobile data consumption, illustrating the nation's leap from 156th to 1st place in just eight years. The exponential growth of UPI transactions, from 0.1 billion to 74 billion in five years, underscored India's prowess in financial technology.

An engaging aspect of the session was the emphasis on startups, with Dr. Mashelkar shedding light on their unprecedented growth. Notably, he pointed out that 50% of these startups originated from tier 3 and tier 2 cities, showcasing the democratisation of innovation.

While acknowledging these achievements, the keynote address also delved into potential inhibitors to sustained growth. Dr. Mashelkar emphasised the importance of a pragmatic approach, recognising the challenges and intricacies that accompany rapid progress.

The session concluded with Dr. Mashelkar encouraging participants to adopt a forward-thinking approach, exploring how the concept of pole vaulting could be practically applied to secure and accelerate India's economic growth.



## SESSION 1

### IMPERATIVES FOR HIGH ECONOMIC GROWTH

#### Session Summary

The first session of PDNS 2023 was on the topic of 'Imperatives for High Economic Growth', and it unfolded as a profound exploration of India's economic landscape, featuring distinguished speakers who shared invaluable insights.

Dr. Surjit Bhalla initiated the discussion by stressing the enduring continuity in India's economic policies since 1991, challenging the perception of stagnation. Contrary to narratives suggesting a decline, Bhalla highlighted the acceleration of reforms over the last decade, showcasing India's remarkable progress.

The discourse extended to core determinants of economic growth, starting with infrastructure development. Dr. Bhalla underscored the significant growth in physical infrastructure investment by the government over the past two decades, reiterating the tangible changes. He debunked the notion of a declining investment rate by distinguishing between nominal and real investment to GDP ratios. According to his analysis, the real investment to real GDP ratio in the April-June quarter of 2023 was approximately 35.5%, indicating a robust investment climate.

Shifting the focus to human capital, Dr. Bhalla challenged misconceptions about women's workforce participation in India. Contrary to narratives suggesting low participation rates, he presented data indicating a rapid increase in the labour force participation rate, reaching the highest levels since 1993. Dr. Bhalla also debunked the narrative of stagnant educational achievements, highlighting the parity achieved in men's and women's average attainment age of education. He provided examples of the significant presence of women in STEM disciplines, challenging the prevailing notion that educated women in India are not actively engaged in the workforce.

Addressing the manufacturing sector, Dr. Bhalla countered the narrative that India lags in manufacturing compared to countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh. Referencing research by Goldar, he explained that when adjusting for the decline in the price of manufacturing goods, India's share of manufacturing is higher than that suggested by nominal data.

Dr. Bhalla concluded his presentation by addressing key challenges and offering recommendations. He called for a reassessment of education strategies, pointing out a

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global surplus of college graduates. Advocating for a shift from freebies to cash transfers, he highlighted the success of India's government in implementing fintech solutions for efficient resource allocation. The talk concluded with a discussion on the delimitation problem within the political system and highlighted the exigency for foresighted solutions to ensure equitable representation.

Dr. Ravi Pandit, in his address, delved into the imperatives for high economic growth, focusing on the criticality of the pivotal role of economic development in ensuring national security. Commending the Pune International Centre (PIC) for its consistent efforts, Dr. Pandit underscored the significance of a healthy population, equitable wealth distribution, education, and social cohesion as crucial factors for a nation's strength. He argued that the responsibility for national security lies with the armed forces and the government and extends to every individual.

Focusing on key technologies and industries, Dr. Pandit highlighted energy and artificial intelligence (AI) as pivotal economic growth and security drivers. In the realm of energy, he discussed the challenges and opportunities associated with transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable sources. Dr. Pandit highlighted India's dependence on imported solar photovoltaic cells and lithium-ion batteries, stressing the need for indigenous solutions in these critical areas. He also touched upon the emerging significance of hydrogen as a clean energy carrier.

Moving on to AI, Dr. Pandit acknowledged the fears and hopes surrounding its impact, ranging from concerns about massive unemployment to the potential for increased prosperity and reduced working hours. He urged India, as a country with a strong IT sector, to take the lead in developing and controlling AI, and delved into its applications in medicine, education, and manufacturing. He brought forth the ongoing debate about AI's control and spoke about the need for India to actively engage in shaping the future of this transformative technology.

Dr. Pandit presented a comprehensive analysis of the current state and future potential of these industries, outlining the challenges and opportunities they pose for India's economic security. He called for increased investment in research and development (R&D), advocating for collaboration between public sector R&D, academic institutions, and private sector companies. Addressing the need for a public-private partnership, he urged the government to support private companies to foster technological advancements.

Concluding his speech, Dr. Pandit emphasised the urgency of focusing on specific industries like energy and AI to ensure equitable economic growth. He provided a nuanced perspective on the potential of emerging technologies, calling for a proactive approach to research, development, and global collaboration to secure India's economic future.



Dr. Ajit Ranade delved into the intricate connection between economic strength and national security. He reiterated the pivotal role of economic prosperity in protecting the nation, projecting global power, and preserving sovereignty. Dr. Ranade outlined key elements contributing to economic strength, including resource allocation flexibility, technological advancements, political stability, global influence, and energy security.

The speaker commended India's remarkable economic resilience, citing its 40-year uninterrupted GDP growth despite facing challenges such as natural disasters, conflicts, and global sanctions. He acknowledged the nation's efficient capital-output ratio, consistently high savings rate, and the remarkable success of the software industry, which significantly contributed to India's income tax earnings.

Dr. Ranade also underscored the importance of female labour force participation as a critical asset for economic growth, drawing parallels with successful models in Japan and Bangladesh. He identified challenges such as the impending need for delimitation, the necessity to bolster federalism, and the urgency to address various dimensions of inequality, including income, wealth, regional, gender, and digital disparities.

Furthermore, Dr. Ranade stressed the significance of effective institutional strengthening, highlighting the role of independent, unbiased, and quality institutions in fostering democratic functioning. The speaker concluded by addressing the importance of countering global misperceptions through effective communication and narratives, urging a realistic assessment of India's economic standing in the global landscape.

Highlighting the potential challenges, Dr. Vijay Kelkar identified social harmony and fraternity as critical constraints that could impede India's progress. Highlighting the importance of cooperative federalism, he called for the empowerment of the third tier of government, particularly urban bodies, to facilitate economic growth and ensure the supply of essential social goods and services. Dr. Kelkar proposed leveraging the Goods and Services Tax (GST) to share resources with urban localities and address the imperative of urbanisation for India's growth.

Addressing the delimitation issue, Dr. Kelkar informed the audience about an upcoming policy paper, spearheaded by Professor Suhas Palshikar, to explore and debate delimitation strategies. He asserted this is crucial for overcoming a significant constraint on India's political landscape. Furthermore, he stressed the need to strengthen institutional guardrails, citing the success of macro-economic guardrails like the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) and inflation targeting, which have contributed to India's economic stability.



In a nuanced observation on women's contribution to the economy, Dr. Kelkar highlighted the inadequacy of current measurements, using a personal anecdote about his daughter to illustrate the complexities of evaluating women's roles in both workforce and caregiving. He urged a more comprehensive measurement framework considering women's contributions to human capital and societal well-being. The session concluded with Dr. Kelkar urging a re-evaluation of how women's roles are measured, to better understand and appreciate their multifaceted contributions.

The subsequent discussion, featuring notable participants, enriched the session. Dr. Bhalla expressed optimism about India's potential, and said it was necessary to sustain growth. The demographic dividend, federalism, realism, and concerns about potential hurdles were discussed. AM Bhushan Gokhale inquired about sectors contributing to a 5 trillion-dollar economy, prompting discussions on market-driven decisions, social harmony, and fraternity.

The session provided a comprehensive exploration of India's economic landscape, debunking myths and focussing the multifaceted imperatives for future growth. The synthesis of insights from Dr. Kelkar, Dr. Bhalla, Dr. Pandit, and Professor Ranade, along with the engaging discussion, offered a nuanced understanding of India's journey towards high economic growth.





## SESSION 2

### CRITICAL MATERIALS, MINERALS, ENERGY, AND SUPPLY CHAINS

#### Session Summary

The second session on ‘Critical Materials, Minerals, and Supply Chains’ at PDNS 2023 provided a deep and comprehensive exploration into the intricacies of India’s strategic landscape and its implications for global supply chains. Guided by the astute moderation of Mr. Gautam Chikermane, Vice President at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), the session unfolded into a captivating odyssey through the complexities of this vital domain.

Colonel Anurag Awasthi, Vice President of the India Electronics and Semiconductors Association, commenced the discussion with a captivating historical narrative, meticulously tracing India’s trajectory in semiconductor manufacturing. With a masterful blend of historical context and contemporary analysis, Colonel Awasthi illuminated India’s latent potential as a significant player in the semiconductor market. Drawing from his rich reservoir of experiences, he underscored the imperative for strategic investments and policy support to harness this latent potential and propel India to the forefront of semiconductor innovation and manufacturing.

Following Colonel Awasthi’s riveting exposition, Ms. Jhanvi Tripathi, Coordinator at the Think20 India Secretariat and Associate Fellow at the ORF, took centre stage, offering a nuanced examination of the indispensable role played by critical minerals in driving technological advancements. With meticulous precision, Ms. Tripathi delineated India’s precarious import dependence on critical minerals, emphasising the urgent need for strategic alliances to fortify supply chain resilience. She gave deep insights into the intricate web of dependencies, particularly in the realms of smartphone production and semiconductor manufacturing, painting a vivid picture of the challenges and opportunities confronting India’s quest for technological self-reliance.

Mr. Rishabh Jain, Senior Programme Lead at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), further enriched the discourse with his erudite analysis of the geopolitical dynamics shaping the critical minerals landscape. With a keen eye on the ramifications of supply chain disruptions and China’s hegemonic dominance, Mr. Jain articulated India’s imperative to navigate these treacherous waters with foresight and agility. His impassioned advocacy for collaborative partnerships and technological innovation resonated deeply, echoing the sentiments of attendees who recognised the pivotal role of critical minerals in ensuring India’s economic and national security in an increasingly volatile global landscape.

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The session unfolded into a vibrant exchange of ideas, with discussions ranging from the intricacies of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to the strategic significance of critical minerals in catalysing India's digital transformation and clean energy revolution. Colonel Awasthi, Ms. Tripathi, and Mr. Jain engaged in insightful dialogues, offering profound insights into India's semiconductor industry, the potential for collaboration with Taiwan, and the strategic implications of India's burgeoning lithium reserves.

Audience participation, spearheaded by thought-provoking questions from participants such as Gen. Pitre and Dr. Alvide, further enriched the discourse, fostering a spirit of intellectual inquiry and collaboration. Topics spanning from trade deficits to clean energy technologies were meticulously scrutinised, illuminating the multifaceted nature of India's quest to bolster its technological prowess and economic resilience.

In conclusion, the session was enlightening, offering attendees a profound understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in India's pursuit of self-reliance and competitiveness in critical industries. Armed with a trove of insights and a renewed sense of purpose, participants dispersed, invigorated and empowered to chart a course towards a more secure and prosperous future.





## SESSION 3

### UNDERSTANDING DISSENT IN HINTERLAND & IMPACT ON ECONOMIC GROWTH: PUNJAB CASE STUDY

#### Session Summary

The third session of the Pune Dialogue for National Security 2023, titled ‘Understanding Dissent in Hinterland & Impact on Economic Growth: Punjab Case Study’, was chaired by Mr. Pradyot Chandra Halder, President of Policy Perspective Foundation and featured Mr. Ramesh Inder Singh, a distinguished civil servant from the Punjab Cadre, as the speaker. The session aimed to analyse the impact of dissent and conflict on economic development, using Punjab as a case study.

Mr. Halder began the session by explaining that they would focus on Punjab as a case study to understand how the state experienced turmoil and recovery and how similar issues could affect other states. Mr. Singh then elaborated on the topic, emphasising that dissent, while essential in a democracy, can become problematic when it turns violent. He discussed the historical and geopolitical context of Punjab, which has been a gateway to India and has faced continuous invasions. This history has shaped the attitudes and values of the people, including a spirit of martyrdom and anti-authoritarianism.

Mr. Singh discussed the incidents that led to the rise of militancy in Punjab in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including a clash between the Nirankari sect and followers of Bhindranwale and the political conflict over river waters between Punjab and Haryana. The mishandling of these issues by the administration, including the failure to order a public inquiry into the Nirankari incident, contributed to the escalation of violence. He emphasised the importance of understanding the psychological and sociological aspects of the regions being handled and the need for effective conflict resolution and governance.

The discussion then shifted to the impact of dissent in the hinterland, particularly left-wing extremism or Naxalism, on the economy. Extortion, physical destruction of infrastructure, and the increased cost of development were highlighted as significant challenges. Additionally, the loss of opportunities for growth due to agitational terrorism and road blockades was addressed.

Mr. Surjit Bhalla presented a potential solution for Punjab’s economic woes, suggesting a structural adjustment programme similar to the one proposed for Chhattisgarh and western

UP. Dr. Vijay Kelkar echoed this sentiment, stressing the need for a national-level solution to a problem that transcends Punjab's borders.

In response to Lt Gen Shamsher Singh Mehta's question about harnessing rainwater in Punjab, Mr. Ramesh Inder Singh pointed out technical and financial challenges. He noted that while the idea was feasible, it required significant investment and technological innovation. Lt Gen Mehta stressed the urgency of the issue, stressing that failure to address water scarcity could lead to widespread discontent.

The discussion concluded with a question about the role of religion in Indian politics. Mr. Halдар acknowledged the divisive nature of religious politics and expressed hope for a future where politics is driven by a greater good rather than sectarian interests. He encouraged young people to work towards this vision, highlighting the importance of societal change.





## VALEDICTORY SESSION – VISION 2047 FOR INDIA

### SESSION SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Valedictory Session of the Pune Dialogue on National Security (PDNS) conference, titled ‘VISION 2047 for INDIA’ and held on November 28, 2023, was a culmination of two days of in-depth discussions on various aspects of national security, chaired by Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, a renowned scientist and President of the Pune International Centre (PIC). Dr. Mashelkar is highly respected for his contributions to science and technology in India. The session also featured Lt Gen Shamsher Singh Mehta (Retd), a distinguished army officer and former GOC-in-C, Western Command. The Valedictory Address was given through a recorded message by Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Dr. Mashelkar opened the session by reflecting on the term “dangerous optimist” used to describe him, expressing his vision for India to become a classless society by 2047. He shared a poignant anecdote about a community in Karnataka facing discrimination at a Hanuman temple, highlighting the persistence of caste-based inequalities in Indian society.

Dr. Mashelkar then shifted the focus to the importance of education, particularly in the context of rapidly evolving global dynamics. He stressed the need for a reimagined educational system that equips students with the skills and knowledge required for the changing world. He also emphasised the role of Indian talent in driving economic growth, drawing parallels with the historical examples of other countries that achieved prosperity through specific industries.

The speech then took a sombre turn as Dr. Mashelkar addressed the issue of malnutrition and its impact on brain development in children. He cited statistics that highlighted the disproportionate contribution of a small fraction of the population to India’s exports, underscoring the need for comprehensive interventions to address the root causes of malnutrition and stunting.

Dr. Mashelkar concluded his remarks by outlining a vision for a “Santulit Bharat” (Balanced India) that encompasses various dimensions, including education, prosperity, governance, security, cultural heritage, and happiness for all citizens. He referenced the words of JRD Tata, who expressed a desire for India to be an economic superpower but also highlighted the importance of happiness and peace for the entire population.

Lt Gen Shamsher Singh Mehta (Retd) focused on the role of economic growth in ensuring national security. He stressed the need to preserve peace, win the war before it starts, and effectively address internal and external threats. Lt Gen Mehta highlighted the importance

of societal harmony and the need for a comprehensive national power to safeguard India's interests.

Lt Gen Mehta stressed the need for a multi-dimensional approach to national security, encompassing economic, social, and military aspects. He stressed the importance of societal harmony and the need for a comprehensive national power to safeguard India's interests. He underscored the importance of a strategic approach to economic growth and security, highlighting the need for a forward-thinking approach that addresses internal and external threats.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri, in his valedictory address through a recorded message, emphasised the importance of integrating national security with economic development, highlighting the need for a comprehensive strategy to address emerging challenges. He stressed the need for a collaborative approach between the government and the private sector to drive innovation and economic growth. He also highlighted the role of technology in enhancing security and economic resilience. Mr. Puri concluded by expressing confidence in India's ability to overcome challenges and achieve sustainable growth.

The session concluded with a discussion on the importance of innovative thinking, the impact of social media, and institutions' role in securing India's economic growth. Dr. Mashelkar emphasised the need for balanced development and leadership that can bring people together.

The speakers highlighted the need for a forward-thinking approach to national security and economic development, highlighting the importance of inclusive growth, innovation, and strong leadership.

The closing remarks were made by Mr. Abhay Vaidya, who thanked the participants, speakers, and organisers for their contributions to the event. He expressed gratitude to the Chief of the Army Staff, General Manoj Pande, and other dignitaries for their involvement and support. Mr. Vaidya highlighted the importance of securing India's economic growth, which was the conference's central theme, and expressed satisfaction with the discussions and insights shared by the speakers. He declared the conference closed, expressing hope that the ideas and discussions would contribute to shaping India's path towards a more prosperous and inclusive future.





## CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Foster Inclusive Growth:** Implement policies to bridge the economic gap between the rich and the poor, ensuring equal access to education, healthcare, and basic amenities for all citizens.
2. **Educational Reformation:** Revamp the educational system to equip students with skills and knowledge essential for the rapidly evolving global landscape, fostering innovation and adaptability.
3. **Human Capital Investment:** Prioritise investments in human capital, especially focusing on children's nutrition and brain development, to ensure a healthy and prosperous future generation.
4. **Strengthen Institutional Mechanisms:** Enhance transparency, accountability, and consensus-based decision-making through the strengthening of institutional mechanisms and governance structures.
5. **Promote Cultural Harmony:** Foster a culture of tolerance and respect for diverse cultural heritage, promoting societal harmony and peaceful coexistence.
6. **Sustainable Development:** Emphasise balanced development, considering economic, social, and environmental aspects to achieve sustainable growth.
7. **Encourage Innovation:** Cultivate innovative thinking and creativity, leveraging India's rich talent pool to drive economic growth and global competitiveness.
8. **Leverage Digital Transformation:** Utilise technology and digital platforms to enhance education, healthcare, and governance, ensuring greater accessibility and efficiency.
9. **Address Nutrition and Health:** Implement comprehensive interventions, including nutritional programmes and access to clean water and sanitation, to address the root causes of malnutrition and stunting.
10. **Empower Entrepreneurship:** Create an environment conducive to entrepreneurship and small businesses, providing economic empowerment and job creation opportunities.
11. **Ensure National Security:** Strengthen national security by effectively addressing internal



## SECURING INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

and external threats and fostering a comprehensive national power.

12. Celebrate Cultural Diversity: Recognise and respect India's cultural diversity, fostering unity and inclusivity.
13. Embrace Environmental Conservation: Encourage sustainable practices and environmental conservation to ensure a healthy and resilient ecosystem for future generations.
14. Promote Citizen Participation: Foster a sense of responsibility and leadership among citizens, encouraging active participation in nation-building and social development.
15. Nurture Inter-Cultural Respect: Cultivate a culture of respect and understanding towards different cultures and traditions, promoting peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.
16. Promote Real Investment Metrics: Encourage the use of real investment to real GDP ratios for a more accurate assessment of India's economic trajectory.
17. Gender Parity in Education: Emphasise achieving gender parity in education, building on successes in fields like aviation and STEM disciplines.
18. Debunk Misleading Narratives: Advocate for nuanced understanding and accurate analysis to counter misleading narratives hindering economic progress.
19. Strategic Investments in Energy and AI: Stress the urgency of establishing a robust presence in critical technology components, especially in energy and AI sectors.
20. R&D Collaboration: Encourage collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors in research and development (R&D), particularly in cutting-edge technologies.
21. Effective Global Communication: Address the concern of ineffective global communication by highlighting India's strengths and achievements on the international stage.
22. Decentralisation for Strengthening Democracy: Stress the importance of decentralisation of power to strengthen democracy, considering it a key element for sustainable growth.
23. Market-Driven Decisions with Government Incentives: Encourage market-driven decisions supported by government incentives to drive economic growth.



24. Holistic Approach to Social Harmony: Acknowledge social harmony and fraternity as critical constraints for India's growth, necessitating a holistic approach.
25. Data Accuracy and Timeliness: Emphasise the necessity of accurate and up-to-date data for informed policy decisions, particularly in poverty metrics.
26. Integrated National Security-Economic Strategy: Develop an integrated strategy that aligns national security objectives with economic policies, ensuring a symbiotic relationship for long-term stability.
27. Investment in Critical Technology Sectors: Prioritise investments in critical technology sectors, such as AI and energy, to reduce dependence on imports and bolster economic self-sufficiency.
28. Strategic Research and Development: Advocate for a strategic approach to R&D, focusing on collaboration between public and private sectors in cutting-edge technologies crucial for economic and security interests.
29. Gender-Inclusive Economic Policies: Integrate gender-inclusive policies to enhance women's participation in the workforce, recognising their pivotal role in economic development and national security.
30. Effective Communication for Global Standing: Strengthen communication strategies to project India's economic strengths globally effectively, enhancing its standing and attracting investments.
31. Decentralisation for Resilient Democracy: Strengthen democratic institutions through decentralisation of power, fostering resilience and stability essential for economic growth and national security.
32. Market-Driven Growth with Government Support: Promote market-driven decisions supported by targeted government incentives, creating an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth.
33. Holistic Approach to Social Harmony: Acknowledge social harmony and fraternity as integral components of a secure nation, emphasising the need for a holistic approach in economic planning.

34. **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Focus on the importance of accurate and timely data in policymaking, enabling informed decisions that contribute to economic growth and national security.
35. **Youth Empowerment and Skill Development:** Prioritise youth empowerment through skill development programmes, ensuring a skilled and adaptable workforce that contributes to economic growth and security.
36. **Strategic Mineral Exploration Investments:** Allocate funding towards advanced exploration technologies to boost domestic mineral discovery capabilities, reducing reliance on imports, and enhancing geopolitical leverage.
37. **Diversification of Supply Sources:** Encourage partnerships with diverse mineral-producing countries to diversify supply sources and mitigate geopolitical risks associated with dependence on a single region.
38. **Development of Domestic Refining Capacity:** Invest in domestic refining infrastructure to add value to raw mineral imports within the country, reducing vulnerability to external market fluctuations and geopolitical tensions.
39. **Promotion of Recycling Initiatives:** Promote initiatives for recycling critical minerals to lessen dependence on primary mineral sources, enhancing resource security and reducing exposure to geopolitical disruptions.
40. **Enhanced Transparency in Supply Chains:** Implement measures to enhance transparency in mineral supply chains, fostering trust among trading partners and reducing the risk of supply chain manipulation for geopolitical purposes.





## SOME GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE



Gen Manoj Pande



Lt Gen Vinayak Patankar (Retd)



Gen Manoj Pande presenting a memento to Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar



Gen Manoj Pande with Guests



Mr. Pradyot Haldar



Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar

## SOME GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE



Dr. Ajit Ranade, Dr. Vijay Kelkar and Dr Surjit Bhalla (L to R)



Ms. Jhanvi Tripathi



Col Anurag Awasthi (Retd)



Dr. Ajit Ranade



Dr. Vijay Kelkar



Mr. Rishabh Jain





## SOME GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE



Mr. Gautam Chikermane



Lt Gen SS Mehta (Retd)



Guests at the Conference



Shri Hardeep Singh Puri (recorded message)

## SOME GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE



Gen. Manoj Pande, PVSM AVSM VSM ADC, Chief of Army Staff; Lt Gen Vinayak Patankar, Convener, PDNS, and Trustee, PIC; and Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, President, PIC, with the winners of the PDNS curtain-raiser research paper writing competition for students held at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics on the theme 'Pole-vaulting to Economic Security for India'.

(Clockwise from top left) The first prize winner Ms. Snehal Jena; second prize winners Mr. Vishal Jain and Ms. Sachi Khobragade; and the third prize winner Ms. Bhakti Rupika Anand.

## SOME GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE



Clockwise from top: Major General Amit Singh Sohal, VSM; Dr. Ajit Ranade; Lt Gen (Retd) Vinayak Patankar; Lt Gen (Retd) S S Mehta; Air Marshal (Retd) Bhushan Gokhale; judges; and audience at the 8th PDNS curtain-raiser research paper writing competition at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics

Mr. Vikas Deshmukh, founder member, PIC and Lt Gen (Retd) Vinayak Patankar





## PUNE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

**P**une International Centre (PIC) is an independent, multi-faceted, action-oriented policy research think tank that seeks to foster the values enshrined in the Indian Constitution and the UN Charter.

It has five research verticals focused on Social Innovation, National Security, Energy Environment and Climate Change, Science, Technology, Innovation and National Growth, and Economic Reforms & Urbanisation.

PIC was established on 24 September 2011 under the leadership of renowned scientist Dr R A Mashelkar, FRS (President), senior economist and ex-bureaucrat Dr Vijay Kelkar (Vice President), and others. Today, PIC has grown into an institution with more than 450+ distinguished members, 58 Institutional Members (ITs, IIMs universities, etc.) and 13 Corporate Members.

In addition to undertaking public policy research, PIC hosts major national and international conferences, promotes an environment for free and fair public debates, and provides a platform to promote the arts and culture.

Report by  
**Praneet Shukla**  
National Security Research Analyst  
Pune International Centre



PUNE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

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