



PUNE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE



**ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025**



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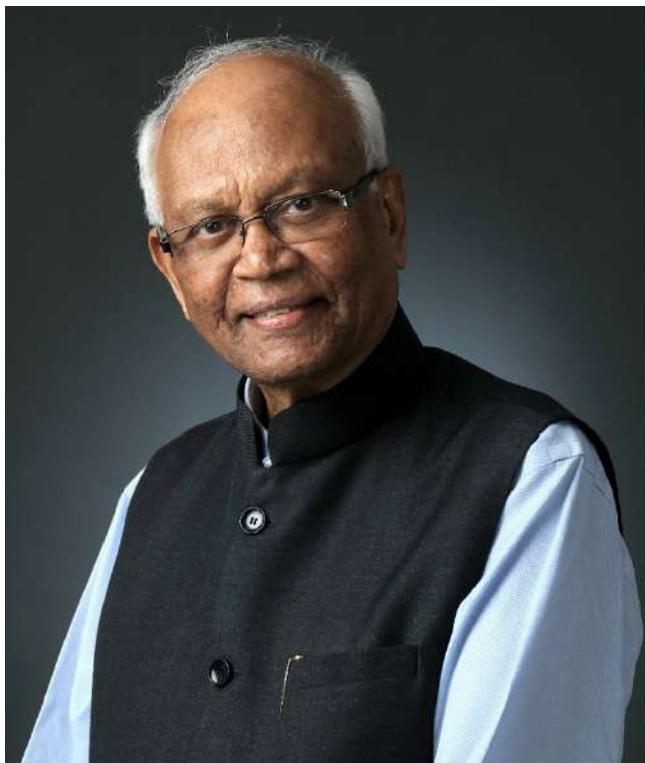
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PIC's Organisational Structure

Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, President	Dr. Vijay Kelkar, Vice President
Dr. Ravi Pandit, Treasurer (Hon.)	Mr. Prashant Girbane, Gen. Secretary (Hon.)
Maj Gen (Retd) Nitin Gadkari, Director	

Sub-Committees	
Executive Committee	
Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, President	Dr. Vijay Kelkar, Vice President
Dr. Ravi Pandit, Treasurer (Hon.)	Mr. Prashant Girbane, Gen. Secretary (Hon.)
Membership Committee	
Chairperson: Ms. Anu Aga	Convener: Mr. Suresh Pingale
Mr. Mukesh Malhotra	Mr. Saif Dhorajiwala
Mr. Amit Paranjape	Dr. Padmini Sundaram
Infrastructure Committee	
Chairperson: Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar	Co-Chair: Mr. Arun Firodia
Convener: Mr. Satish Magar	Dr. Vijay Kelkar, Vice President
Dr. Ravi Pandit, Treasurer (Hon.)	Mr. Prashant Girbane, Gen. Secretary (Hon.)

Message from the President and the Vice President



It gives us great pleasure to share with you the highlights and milestones of Pune International Centre (PIC) over the past year—a year that marks a defining chapter in our journey. On 26th January 2025, PIC inaugurated its long-awaited, purpose-built campus at Pashan on the occasion of India's 76th Republic Day. Blessing the PIC, His Holiness the Dalai Lama sent a personally signed message to the PIC. The message to the PIC is now beautifully framed in our central lobby. In his message, his Holiness highlights Pune's "vibrant intellectual environment" and describes PIC as a platform for discussions on issues affecting both regional and national policies.

Spread across 7 acres, this new space represents not just a physical expansion but a deepening of our vision to become a leading centre for shaping public opinion and public policy, as well as research and social innovation. And for the above, we remain deeply grateful to the many individuals and institutions whose generous contributions made this dream a

reality. These include S.L. Kirloskar CSR Foundation, Wipro, Bajaj Foundation, Britannia Industries, Forbes Marshall Pvt. Ltd., JM Financial, Kirloskar Brothers, KPIT Technologies, Magarpatta Township Development and Construction Co. Ltd., Dr. Ravi Pandit, Reliance Foundation, Tata Trusts, and Thermax Foundation, among others. Our efforts to raise further support continue, and we are confident that many more will join this collective journey.

Throughout the year, PIC remained steadfast in its core mission of advancing public policy research, fostering informed dialogue, and facilitating meaningful engagement through a range of impactful programmes and publications. Over the year, we organised over 40 diverse programmes—conferences, roundtables, book discussions, film screenings, and lectures—bringing together some of the most respected thinkers and practitioners from India and abroad.

The sixth edition of the Asia Economic Dialogue, held

in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, continued to attract global attention, with 43 speakers from 11 countries participating in 13 sessions.

This year marked the commencement of the Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture Series, comprising a total of five lectures that explored powerful themes, ranging from India's foreign policy and economic reforms to soft power and regional diplomacy. Speakers included Mr. Kumar Ketkar, Ambassador Sudhir Devare, Ambassador Madhav Keshav Mangalmurti, Dr. Vijay Kelkar, Dr. Sudheendra Kulkarni, and Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, among others.

Union Minister Shri Hardeep Singh Puri delivered the 14th Foundation Day Lecture on India's energy security, which marked the highlight of this year's Foundation Day. Ms Neerja Chowdhury, the author of the book *How Prime Ministers Decide*, delivered the 8th Dilip Padgaonkar lecture this year.

PIC's commitment to research remained strong, with the publication of 12 Research Papers and two Issue Briefs. The subject for the issue briefs were: 'India's Hypersonic Pursuit: Navigating Strategic Stability and the New Global Arms Race by Prajakta Garg', and 'India and Bhutan: Exemplary Neighbours', by Ambassador Gautam Bambawale, Praneet Shukla and Mansi Pendhakar. We saw the launch of PIC's book, *Sustainable and Climate Resilient Development for India*, edited by Prof. Amitav Mallik. PIC's fourth and latest book, *Nari Shakti: Indian Women Take Centre Stage*, edited by Dr. Ganesh Natarajan and Dr. Uma Ganesh, was released this year by Ambassador Lakshmi Puri. This book carries contributions from eminent women, including Ms. Anu Aga and Ms. Vandana Chavan, and it celebrates the leadership and achievements of Indian women. The Social Innovation Hub (Social Innovation Lab) also released a playbook, *Social Innovation in Healthcare*,

which focuses on access and affordability in healthcare.

One of the most promising initiatives of the year was the launch of the PIC Research Fellowship Programme for postgraduate scholars, providing them with the opportunity to work with PIC's Distinguished Fellows—including Prof. Abhay Pethe, Dr. Ajit Ranade, Air Marshal Bhushan Gokhale, Amb. Gautam Bambawale, Prof. Gurudas Nulkar, Ms. Juthika Patankar, Dr. Ravi Pandit, Lt Gen Shamsher Singh Mehta, and Mr. Vijay Gokhale. Their mentorship ensures that a new generation of public policy thinkers will emerge from this ecosystem.

New partnerships and collaborations also blossomed this year with the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF), the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE), Symbiosis International University, and several other institutions. PIC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA), marking an ongoing, long-term research partnership. Under this MOU, PIC and YASHADA have collaborated on the Maharashtra Finance Project, which was presented to the then chief Secretary to the Government of Maharashtra, Dr. Nitin Kareer. Many such impactful projects are envisioned for the future under this partnership.

Joint events and research discussions across these platforms have enriched PIC's reach and impact. Meanwhile, our regional engagement continued through the Marathi series, Pune Samwad, and the informal PIC ADDA discussions, thanks to the tireless efforts of our members and conveners.

As of 31st March 2025, PIC's total membership stood at 530, including 355 Life Members, 59 Institutional Members, and 14 Corporate Members. New members include the School of Inspired Leadership (SOIL), Lend

a Hand India, and ICICI Foundation. We thank all our trustees, committee members, programme conveners, and the dedicated team at the PIC Secretariat, now led by our Director, Maj Gen Nitin Gadkari, and earlier by Abhay Vaidya, for their invaluable contributions throughout the year.

In conclusion, this has been a year of transformation—not only for our physical campus but also for the scope, ambition and energy of PIC's work. We look to the future with renewed confidence and purpose and invite you to remain active participants in this journey of ideas and impact.

Jai Hind!

Raghunath Mashelkar

PhD, President

Vijay Kelkar

PhD, Vice President

Director's Report

It gives me immense pleasure to present to all members my first Director's Report. I joined PIC in January 2025 and was privileged to be on the organising and execution committee for the inauguration of the Centre's new campus. The facility was officially inaugurated on January 26, 2025—India's 76th Republic Day. A long-cherished dream became a reality on that day. It was a moment of immense pride and symbolism for the entire PIC fraternity. What was described as a "larva" by the PIC President and Vice President in last year's Annual Report has now transformed into a "beautiful butterfly"—a brand new, state-of-the-art PIC Campus in Panchwati, Pashan.

Spread across a serene 7-acre site, the new campus features thoughtfully designed spaces, including the Administrative Block, an inspiring Auditorium, an open Amphitheatre, and a welcoming Cafeteria. Beyond mere architecture, these spaces reflect our commitment to fostering dialogue, collaboration, and innovation. They are symbolic of PIC's objective: to expand its sphere of influence with renewed purpose, clarity of vision, and an unwavering determination to contribute meaningfully to public discourse and public policy.

As in previous years, the PIC calendar year 2024–2025 was marked by a vibrant and diverse array of activities. Over the year, PIC hosted 40 programmes—including conversations, book launches, roundtables, and national and international conferences—that saw excellent participation from India and abroad. PIC's flagship events—the Asia Economic Dialogue (AED) 2025 and the National Conference on Social Innovation (NCSI) 2024—were successfully held, further strengthening our reputation as a platform for high-impact dialogue

and thought leadership. The 12th edition of NCSI, held in November 2024, received over 200 applications from social innovators across the nation. Eighteen finalists were selected across the Tribal, Rural, and Urban categories, showcasing innovative solutions to some of India's and the world's most pressing challenges.

In February 2025, the 6th edition of the MEA-PIC Asia Economic Dialogue, themed 'Economic Resilience in an Era of Fragmentation', was inaugurated by Union Minister Piyush Goyal. The conference featured over 40 distinguished speakers—including academicians, policymakers, and industry experts from nine countries—who engaged in lively discussions on critical global issues such as artificial intelligence, African transformation, sustainable development, cybersecurity, MSMEs, and the Blue Economy.

The fiscal year began with an engaging book discussion in April 2024, featuring journalist and author Shastri Ramachandran, who discussed his work, *Beyond Binaries: The World of India and China*, setting the tone for a series of intellectually stimulating events at PIC. Throughout the year, we hosted several distinguished personalities who shared insightful perspectives on contemporary issues of significance. Among the highlights were political scientist Prof. Suhas Palshikar's incisive analysis of the political implications of the 2024 general elections, vocalist Pt. Dr. Arun David's talk on the science of ragas, and journalist Kumar Ketkar's address at the inaugural AB Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture.

Subsequent lectures in the 5-part Vajpayee series featured Amb. Sudhir Devare on PM Vajpayee's

approach to foreign policy; eminent scientist Dr. Soumya Swaminathan on the "silent pandemic" of drug-resistant TB; and Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, who delivered PIC's 14th Foundation Day Lecture on strategies to boost India's energy security. Other speakers in the Vajpayee series included Dr. Vijay Kelkar and Dr. Ajit Ranade, who, in a conversation, reflected on Vajpayee-era economic reforms; politician and columnist Sudheendra Kulkarni, who spoke on PM Vajpayee's enduring relevance; and former Rajya Sabha MP Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, who discussed Vajpayee's contributions in advancing India's soft power.

At the 8th Dileep Padgaonkar Memorial Lecture, political commentator Neerja Chowdhury delivered a compelling address on the challenges of political decision-making at the top.

The year 2024 concluded with the final lecture in PIC's well-received 11-part series on 'India and the World's Great Religions', delivered by Sufi scholar Sumit Paul. PIC is working on converting the lecture series into a book.

In January 2025, the inauguration of the new PIC Auditorium was marked by a mesmerising Hindustani classical concert by vocalist Pt Ulhas Kashalkar. In March, social activist and anti-trafficking crusader Sunitha Krishnan delivered a powerful talk at the launch of her latest book, *I am What I Am*. The talk, held at the PIC auditorium, drew a large audience, with many attendees unable to find a seat seen sitting on the floor. She ended to a standing ovation from all present.

2024 was the hottest year on record, with devastating wildfires and climate change-induced natural disasters reported worldwide. Against this backdrop, the EECC

(Energy, Environment, and Climate Change)/C-SEM (Centre for Sustainable Mobility) vertical of PIC organised the Youth Climate Action Nexus (YouCAN) 2.0 Conference, preceded by a well-attended and spirited Climate Emergency Debate Competition held for college students at the PIC Campus. You-CAN 2.0 was followed by a day-long EECC Conference on Climate Emergency at the PIC auditorium, where renowned ecologist Dr. Madhav Gadgil gave a thought-provoking lecture on the perils of unchecked development and environmental degradation. These events provided a platform for the next generation to voice their concerns, explore solutions, and affirm their role in the global climate movement.

The PIC Research Fellowship Programme, launched at the end of the previous financial year, gained traction in 2024-2025, attracting submissions from scholars across India. During the year, a total of 12 research papers were published under PIC's various verticals, covering topics including India's export potential, mental health, geopolitics, artificial intelligence, environmental sustainability, the electric vehicle transition, urbanisation, and education.

A Social Innovation Hub (SI Hub, formerly Social Innovation Lab) initiative launched in February 2024 was a YouTube interview series titled 'Beyond Profit Perspectives', where CSR heads of renowned organisations shared valuable insights with social entrepreneurs. SI Hub also unveiled its second playbook, *Social Innovation in Healthcare*—an insightful guide for founders of startups in the healthcare sector.

With the new campus in place and key initiatives underway under PIC's verticals—the Comprehensive Centre for National Security, Centre for Sustainable Energy and Mobility (C-SEM, formerly EECC—Energy,

Environment and Climate Change), Centre for Culture, the Centre is poised for an even more impactful Federalism and Multilevel Governance; Geopolitics and productive year ahead. and Geoeconomics; Social Innovation Lab, and Art and

Thank You.

Maj Gen Nitin Gadkari (Retd.)

Inauguration of the new PIC Campus at Pashan



Top: Dr. Mashelkar delivering the opening remarks and reading out The Dalai Lama's message; seated (L to R) are Mr. Prashant Girbane, Dr. Vijay Kelkar, and Mr. Ravi Pandit. Bottom: Dr. Vijay Kelkar addressing the audience in the amphitheatre (Detailed report inside)

Birth of a New Landmark: Infrastructure

PIC moved to its new premises on the 26th of January 2025. After about thirteen and a half years, the idea found its base. The concept called PIC found abode in Panchwati, Pashan, amidst the rich knowledge cluster of Pune city: 'Where knowledge grows and minds churn, where what you know is more important than what you own, where you stand is more important than where you sit, where what you can give to Pune is more important than what you can get'. PIC was born with such noble thoughts and in January 2025 it found a home to rest its voice. After the Government of Maharashtra realised the potential of PIC and granted it land on lease to build for itself a knowledge Centre of international standards, PIC got more than a home. It gave Pune a place where knowledge can coexist with nature and where art can flourish with science. The new campus of PIC is a place where all come and applaud for the sheer brilliance of the idea and the audacity of hope.

The campus as it stands has an administrative building which houses the administrative office, the research wing, the President's and Vice President's rooms, the board rooms, a social innovation lab, and a library space to be jealous of. The open and spacious central lobby is adorned with the famous Buddha statue in the Bhoomi Sparsh pose. Carved from black granite, it reflects the culture of the Centre. Serene and meditative. A 194-seater auditorium stands to the east of the administrative building and adorning the space to its south is a 350-seater amphitheatre.

The rest of the campus is still under construction. Amidst the buildings which await completion is the 600-seater Convention Hall that lies to the east of the plaza path. The café and member's area lie to the west of the plaza and the three-storey office building at the SE end of the campus land. Once completed, phase 1 of the construction work would be over and the campus will be fully operational to hold seminars and conferences.

When the above is done, PIC would have realised a part of its dream.



Top: The audience in the Amphitheatre during the Campus inauguration. Bottom: The inauguration of the PIC Auditorium on March 5 with a musical concert by Pt Ulhas Kashalkar

Mandate

Pune has always been a city of learning, scholarship, liberal values, enlightened thinking and action, and prides itself in being home to thought leaders from all walks of life.

What this great city missed was a meeting point and a place for all such thought leaders and doers to come together in an intellectually stimulating and peaceful environment, where enlightened discussions and debates could be held about the future of this city, this great nation, and the world. Other cities have such meeting places. In New Delhi, for example, the India International Centre (IIC) provides such an ambience. Over almost half a century, it has played a unique cultural and intellectual role in the life of New Delhi's citizens. On similar lines, Goa hosts the International Centre, Goa (ICG) and Bengaluru hosts the Bangalore International Centre.

Individuals with a distinguished record of public service in India and abroad conceived the idea of an international centre in Pune. The idea of setting up the Pune International Centre (PIC) received prompt and enthusiastic support.

Aware of the city's role during the freedom struggle, its pioneering contribution to social reforms and liberal politics, its reputation as a crucible of educational, scientific, literary and artistic endeavours, and its emergence as a centre of high-end entrepreneurial activity, the founders were determined to preserve, enrich and enlarge this legacy. As time progressed, more eminent people joined them and soon the idea gathered momentum. PIC, they reckoned, would provide a platform to all and, in particular, to younger generations who wish to promote innovative, progressive thinking in all fields of public life.

PIC is registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 and the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950.

Aims & Objectives of PIC

The objectives for which the Centre is formed are:

Research:

To promote public policy research and advocacy.

Provide a platform for discussion:

To create a platform for open discussion and for stimulating debates by mobilising the intellectual resources with which the city of Pune is so richly endowed.

Build future leadership which will help eradication of poverty in future:

To promote activities and programmes with strong emphasis on involvement of youth so as to help build future leadership and to inspire a new generation to create positive social change based on the eternal human values enshrined in the UN Charter and the Indian Constitution which will further help in eradicating poverty amongst society by providing better ideas and opportunities which will also enable quality amongst people at large.

Educate:

To undertake, organise and facilitate study Courses, Conferences, Seminars, and Lectures in matters relating to the all-round socio-economic and cultural development of the city of Pune in particular, and the nation in general.

Publications:

To undertake, facilitate and provide for the publication of newsletters, research papers and books, and of a journal for the exposition of emerging cultural and socio-economic patterns and values.

Libraries:

To establish and maintain libraries and information services to facilitate the spread of new information and knowledge and also the study of world cultures and socio-economic conditions.

To provide sustainable solutions through Policy Research and the support of social projects that facilitate employment generation.

To promote and uphold the social causes of:

- a) public health and health care (including preventive health) and sanitation.
- b) making available safe drinking water
- c) education, including special and vocational education
- d) gender equality and empowering women
- e) environmental sustainability, ecological balance, protection of flora and fauna, animal welfare, agroforestry, conservation of natural resources and maintaining quality of soil, air and water
- f) protection of national heritage, art and culture including restoration of buildings and sites of historical importance and works of art; setting up public libraries; promotion and development of traditional arts and handicrafts.

Scholarships and Awards:

To offer prizes and to grant scholarships where possible in furtherance of the objectives of the Centre.

To provide a forum for the promotion of all arts including visual, performing and design arts and also literature.

To do or get done all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of the above aims and objectives.

Section A

Membership

Trustees – 24
Mr. Ajit Nimbalkar
Dr. Ajit Ranade
Prof. Amitav Mallik
Mr. Anil Supanekar
Mr. Arun Firodia
Air Marshal Bhushan Gokhale (Retd)
Dr. Ganesh Natarajan
Amb. Gautam Bambawale (Retd)
Mr. Mukesh Malhotra
Dr. Narendra Jadhav
Dr. Nitin Kareer
Mr. Prashant Girbane
Mr. Pratap G Pawar
Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar
Dr. Ravi Pandit
Mr. Satish Magar
Mr. Suresh Pingale
Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar
Mr. Vijay Gokhale
Dr. Vijay Kelkar
Lt Gen Vinayak Patankar (Retd)
Additional Chief Secretary (Planning), Maharashtra
Divisional Commissioner, Pune
Director General, YASHADA, Pune

Honorary Members – 20
Dr. Abhay Bang
Ms. Arundhati Bhattacharya
Dr. Ashok Ganguly
Prof. Avinash Dixit
Mr. Chandu Borde
Prof. CNR Rao
Dr. Fareed Zakaria
Mr. Javed Akhtar
Prof. M M Sharma
Prof. Madhav Gadgil
Mr. Mohan Agashe
Mr. Nandan Nilekani
Dr. Prabha Atre
Mr. Rahul Dravid
Mr. Sachin Tendulkar
Ms. Sai Paranjpye
Ms. Shabana Azmi
Ms. Suman Kirloskar
Mr. Sunil Gavaskar
Ms. Vijaya Mehta

Institutional Members – 59

Alliance Française de Pune, Maharashtra

Azim Premji Foundation, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, Pune

Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune

College of Engineering, Pune (COEP)

DES, Institute of Management Development and Research, Pune

Equal Opportunity Foundation, Pune

Fergusson College, Pune

FLAME University, Pune

Forum of Federations, Ottawa, Canada

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE), Pune

India Development Foundation (IDF), Gurgaon

India Habitat Centre (IHC), New Delhi

Indian Institute for Human Settlement (IIHS), Bengaluru

Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA), Gujarat

Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER), Kolkata, West Bengal

Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER), Mohali, Punjab

Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER), Pune

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhilai, Chhattisgarh

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, Mumbai, Maharashtra

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Gandhinagar, Gujarat

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Goa

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee, Uttarakhand

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), New Delhi

Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata

Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT), Mumbai

Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Pune

Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Bangalore

K E M Hospital and Research Centre, Pune

Lend a Hand India, Pune
MAEER's MIT School of Government (MIT-SOG), Pune
Mahratta Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA), Pune
National Academy of Defence Financial Management (NADFM), Pune
National AIDS Research Institute (NARI), Pune
National Centre for Cell Sciences (NCCS), Pune
National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), Pune
National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), Delhi
National Innovation Foundation – India (NIF), Gandhinagar
National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM), Pune
National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), New Delhi
National Insurance Academy (NIA), Pune
Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), New Delhi
Pravara Institute of Medical Sciences (Deemed University), Ahmednagar, Maharashtra
Prayas Energy Group (PEG), Pune
Progressive Education Society, Pune
Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU), Pune
School of Inspired Leadership (SOIL), Gurgaon
Science and Technology Park (STEP), Pune
Shree Chanakya Education Society (Indira Group of Institutions), Pune
Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey (SNDT) Women's University, Mumbai
Sir Parshurambhau College (SP College), Pune
Society of Civil Servants, Pune
Sri Balaji Society, Pune
Symbiosis International University (SIU), Pune
Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai
The Agri Horticultural Society of Western India (Empress Garden), Pune
Venture Center, Pune
Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR), Pune
Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA), Pune

Corporate Members – 14

BP Exploration (Alpha) Ltd, New Delhi

Cairn Energy India Pvt Ltd, Haryana

Deccan Mechanical and Chemical Industries Pvt Ltd (DEMECH), Pune

Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC), Mumbai

Huawei Telecommunications (India) Co. Pvt Ltd, Haryana

ICICI Foundation

JSW Steel Ltd, Mumbai

Larsen & Toubro Ltd, Mumbai

National Stock Exchange of India, Mumbai

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), Mumbai

Petronet LNG Ltd

Reliance Industries Ltd, Mumbai

Tata Chemicals Ltd, Mumbai

Tata Consultancy Services, Mumbai

Section B

Programmes

A total of **40 programmes** including conversations, book releases, roundtables and national and international conferences were held, with excellent participation from India and abroad.

The following pages contain a review of the events held from April 2024 to March 2025.

APRIL 2024

PICT organised **three** main events and a press conference in April. These included a book discussion on Mr. Shastri Ramachandaran's *Beyond Binaries: The World of India and China*, a PIC ADDA session on cybersecurity, and a symposium on promoting India-Taiwan Business Relations. A press conference was also held to share details of the proposed 'Project JAL MULYA', an initiative aimed at promoting Pune's water security.

Book discussion on *Beyond Binaries: The World of India and China*

April 4



L to R: Mr. Shastri Ramachandaran and Air Marshal Bhushan Gokhale during the book discussion

On April 4, 2024, Pune International Centre (PICT) in collaboration with Symbiosis School of Economics organised a book discussion with veteran journalist and author Shastri Ramachandaran on his book *Beyond Binaries: The World of India and China*.

The event, held at Symbiosis Vishwabharan in Pune, was chaired by PICT Trustee Air Marshal (Retd) Bhushan Gokhale.

In his talk, Mr. Ramachandaran shared firsthand experiences from his tenure as a journalist in China, offering insights into the intricate dynamics of India-China relations and their profound impact on shaping the global economy. He also shed light on China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and drew comparisons with India's 'Digital India' campaign.

He spoke about China's view on India, the 1962 war, and the roles of countries, including the US, UK, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Mongolia, and Myanmar, in shaping the India-China dynamics. He observed that it is the "binaries" that fuel conflicts, and not the other way round.

Air Marshal Gokhale addressed the media's coverage of China and its impact on public perception and opinion. He recounted his experiences of visiting China and interacting with the Chinese public.

The programme was followed by a lively Q&A session. Dr. Chandani Tiwari of Symbiosis School of Economics delivered the vote of thanks.

PIC ADDA: Elements of Institutional Response for Cyber Security

April 20



Mr. Nandkumar Saravade speaking at the PIC ADDA

The PIC ADDA discussion, titled 'Elements of Institutional Response for Cyber Security', featured Mr. Nandkumar Saravade, Senior Advisor, Governance, Strategy, Ethics and Cyber Security, as the keynote speaker. Chaired by Dr. Sangeeta Kale, Professor in Physics at the Defence Institute of Advanced Technology (DIAT), DU, DRDO, the session, which was exclusively for PIC members, gave insights on the key elements of cyber security.

Mr. Saravade highlighted that at stake is not only national security and democracy but also economic competitiveness, the integrity of critical infrastructure, trust in financial systems, the quality of life for citizens, and the realisation of the digital potential. Outlining short-term and long-term risks and their interconnectedness, he stressed the need for a holistic approach to cyber security preparedness.

On the many challenges of securing smart cities in the evolving urban landscape, he noted that security challenges such as poor encryption, shortage of skilled workforce, privacy breaches and disruptions in city operations should be addressed.

He concluded that measuring "cyber maturity" should encompass legal, technical, organisational, capacity development, and cooperation dimensions that are needed for institutions to gauge and enhance their readiness in the face of evolving cyber threats.

Press Conference on 'Project JAL MULYA' for Pune's water security

April 25



Mr. Dinanath Kholkar addressing the press conference

PIC on April 25 organised a press conference to share details of the proposed "Project JAL MULYA: Promoting sustainable and efficient use of water through cost price approach."

Aimed at promoting sustainable and efficient use of water through cost-price approach to achieve water security for Pune Metropolitan Region (PMR), the project is a collaborative effort of PIC; Centre for Sustainable Development (Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics); and Pune Knowledge Cluster, supported by the O/O Principal Scientific Advisor, GOI; Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad civic bodies; industry sector; NGOs; community-based organisations; and individuals operating in and around Pune district. The project envisioned experts from various fields working together to conduct critical economic evaluation of water availability, distribution and consumption in Pune city.

Addressing the conference, Mr. Dinanath Kholkar, Research Track Lead, Science Technology & National Innovation Ecosystem, PIC, said that despite the efforts by governments and administrations, water supply and treatment projects often operate at a loss due to lax revenue generation and enforcement of user charges. The project aims to test the hypothesis that citizens perceive water prices to be lower than the actual costs, considering economic externalities. It also seeks to establish the true cost of water services borne by administrative bodies. The ultimate goal is to develop a standardised template for nationwide use in India. Also present were Mr. Siddharth Desai, Joint MD, Kishor Pumps and member, PIC; Dr. Ashwini Keskar, Programme Manager, Sustainability and Environment; and Dr. Gurudas Nulkar, Director, Centre for Sustainable Development, Gokhale Institute of Politics & Economics.

Symposium on 'Promoting India-Taiwan Business Relations'

April 30



Left photo (L to R): Prof. Dhanmanjiri Sathe; Dr. Vijay Kelkar; Mr. Abhay Vaidya; Mr. Dinanath Kholkar; and Mr. Manoj Soman; **Right photo (L to R):** Ms. Koena Lahiri; Dr. Ajit Ranade; Air Marshal (Retd) Bhushan Gokhale; and Mr. Madhukar Kotwal

On April 30, PIC, in collaboration with the Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research (CIER) and the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) as the knowledge partner, convened a symposium on 'Promoting India-Taiwan Business Relations'. Dr. Ajit Ranade, noted economist and Trustee, PIC, opened the event by emphasising the global significance of the India-Taiwan relationship. Dr. Wang Jiann-Chyuan, Vice President of CIER, initiated the discussion from Taiwan's perspective.

Mr. Manoj Soman, an Analog, RF, Mixed-Signal VLSI, and DSP Architect, made a presentation on 'India-Taiwan Cooperation in Building the Semiconductor Ecosystem in India'.

Mr. Dinanath Kholkar provided an overview of India's business opportunities, particularly in Generative AI and the country's space development. He discussed India's digital growth, highlighting government initiatives and India's position as the third-largest tech startup ecosystem.

Ms. Kristy Sun-Tzu Hsu, Director of the Taiwan ASEAN Studies Centre (TASC) at CIER, addressed the promotion of India-Taiwan partnerships in the digital era. She underscored the timely opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations, providing insights into Taiwan's investment in India, the effects of the trade war, and potential areas for cooperation, including Taiwan's global semiconductor sector. Dr. Chih Yen Tai, Associate Research Fellow at CIER, explored India-Taiwan cooperation in the electric vehicle (EV) sector.

The presentations were followed by a dynamic Q&A session. Dr. Vijay Kelkar delivered the concluding remarks and Mr. Abhay Vaidya, (former) Director, PIC, offered the vote of thanks.

MAY 2024

May featured **three** main events, including roundtable discussions on 'Democratic Decentralisation and Strengthening Local Government' and 'CSR in Education Sector', and the unveiling of SI Hub's *Social Innovation in Healthcare* playbook.

Roundtable on 'Democratic Decentralisation and Strengthening Local Government'

May 3



Dr. Ajit Ranade and Dr. Vijay Kelkar during deliberations with participants at the roundtable

Experts from various fields gathered for a roundtable on 'Democratic Decentralisation and Strengthening Local Government', jointly organised by PIC and GIPE. Held at the Bajaj Conference Hall, MCCIA Trade Tower, the event was chaired by Dr. Vijay Kelkar. Discussions centred on the role, challenges, and opportunities of local government bodies in both rural and urban areas, focusing on service delivery and fostering vibrant democracies.

The sessions were on 'Multilevel Governance Structure and Institutional Structure', chaired by Prof. Pradeep Apte, Senior Fellow at PIC, and 'Capacity Building, Resource Requirements, and Political Economy', chaired by Ms. Juthika Patankar, PIC Member and former IAS officer (UP cadre). Mr. Sunil Kumar, PIC Member and former Secretary of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, stressed the importance of strengthening local democratic governance, highlighting challenges in delivering services like electricity and jobs through local bodies.

Prof. Apte discussed the political and financial challenges in local government, emphasising the overlap of departmental responsibilities and the need to enhance administrative capacity. Mr. T. R. Raghunandan, former IAS officer and ex-Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, shared his decentralisation consultancy experience and challenges in multi-level governance systems.

The discussions covered decentralisation, rural governance, resource allocation, and community participation in governance. Key speakers included Mr. Sumit Bose, former IAS officer (MP cadre); Prof. Abhay Pethe, PIC Member; Mr. Chandrashekhar Pran, Convener of Teesari Sarkar Abhiyan; Dr. Joy Elamon, Director of the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA); Mr. Ashok Datar, Transport Analyst and Economist; Mr. Anish Kumar of Transform Rural India; and Mr. Anand Iyer of the Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy.

The roundtable, featuring experts from academia, former bureaucrats, leaders of national and international organisations, and members of PIC and GIPE, aimed to deepen understanding of local governance issues, explore solutions, and develop a policy research plan on democratic decentralisation. Dr. Ajit Ranade delivered the valedictory remarks.

SI Hub's Social Innovation in Healthcare playbook unveiled

May 15



Dr. Vijay Kelkar (**5th from left**) during the launch of the playbook. (**L to R**) Ms. Archita Joshi (Research Analyst, SI Hub [formerly SI Lab], PIC); Mr. Neeraj Thakur, Head, SI Hub; Mr. Gireendra Kasmalkar, Founder, Ideas to Impact; Mr. Pramod Athalye, Co-founder, Bourton Consulting India; Mr. Anil Kulkarni, Strategy and Leadership Coach; Mr. Ram Iyer, Trustee and Administrator, Swadhaa School; and Ms. Samruddhi Isave, (former) Programme Coordinator, SI Hub, PIC

PIC on May 15, 2024, unveiled its pioneering playbook, *Social Innovation in Healthcare – Enabling Access and Affordability*, marking a significant milestone in sustainable practices. The event was presided over by Dr. Vijay Kelkar. The playbook, from PIC's Social Innovation Lab (SI Hub), is a guide that shares insights, patterns, and lessons learnt, providing a valuable resource for founders working on similar themes. With eight stories of social enterprises in the healthcare sector, it mentions important patterns and lessons from the experiences of other startups to keep in mind when running a startup.

Roundtable on 'CSR in Education Sector'

May 28



Clockwise from top left: Mr. Dinanath Kholkar and Mr. Abhay Vaidya, and participants at the roundtable conference

PIC's SI Hub organised a roundtable conference on 'Corporate Social Responsibility in Education Sector', on May 28, 2024.

Attended by CSR heads from Volkswagen, KPIT, Persistent, Thermax, and other companies, along with social entrepreneurs and special invitees, the conference highlighted the need for key stakeholders in the education sector to collaborate with the corporate sector, social entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders for the betterment of education.

Moderated by Mr. Dinanath Kholkar, the conference sought to understand the initiatives of the CSR companies and foster collaboration through learning and sharing, and discuss the challenges that need to be addressed, including the pressing issue of funding.

JUNE 2024

In June, **four** main events were held, including the launch of PIC's first self-published book, *Sustainable and Climate Resilient Development for India*. The month also featured lectures on 'Political Implications of Elections 2024' (by Prof. Suhas Palshikar) and 'Science & Music' (by Pt Dr. Arun Dravid), along with a PIC ADDA session on 'Trending Cyber Crimes and the new Digital India Act'.

PIC's first self-published book launched on World Environment Day

June 5



Top L to R: Prof. Amitav Mallik, Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, and Dr. Ajit Ranade at the event. **(Bottom L)** Dr. Gurudas Nulkar moderating the panel discussion; also seen in the photo are **(seated L to R)** Ms. Aditi Kale, Dr. Nitant Mate, Dr. Priyadarshini Karve, Ms. Megha Phadkay, and Ms. Shalvi Pawar.

PIC marked World Environment Day (June 5) with the launch of its first self-published book, *Sustainable and Climate Resilient Development for India*, edited by Prof. Amitav Mallik, Head, EECC, and Trustee, PIC.

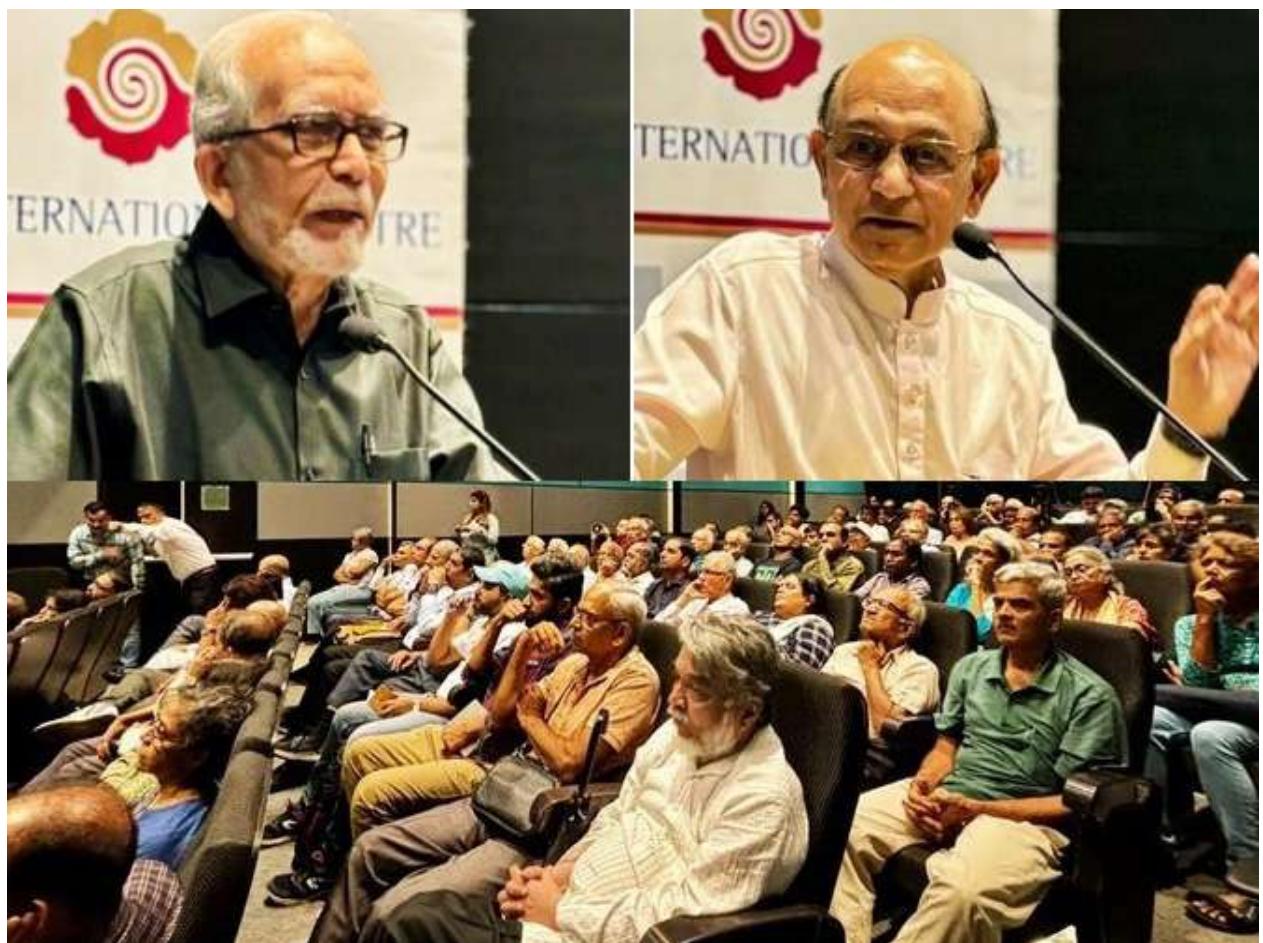
The 11-chapter volume was ceremoniously launched by Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar in the presence of the authors, and Special Guest Dr. Ajit Ranade and Mr. Abhay Vaidya.

The speakers conveyed the urgent need to act on climate change to ensure survival of future generations. Pointing to the 50-plus degree Celsius heat experienced in Delhi and elsewhere, Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar said we are already feeling the impact of climate change and it threatens future generations. Prof. Mallik said climate change is "real", emphasising the need to evolve a "green GDP". Dr. Ajit Ranade cautioned that by causing environmental damage we are "stealing" our children's future.

A panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Gurudas Nulkar (author, Senior Fellow at PIC), featured Dr. Nitant Mate (Partner at SeeGreen Solutions), Dr. Priyadarshini Karve (Founder Director of Samuchit Enviro Tech), Ms. Aditi Kale (Director at CCP Environmental Foundation), Ms. Megha Phadkay (formerly Climate Policy researcher at PIC), and Ms. Shalvi Pawar (formerly Research Associate at PIC). Among the authors featured in the book are Dr. Ejaz Ghani (former Lead Economist at World Bank) and Mr. Ajay Shankar (Distinguished Fellow at TERI). The programme was anchored by Ms. Sanika Potnis.

Lecture on 'Political Implications of Elections 2024', by Prof. Suhas Palshikar

June 13



Prof. Suhas Palshikar (L) and Mr. Mukund Sangoram at the lecture

On June 13, 2024, one of India's foremost political scientists, Prof. Suhas Palshikar, delivered a lecture on 'Political Implications of Elections 2024'. The event was chaired by senior journalist Mr. Mukund Sangoram, former Resident Editor of Loksatta.

Prof. Palshikar gave an analysis of the election results and its implications. Mr. Sangoram spoke about the dynamics of the election results. The discussion was followed by a lively Q&A session.

Lecture on 'Science & Music', by Pt (Dr.) Arun Dravid

June 15



(Top) Dr. Arun Dravid (L) delivering the lecture as Prof. Pradeep Apte looks on.

On Saturday, June 15, Pt (Dr.) Arun Dravid, a Chemical Engineer and an accomplished vocalist of the Jaipur-Atrauli Gharana, delivered a fascinating talk on the science behind the ragas in classical Indian music. The event was chaired by Prof. Pradeep Apte.

Prof. Dravid discussed the manner in which the 12 notes of the octave are related to the base note Sa, and to each other by their frequencies. He explained the slight frequency differences between the Indian and the Western scales. Dr. Mashelkar shared memories of his long friendship with Dr. Dravid. The lecture was followed by a Q&A session.

PIC ADDA on 'Trending Cyber Crimes and the new Digital India Act'

June 29



Adv. Vaishali Bhagwat (R) and Dr. Sangeeta Kale at the PIC ADDA session

The PIC ADDA session, titled 'Trending Cyber Crimes and the new Digital India Act,' featured Adv. Vaishali Bhagwat, member, PIC, and a distinguished civil and cyber lawyer with 24 years of experience.

The session, chaired by Dr. Sangeeta Kale, Professor in Physics at DIAT, delved into the dynamic landscape of cybercrimes and India's evolving legal framework. Adv. Bhagwat outlined the primary cyber crimes prevalent in India and spoke about the motivations behind them.

A highlight of the discussion was the pressing issue of data privacy. Adv. Bhagwat urged attendees to prioritise vigilance in protecting personal data.

The session underscored the prevalence of social media harassment and the inadequate preparedness of youngsters in managing online complexities, often resulting in adverse consequences. The event concluded with discussion on the Digital India Act.

JULY 2024

In July, **three** events were held, including a roundtable on 'Social Innovation in the Tribal Sector', a Pune Samwad featuring a panel discussion on 'Roads and Waterlogging: Challenges and Solutions', and a discussion on Union Budget 2024.

Roundtable on 'Social Innovation in the Tribal Sector'

July 2



Participants during discussions at the roundtable

PIC's Social Innovation Lab on July 2 hosted a roundtable on 'Social Innovation in the Tribal Sector'. Experts and practitioners discussed the challenges and opportunities within tribal communities and underscored the need for a community-based approach and local engagement for the development of tribal communities.

PIC General Secretary Mr. Prasant Girbane underscored the Centre's commitment to fostering innovations that impact tribal lives, stressing that their initiatives are not limited to traditional NGO roles but aim to drive innovation across the country. Mr. Abhay Vaidya gave an overview of PIC and its activities and publications. Mr. Ram Iyer, an SI Hub mentor, outlined the Social Enterprise Mentorship Programme (SEMP) and spoke about the need to foster innovation across the country, stressing on solutions "by the tribal, for the tribal."

Key speakers included Mr. Proteek Kundu from NeevJivan Foundation, Mr. Madhav Sathe from Rajgurunagar Tribal Area, and Mr. Pratap Gaikwad from Dahanu Tribal School, who addressed challenges such as in educational improvements, water storage solutions, and skill development in agriculture.

Ms. Rashmi Tiwari of Aahan Foundation spoke about preventing tribal youth from turning to Naxalism and about promoting women's entrepreneurship. Mr. Milind Thatte from TEER & Vayam highlighted upgraded labour opportunities, while Mr. Ganesh Neelam from Tata Trusts focused on empowering women through the Lakhpati Kisan programme.

Ms. Anjali Deshpande from Drishti Stree Adhyayan Prabodhan Kendra discussed issues like migration of girls and

the need for better government scheme implementation. Mr. Gyan Prakash from the SBI Foundation addressed project continuity and career guidance for tribal youth. Ms. Rajashree Joshi from BAIF emphasised problem-solving innovations and Mr. Mansur Khorasi from Dilasa Sansthan focused on irrigation projects and partnerships with tribal communities. Ms. Shreya Kothawale highlighted efforts to promote tribal culture through tourism.

Discussions spanned education, skill development, livelihood diversification, agriculture, art, culture, heritage preservation, and leveraging technology for market connectivity. The session concluded with a call for offensive policies, customer-centric approaches, and public consultation to drive sustainable growth and positive change in the tribal sector.

Pune Samwad – Panel Discussion: 'Roads and Waterlogging: Challenges and Solutions (रस्ते आणि पाणीतुंबारा: आव्हाने आणि उपाययोजना)'

July 19



Top L to R: Panellists Dr. Gurudas Nulkar, Mr. Sarang Yadwadkar, Mr. Vivek Kharwadkar, Mr. Mahesh Zagade, Mr. Shirish Kembhavi, and Ms. Poorva Keskar at the discussion

PIC organised its Pune Samwad, titled 'रस्ते आणि पाणीतुंबारा: आव्हाने आणि उपाययोजना (Roads and Waterlogging: Challenges and Solutions)', on July 19, 2024.

Experts and citizens at the discussion highlighted issues such as inadequate drainage systems, encroachment of nala, low water percolation due to extensive ground concretisation, and poor urban planning as the main factors contributing to recurrent flooding in urban centres such as Pune. They suggested better flood control mapping, dedicated department for flood water management, and positive citizen involvement as ways to tide over the problem.

Mr. Mahesh Zagade, former Principal Secretary, Maharashtra, and Member, PIC, underscored the need to clear and prevent the encroachments of nala and called for clear policies and centralised efforts in development planning. He said there are technological solutions for waterlogging and urged citizens to be proactive in getting the authorities to act and implement the solutions.

Mr. Sarang Yadwadkar, member, Development Plan of Pune City, cautioned that current flood events may just be a preview of future challenges as Pune is vulnerable to climate change-induced cloudbursts.

Mr. Vivek Kharwadkar, architect and town planning expert, stressed on including Pune's unregistered nallas and using engineering solutions in urban planning strategies. Dr. Gurudas Nulkar said urban planners need to have a better idea of water flow channels and the impact of urbanisation on them, adding that hard-flooring has contributed to low water percolation.

Ms. Poorva Keskar, environment consultant, and Director, VK:e Environmental, called for institutional mechanisms for effective implementation of town development plans and a rethink of UDCPR (Unified Development Control and Promotion Regulations, aimed at merging villages into PMC to simplify procedures. The session, moderated by architect and urban designer Mr. Shirish Kembhavi and anchored by PIC member Ms. Swati Raje, Convener, Pune Samwad, concluded with a spirited exchange of ideas from the audience.

Prof. Amitav Mallik urged the audience to contribute their suggestions to PIC and participate actively in shaping urban strategies. "This is a beginning. Let us plan for 2047," he said.

Post Budget 2024 Discussion

July 31



L to R: Dr. Ajit Ranade, Mr. Prashant Girbane, Dr. Rupa Rege, Dr. Sanjay Basu, Dr. K S Hari, and Prof. Pradeep Apte during the panel discussion

In keeping with the tradition of previous years, a post-Budget analysis and discussion of the Union Budget 2024 was organised by PIC on July 31, 2024, in association with GIPE and National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM).

Panellists at the discussion included economists and experts such as Prof. Pradeep Apte; Dr. Rupa Rege (former Chief Economist, L&T); Dr. Sanjay Basu (Professor, NIBM); Mr. Prashant Girbane; and Dr. K S Hari (Professor, GIPE). The discussion was chaired by Dr. Ajit Ranade. The discussion was enriched by two rounds of Q&A with participation from GIPE students and members of the audience.

AUGUST 2024

August saw **five** main events. This included the inaugural 'Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture', a roundtable on 'Urban and Metropolitan Region Governance', the PIC-GIPE lecture on 'Economic Nationalism in Colonial South India' by AR Venkatachalapathy, a roundtable on 'Role of Small Modular Reactors (Nuclear)', and the 2nd Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture on 'PM Vajpayee's Approach to India's Foreign Policy'. In this month, PIC also hosted a delegation of the 16th Finance Commission, led by Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Chairman, 16th Finance Commission.

Inaugural 'Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture Series' August 7



Top: Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar (L) and Mr. Kumar Ketkar during the lecture. **Bottom:** Dr. Vijay Kelkar (L), and a member of the audience raising a question during the Q&A session

PIC on August 7, 2024, launched the 'Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture Series', with a talk by eminent journalist and former Rajya Sabha MP Mr. Kumar Ketkar.

In the hour-long session, Mr. Ketkar shared interesting insights on the persona of the late leader, particularly about the Mr. Vajpayee he had covered as a journalist. Recalling his professional interactions with Mr. Vajpayee when the latter was foreign minister in the 1970s, he said Vajpayee shared a "bonhomie" with journalists. He said Mr. Vajpayee believed in the politics of consensus; had cordial relations with the opposition; and did not participate in L K Advani's Rath Yatra, which he had said was divisive.

A recipient of the Padma Shri in 2001, Mr. Ketkar also spoke about his experience as a member of the Rajya Sabha, and touched upon topics including democracy, liberalisation, communalism, politics, governance, and the media.

Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, who chaired the lecture, highlighted Mr. Vajpayee's humility, tolerance, and empathy and his initiative for conducting Pokhran 2 and also his contributions to science. In his opening remarks, Mr. Abhay Vaidya said Mr. Vajpayee was not only a poet but also a powerful orator who touched our hearts; in the words of his biographer, he was not only a Hindutva Loyalist but also a Liberal Centrist; a coalition builder; a ruthless political tactician; a benevolent father figure, and someone who did not hide his unconventional personal life. The lecture was followed by a lively Q&A session.

Roundtable on 'Urban and Metropolitan Region Governance'

August 12



Dr. Vijay Kelkar chairing the roundtable

PIC, in association with Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE), organised a Roundtable on 'Urban and Metropolitan Region Governance' at the GIPE. This roundtable was the second in a series on multilevel governance and cooperative federalism. A previous discussion was on rural local governance.

The session, chaired by Dr. Vijay Kelkar, brought together experts, delegates and PIC members to explore critical aspects of urban and metropolitan governance. Discussions covered the importance of people's participation in urban governance, status of Constitutional amendments (73rd and 74th) to strengthen rural and urban local self-governance, and the roles of metropolitan region development authorities such as MMRDA and PMRDA, among other related topics.

Participants also deliberated on the way forward for metropolitan governance in terms of planning the economy, infrastructure, and other key aspects, and proposed the setting up of a national commission on urban governance.

Among those present were Dr. Ajit Ranade; Dr. Abhay Pethe; Ms. Juthika Patankar; Mr. Sunil Kumar; Dr. Nitin Kareer, Member, PIC, and former Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra; Mr. Mahesh Zagade; and Mr. Sitaram Kunte, former Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra.

GIPE-PIC lecture on 'Economic Nationalism in Colonial South India', by AR Venkatachalapathy
August 12



Prof. AR Venkatachalapathy speaking at the lecture

In a joint event, PIC and Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics organised a lecture by Prof. AR Venkatachalapathy, Professor at the Madras Institute of Development Studies, on the topic 'Economic Nationalism in Colonial South India: V O Chidambaram Pillai and Swadeshi Shipping, 1906–1911', at the GIPE campus on August 12, 2024.

Roundtable on 'Role of Small Modular Reactors (Nuclear)'

August 22



Vice Admiral D Deshpande addressing the conference

On August 22, PIC organised a roundtable on the role of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) in advancing India's renewable energy goals by 2047. Titled 'Role of Small Modular Reactors (Nuclear) to Enhance India's Clean Renewable Energy Capacity by 2047', the session explored how SMRs could help bridge India's energy gap and transition to cleaner sources.

Prof. Amitav Mallik highlighted the importance of clean energy for India's net-zero emissions goal by 2070. He proposed SMRs as a safe, cost-effective solution, noting the government's inclusion of SMRs in the 2024 Budget as a promising step.

Roundtable Chairperson Vice Admiral D Deshpande AVSM, VSM (Retd) stressed the need for green energy solutions to address rising fossil fuel costs and carbon emissions. He advocated for the inclusion of miniature nuclear reactors in India's tech roadmap, emphasising the role of technological innovation and SMR expertise. Dr. Suresh Gangotra, former Senior Technical Adviser to the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), discussed the benefits and challenges of nuclear reactors, highlighting SMRs' smaller carbon footprint and the importance of India developing its own reactors to navigate international regulatory complexities.

Ms. Sanyukta Chougale, (former) Senior Research Intern at PIC, presented an overview of India's nuclear energy landscape, the feasibility of SMRs, offering actionable recommendations for policymakers. Mr. Madhukar Kotwal, Member, PIC, discussed the various types of SMRs.

Addressing safety concerns, Mr. Ajit Patankar, former Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) scientist, reassured that civilian reactors cannot be converted into weapons. Mr. Sanjay Kirloskar, Chairman of Kirloskar Brothers Ltd,

called for timely policy implementation and effective public communication about nuclear energy, and proposed a public-private partnership (PPP) model.

Concluding the discussion, Dr. Ravi Pandit, Trustee, PIC, recommended that the government manage structural aspects, while the private sector oversees managerial responsibilities. The roundtable highlighted SMRs' transformative potential in India's energy strategy, reflecting a unified push towards a greener, sustainable future.

PIC hosts 16th Finance Commission delegation

August 23



PIC on August 23 hosted a delegation of the 16th Finance Commission, led by Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Chairman, 16th Finance Commission. The delegation members held discussions with Dr. Vijay Kelkar and other members of PIC. On the occasion, PIC's books and GIPE's book on Gopal Krishna Gokhale were presented to the delegation members. **In photo (top):** Dr. Arvind Panagariya (**seated 4th from left**) and Dr. Vijay Kelkar (**seated 5th from left**) with members of the 16th Finance Commission delegation and PIC members and staff.

2nd Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture: 'PM Vajpayee's Approach to India's Foreign Policy'

August 29



Amb. Sudhir Devare (L) and Amb. Madhav Mangalmurti during the lecture

On August 29, the second Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture featured a talk by Amb. Sudhir Devare, former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, on the topic 'PM Vajpayee's Approach to India's Foreign Policy'. The event was chaired by Amb. Madhav Mangalmurti, former diplomat.

Amb. Devare, who was Secretary, MEA, for two years during Mr. Vajpayee's tenure, described the PM as a tall leader, genial, punctual and available.

Amb. Devare said twenty years after Mr. Vajpayee demitted office, his contributions are still remembered. He said Mr. Vajpayee was passionate about foreign affairs and maintained continuity in India's foreign policy during his term as PM, believed in non-alignment, the Gujral doctrine, and in improving relations with India's neighbours, including Pakistan and China. However, he noted, incidents like Kargil and Parliament attack prevented his efforts from bearing fruit.

Amb. Devare said one of Mr. Vajpayee's outstanding decisions was the Pokhran 2 nuclear test conducted a few days after taking charge as PM, where he handled the international fallout deftly and was also graceful to acknowledge the test wasn't the result of only his party or government's efforts.

Amb. Madhav Mangalmurti said moderation and geniality were the defining qualities of Mr. Vajpayee, noting that Vajpayee's greatest decision was to go ahead with Pokran 2 after his predecessor had to back down under US pressure.

The talk was followed by a lively Q&A Session. PIC books were also presented to the Amb. Devare and Amb. Mangalmurti.

SEPTEMBER 2024

In September, **four** events were held, including PIC's 14th Foundation Day Lecture by Union Minister Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, and the third Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture (on 'PM Vajpayee's Economic Reforms'). Other events included a panel discussion on 'The Silent Pandemic' along with the book release of *At the Wheel of Research* (a biography of Dr. Soumya Swaminathan), and the PIC-ORF roundtable on 'India's Response to China in the Next 10 Years'.

Panel Discussion on 'The Silent Pandemic' and Book Release of *At the Wheel of Research*

September 12



L to R: Cover of the book *At the Wheel of Research*; Ms. Anuradha Mascarenhas, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, Dr. Vinay Kulkarni, and **(on screen)** Dr. Gangakhedkar during the release of the book; Dr. Mashelkar felicitating Dr. Mohan Agashe.

On September 12, 2024, PIC organised a panel discussion, titled 'The Silent Pandemic', and the book release of *At the Wheel of Research*, a biography of the eminent scientist Dr. Soumya Swaminathan. The book, by Ms. Anuradha Mascarenhas, Senior Editor, Indian Express, was unveiled by Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar in the presence of the distinguished panellists.

During the panel discussion, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Principal Advisor, Government of India's National TB Elimination Programme, and Chairperson, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, said drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB) is a "silent pandemic" that claims more than 1,000 lives daily in India and millions globally, yet it lacks the attention it warrants.

Highlighting the threat posed to public health by multidrug resistant TB (MDR-TB), she pointed to critical gaps in

the understanding of TB and stressed the need to bridge them to develop a vaccine, and also develop quick tests, advocating for the use of digital technology in these areas. Referring to the misinformation "infodemic" in the age of social media, as was seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Swaminathan, former chief scientist of the World Health Organisation during the COVID-19 pandemic, called for enhanced science literacy in India, starting with schoolchildren.

Dr. Vinay Kulkarni, Coordinator, Health Group, Prayas, and Member, PIC; and Dr. Raman Gangakhedkar, former Head of Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), were the other panellists at the discussion moderated by Ms. Anuradha Mascarenhas. Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar chaired the event and delivered the opening remarks.

Dr. Gangakhedkar described antimicrobial resistance (AMR) as a "silent pandemic" that is related to improper use of antibiotics. On the M-Pox threat, he noted that while human-to-human spread has increased with the emergence of Clade 2, it may not spread very rapidly.

Dr. Vinay Kulkarni highlighted Europe's example in TB elimination and the importance of tackling diseases through community engagement and preventive public health measures rather than fear.

The panel addressed public health threats from non-infectious diseases, including sexually transmitted diseases, and emissions-induced issues as "silent pandemics", urging for enhanced preparedness, and investment in health sector R&D.

During the lively Q&A session, Dr. Mashelkar highlighted the potential of innovation by explaining about a gadget developed by an Anjani Mashelkar Foundation awardee that helps diagnose diseases by analysing a person's cough. Mr. Abhay Vaidya delivered the opening remarks.

PIC-ORF Roundtable

September 13-14



The PIC-ORF Roundtable was held on September 13 and 14, 2024. The closed-door conference discussed 'India's Response to China in the Next 10 Years'.

PIC's 14th Foundation Day Lecture by Union Minister Shri. Hardeep Singh Puri

September 27



Top L to R: Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, and Dr. Vijay Kelkar during the lecture.
Bottom L to R: Dr. Mashelkar and Dr. Kelkar; PIC members Mr. Madhukar Kotwal and Mr. Prashant Khankhoje raising questions during the Q&A session.

On September 27, PIC marked its 14th Foundation Day with a lecture by Chief Guest Shri Hardeep Singh Puri,

Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India.

Speaking on the theme 'Strategy and Measures for Enhancing India's Energy Security in the Coming Decade', the minister said India must prioritise strategic petroleum reserves and focus on exploration and production to reduce its heavy reliance on imported fuels and bolster India's energy security.

He said that with a population of 1.4 billion and India's energy consumption projected to be three times the global average, the country is positioned to be a key player in the global energy landscape.

While asserting his support for bringing petrol and diesel under the Goods and Services Tax (GST), he said there were challenges in achieving this due to the differing interests of different state governments and stressed on the need for consensus among states to make this happen.

On global oil markets, he said there is no shortage of oil globally but rising geopolitical tensions could lead to increased oil prices. Mr. Puri identified availability, affordability, and transition to renewable energy sources as primary challenges to energy security, noting that green hydrogen represents the fuel of the future. As new energy sources emerge, traditional oil cartels will have less influence, he said.

During a lively Q&A session, Mr. Puri fielded audience questions about fuel tariffs, the necessity for India to produce LNG carriers, and inclusion of fossil fuels under GST. Earlier, Mr. Puri was warmly welcomed by Dr. Vijay Kelkar.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar reiterated the importance of reducing India's fuel import bill and advancing renewable energy initiatives. The minister was felicitated by Dr. Mashelkar and Dr. Kelkar, who presented him with PIC publications.

3rd Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture – 'PM Vajpayee's Economic Reforms'

September 30



Dr. Vijay Kelkar (L) and Dr. Ajit Ranade during the event

On September 30, 2024, PIC organised the 3rd Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture, titled 'PM Vajpayee's Economic Reforms'.

In a conversation with Dr. Ajit Ranade, Dr. Vijay Kelkar, who had served as Finance Secretary in the Vajpayee government, said the diplomacy and economic policies of former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee successfully steered India through the years when it faced diplomatic challenges following the Pokhran nuclear tests in May 1998. He said the former PM's economic policies laid the foundation for India's high growth from 2004 to 2010.

Reflecting on his tenures as Finance Secretary and Advisor to the Finance Minister in the Vajpayee government, Dr. Kelkar termed the former PM as "gracious", a "liberaliser", and a believer in consensus, even as he headed a government that had 23 coalition partners.

Dr. Kelkar emphasised the game-changing impact of the Vajpayee government's key initiatives such as the Golden Quadrilateral Highway Project and the PM Gram Sadak Yojana, which significantly enhanced India's infrastructure and productivity. He said the Vajpayee government's introduction of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act of 2003 was a pivotal step towards improving fiscal governance. He highlighted PM Vajpayee's efforts towards making institutions transparent and independent.

Dr. Ranade noted that the Maruti IPO and various corporate reforms under Vajpayee's leadership have been understated in their significance, adding that agriculture remains a largely unreformed sector in India. Mr. Abhay Vaidya delivered the opening remarks. The event featured a short film screening on PM Vajpayee and a lively Q&A session.

OCTOBER 2024

There was **one** event in October—the 4th Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture, by Dr. Sudheendra Kulkarni.

4th Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture, by Dr. Sudheendra Kulkarni

October 19



Top: Dr. Sudheendra Kulkarni (R) and Dr. Mashelkar during the lecture. **Bottom:** Members of the audience raising questions during the Q&A session

On 19 October, PIC hosted the 4th Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture, delivered by Dr. Sudheendra Kulkarni, former Director of Operations in the Prime Minister's Office during Shri Vajpayee's tenure. Describing Vajpayee as a "great son of India", a "quintessential democrat", and "one of the great prime ministers of the country", Dr. Kulkarni explored his enduring relevance in four key areas: democracy, secularism, India-Pakistan relations, and the India-China dispute.

Dr. Kulkarni described Vajpayee as a democrat who believed in cooperation over confrontation, noting that his concept of Coalition Dharma became part of India's political vocabulary. He said Vajpayee institutionalised Centre-state consultations, encouraged parliamentary debate, and welcomed opposition input, earning widespread respect. He was also a staunch Hindu who stood for "positive secularism".

Dr. Kulkarni, who was part of Vajpayee's historic bus yatra to Lahore, explained how despite setbacks like the Kargil War, Vajpayee remained committed to dialogue with Pakistan. He said Vajpayee's approach to Kashmir was based on 'insaaniyat' (humanism) and trust-building through consultation and that his vision for resolving the India-China border dispute included a "packaged solution".

He argued that Vajpayee's legacy remains vital even in the post-Modi era. While acknowledging PM Modi's long-term vision for a developed India by 2047, Dr. Kulkarni stressed that the country must not stray far from the path of Vajpayee and Nehru, calling for India to lead efforts for a more integrated South Asia.

In his welcome address, Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar highlighted Vajpayee's contributions to highways, IT, telecom, and regional and diasporic connectivity. He also introduced Dr. Kulkarni's book *Music of the Spinning Wheel: Mahatma Gandhi's Manifesto for the Internet Age*. Opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Abhay Vaidya. The lecture concluded with a lively Q&A session, and presentation of PIC books to Dr. Kulkarni.

NOVEMBER 2024

Four main events were held in November, including PIC's flagship annual National Conference on Social Innovation (NCSI). The month also witnessed the 5th and concluding lecture of the 'Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture Series' (by Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe), the 8th Dileep Padgaonkar Memorial Lecture, and the launch of PIC's book *Nari Shakti: Indian Women Take Centre Stage*.

5th 'Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture', by Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe

November 8



Top L to R: Dr. Vijay Kelkar presenting the memento to Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe (2nd from left). Also seen are Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar (extreme left) and Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar. **Bottom:** Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe and Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar during the lecture

The fifth and final lecture of the 'Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Birth Centenary Lecture Series' featured an insightful talk by former Rajya Sabha MP Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe. The event, titled 'India's Soft Power and the Legacy of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee', was chaired by Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar, Pro Chancellor of Symbiosis International University.

Dr. Sahasrabuddhe described Shri Vajpayee as one of India's "most beloved" and "popular" prime ministers, who projected India's cultural and democratic values to enhance its global standing as a soft power. He said that under Vajpayee's leadership, India's ethos of peace and harmony gained international resonance, positioning the country as a significant voice on the world stage.

He said Vajpayee's vision of foreign policy was rooted in "good neighbourliness" and the philosophy of "friendship with all and dominance over none", echoing the Indian ideal of vasudhaiva kutumbakam (the world is one family).

Dr. Sahasrabuddhe said Vajpayee saw secularism not just as a Constitutional obligation but as the "signature tune" of Indian civilisation that involved equal respect for all religions. He recalled Vajpayee's caution against overemphasising "composite culture" as India had been secular throughout its recorded history.

He said the promotion of Hindi abroad and the recognition of the Indian diaspora as "ambassadors of India" were Vajpayee's lasting contributions and key to India's cultural diplomacy. He also urged the government to continue the vision of Dr B.R. Ambedkar's idea of a "cultural commonwealth", which Vajpayee supported.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar praised Dr. Sahasrabuddhe's use of the term 'soumya sampada'—a "beautiful expression" that captured the essence of India's soft power. Earlier, Mr. Abhay Vaidya introduced the guest. The lecture concluded with a lively Q&A session.

12th National Conference on Social Innovation

November 17



Top: Dr. Vijay Kelkar, Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar and Ms. Jyotsna Sitling giving away the prizes to winners of the national competition for social innovators at the 12th National Conference on Social Innovation on November 17, 2024. **L to R:** Winners Mr. Tejaram Mali (Tribal Category); Ms. Neelam Pathak (Rural Category); and Ms. Uma Subramanian and Mr. Siddharth Pillai (Urban Category).

Bottom: Presentation of the 14th Anjani Mashelkar Prize to innovator Mr. Partha Pratim Das Mahapatra. **Bottom L to R:** Mr. Sushil Borde, Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, Mr. Partha Das, Mr. Sanjay Kirloskar, Mrs Vaishali Mashelkar, Dr. Vijay Kelkar, and Mr. Prashant Girbane

The 12th National Conference on Social Innovation (NCSI) was held on Sunday, November 17, 2024, at the YASHADA Auditorium, Pune. Nine innovators showcased their projects across three categories—Urban, Rural, and Tribal—with one winner announced in each category.

The winners included Manthan Sanstha in the Tribal category, which works with underprivileged communities in 120 villages across five districts of Rajasthan, led by Mr. Tejaram Mali; Rozgar Dhaba in the Rural category, providing job skilling and safer employment to rural communities, founded by Ms. Neelam Pathak; and RATI Foundation for Social Change in the Urban category, which supports victims of sexual violence, co-founded by Mr. Siddharth Pillai and Ms. Uma Subramanian. Each winner received a cash prize of Rs 50,000 and mentorship

from PIC's Social Innovation Lab. Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar and Dr. Vijay Kelkar presented the awards, with Ms. Jyotsna Sitling also in attendance. The event was a collaboration with the National Innovation Foundation (NIF) and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).

Dr. Mashelkar, in his opening remarks, stressed the need for compassionate equity to support innovators and highlighted the importance of innovation for public good. He encouraged moving beyond best practices to adopt "next practice". Session chairpersons included Ms. Bina Joshi (Forbes Marshall), Mr. Dinanath Kholkar, Ms. Soujanya Venguru (Cummins), Mr. Shashank Kothari (Angel One), Dr. Sujata Deshpande (Thermax Foundation), and Mr. Ram Iyer (Swadhaa School).

Panel discussions introduced this year included one on 'Success Stories of Leading Social Entrepreneurs', with panellists from Blackfrog, Padcare, Rnisarg Foundation, and Trestle Labs, moderated by Mr. Hitendra Singh of Emcure Pharmaceuticals. Another panel, on 'CSR Funding Opportunities', featured representatives from Persistent Systems, Bajaj Finserv, and Flipkart Foundation, and was moderated by Mr. Amit Bhargava of BiofuelCircle. A fireside chat on 'Impact Investing in Social Enterprises' featured Dr. V Premnath (NCL Venture Centre) and Mr. Vishwas Mahajan (Whizable). In her keynote, Ms. Sitling, Member of the Advisory Committee to SEBI on the Social Stock Exchange, discussed 'Democratising Giving: The Role of the Social Stock Exchange'.

NCSI 2024 received over 200 applications from social innovators across the country, showcasing 18 finalists whose ideas were evaluated by a distinguished panel of judges. The event also saw the presentation of the 14th Anjani Mashelkar Prize to Mr. Partha Pratim Das Mahapatra for his innovation, EzeCheck, a non-invasive haemoglobin screening device for testing anaemia. Mr. Sanjay Kirloskar presented the award and discussed the need to eliminate rural poverty to tackle urban poverty. Mr. Sushil Borde, President of the Anjani Mashelkar Foundation, provided an overview of the Foundation's award-winning innovations. Each session concluded with engaging Q&A discussions.

8th Dileep Padgaonkar Memorial Lecture, by Ms. Neerja Chowdhury

November 25



L to R: Dr. R Raman, Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, Ms. Latika Padgaonkar, Ms. Neerja Chowdhury, Dr. S B Mujumdar, and Mr. Abhay Vaidya during the lecture

PIC, in association with Symbiosis International (Deemed University), organised the 8th Dileep Padgaonkar Memorial Lecture, by senior journalist and political commentator Ms. Neerja Chowdhury.

Speaking on the topic, 'Political Decision-Making at the Top: Growing Challenges', Ms. Neerja said some doubt has entered people's mind about electronic voting machines (EVMs) and the issue needs to be reviewed. She said there is no real evidence to support claims made against the reliability of EVMs and the review need not be based only on one particular election. However, the Opposition must turn their protest into a movement so that the issue is resolved once and for all, she added.

Ms. Neerja, who is also the author of *How Prime Ministers Decide*, said the nature of decision-making in India at the top level is "ad hoc" and often guided by immediate compulsions of political survival. Reflecting on the working styles and decisions of past prime ministers from Indira Gandhi to Manmohan Singh, she spoke about how V P Singh's implementation of the Mandal Commission Report was aimed at political survival but had a lasting impact on Indian politics.

She noted that women's awakening is a recent thing, pointing to how schemes such as the Ladki Bahin Yojana helped consolidate the women's vote bank in the recent Maharashtra assembly elections. The flip side of such decisions, she said, is its potential impact on political economy and fiscal prudence. That jobs are not an issue during elections is a paradox, she noted.

She emphasised the need for opposing political parties to work together nationally and engage in dialogue in the parliamentary process by setting aside differences and underscored the need to preserve India's unique diversity by taking all sections of society along, and for leadership that combines colliding factors with vision. Paying tributes to the late Mr. Dileep Padgaonkar, Ms. Neerja said he stood for the best of what media role should be in a democracy.

Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar in his address said Mr. Dileep Padgaonkar was a multifaceted personality who left a phenomenal imprint on Pune, the society, and the country. Dr. S B Mujumdar, Founder and President, Symbiosis, and Chancellor, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), described Mr. Padgaonkar as a "one-man university" to whom no subject was foreign.

Ms. Latika Padgaonkar was present during the proceedings. In her introduction, Ms. Lisa Pingale, one of the founding members of PIC, gave an overview of PIC. Dr. R Raman, Vice-Chancellor, Symbiosis International University, welcomed the guests. Mr. Abhay Vaidya delivered the vote of thanks. The lecture was followed by a lively Q&A session.

Launch of PIC's book *Nari Shakti: Indian Women Take Centre Stage* November 25



Top L to R: Mr. Abhay Vaidya, Ms. Gunjan Bhojwani (Fellow, MCCIA); Ms. Mridula Sankhyayan (Founder and Leadership Coach, VattVriksh Consultants), Ms. Eika Chaturvedi, Dr. Uma Ganesh, Ms. Anu Aga, Ms. Vandana Chavan, Dr. Ajit Ranade, Mr. Dinanath Kholkar, Ms. Mrunal Ghorpure (Lighthouse Communities Foundation), Mr. Prashant Girbane, and **(on screen)** Amb. Lakshmi Puri during the book release.

Bottom L to R: Dr. Uma Ganesh, Ms. Eika Chaturvedi, Ms. Anu Aga, Ms. Vandana Chavan, Dr. Ajit Ranade, and Dr. Ganesh Natarajan during the panel discussion

PIC's fourth and latest book, *Nari Shakti: Indian Women Take Centre Stage*, was launched at the Sumant Moolgaokar Auditorium, MCCIA Trade Tower, SB Road, Pune.

Edited by Dr. Ganesh Natarajan, Founder of 5F World and Lighthouse Communities Foundation, and Chairman of

Honeywell Automation India, and Dr. Uma Ganesh, Founder of Global Talent Track Ltd and GTT Foundation, the volume was ceremonially released by Chief Guest Amb. Lakshmi Puri, former Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations, and author of *Swallowing the Sun: A Novel*, in the presence of Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar. Dr. Vijay Kelkar, Vice President, PIC, joined the proceedings remotely.

Among those present were the book's editors and contributing authors, including Dr. Uma Ganesh; Dr. Ganesh Natarajan; Ms. Anu Aga, renowned philanthropist and former Chairperson, Thermax, who has written the foreword for the book; Ms. Vandana Chavan, former Rajya Sabha MP; Dr. Ajit Ranade; Mr. Prashant Girbane; Mr. Dinanath Khokar; Ms. Eika Chaturvedi, one of India's leading women business leaders and also author of the bestselling 52 Red Pills; Mr. Abhay Vaidya; and other distinguished guests, PIC Trustees, and Members. The event concluded with a panel discussion on the book.

DECEMBER 2024

Two events were held in December. It included a roundtable on 'Sustainable Lighting: Innovations in Energy Conservation' and the concluding lecture (on Sufism) in the 'India and the World's Great Religions' lecture series.

Roundtable on 'Sustainable Lighting: Innovations in Energy Conservation' December 17



Mr. Dinanath Khokar (5th from left) chairing the discussions

On December 17, 2024, the PIC Roundtable on 'Sustainable Lighting: Innovations in Energy Conservation' brought together academia, industry experts, and decision-makers to discuss the latest research, technologies, and regulatory frameworks in the domain.

The conference assumes significance as organisations face increasing pressure to adopt efficient energy practices to offset rising energy costs and also meet sustainability goals. Lighting accounts for a significant portion of commercial energy use and presents an immediate area for impactful improvement. However, optimal lighting solutions involve complex considerations from costs to compatibility with existing infrastructure and balancing user comfort with efficiency.

The roundtable, held at the Finolex Board Room of the MCCIA Tower, was an initiative under PIC's Science, Technology and National Innovation Ecosystem research vertical, headed by Mr. Dinanath Kholkar, and was organised in collaboration with PIC's knowledge partners: Indian Society of Lighting Engineers (ISLE); IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) – Pune Section; IEEE Power and Energy Society; and College of Engineering Pune (COEP) Technological University.

The discussions focused on four areas: Intelligent Lighting for Smarter Living: Leveraging Smart Controls, IoT and automation for energy efficiency; Energy-Smart Lighting Design; Healthy Lights, Healthy Lives: Impact of lighting on health, wellbeing, and the environment; and Lighting for Public Spaces. Also discussed were the success stories under 'Energy Performance Contract'; IEEE and its work in lighting; best practices in daylighting; and lighting education.

Lecture series on 'India and the World's Great Religions' concludes with lecture on Sufism

December 19



Prof. Pradeep Apte (extreme left) presenting a memento to Mr. Paul. Mr. Paul delivering the lecture.

PIC's 11-part lecture series on 'India and the World's Great Religions' concluded on December 19 with a lecture on Sufism by writer and columnist Mr. Sumit Paul.

At the lecture, titled 'The All-encompassing Philosophy of Sufism', Mr. Paul—an independent researcher of

Semitic languages, culture and civilisation, who has lived in Iran and is now based in Pune—said the spirit of Sufi philosophy is needed in today's world of conflict and division. The event was chaired by Prof. Pradeep Apte. On the occasion, late Pune scholar Dr. Charu Gidwani's book *An Anthology of Sindhi Sufi Poetry*, co-authored with French scholar Michel Boivin, was presented by Dr. Charu's brother Mr. Rohitesh Gidwani to the distinguished speakers.

The PIC lecture series has featured talks by Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman on Zoroastrianism; Dr. Abhay Firodia (Jainism); Amb. Pavan Varma (Hinduism); Mr. Wajahat Habibullah (Islam); Prof. Mahesh Deokar (Buddhism); Dr. Sebastian Michael (Christianity); Mr. Elijah Jacob (Judaism); Prof. Sadanand More (Maharashtra's Bhagwat Dharma); Amb. Navtej Sarna (Sikhism); and the late Dr. Shantanu Abhayankar (Atheism). Conceived by Dr. Vijay Kelkar and curated by PIC members Dr. Latika Padgaonkar and Prof. Apte, the lecture series aims to highlight the plurality of the Indian ethos.

In his enlightening lecture, Mr. Paul argued that Sufi philosophy is uniquely positioned to foster pluralism and harmony, as it transcends religious boundaries, imbibing the best from all religions, including Hinduism and Islam. Emphasising that Sufism is not restricted to Islam, he explained that its inclusive nature has historically diminished the militant aspects of the religion.

Mr. Paul discussed the influence of Sufism on art, culture, and music in India and beyond, noting that the growing popularity of Rumi's poetry in the US and Europe was a testament to the universality of Sufi thought.

JANUARY 2025

January featured **three** main events, including the inauguration of the new PIC Campus in Pashan. Other events included a conversation with Ms. Jyotika Athavale on Atmanirbhar Bharat – The Semiconductors Opportunity and a roundtable on delimitation. Additionally, a press conference was held as a curtain raiser for the PIC Campus inauguration.

'Atmanirbhar Bharat – The Semiconductors Opportunity', conversation with Ms. Jyotika Athavale

January 13



Clockwise from top left: Ms. Jyotika Athavale; Dr. Ritu Sodhi and Ms. Jyotika Athavale during the discussion; Dr. Sunil Bhirud, Mr. Rob Anderson, Maj Gen Nitin Gadkari, and Dr. Mashelkar; audience at the event; and the roundtable discussion

On January 13, 2025, PIC, in collaboration with the College of Engineering Pune (COEP) Technological University and the IEEE Pune Section, organised a discussion on 'Atmanirbhar Bharat – The Semiconductors Opportunity'. The session focused on India's ambitions and its emerging role in the global semiconductor industry, emphasising self-reliance and innovation in critical technologies.

The event featured a conversation between Ms. Jyotika Athavale, RAS Director at Synopsys and 2024 President of IEEE Computer Society, and Dr. Ritu Sodhi, session Chairperson and Advisor to SemiX at IIT Bombay. The discussion was attended by Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar and Prof. Sunil Bhirud, Vice Chancellor of COEP Technological University. Ms. Athavale, a global leader in semiconductor innovation, shared insights on advancing semiconductor technologies, workforce development, and the importance of interdisciplinary learning. She urged students to build skills beyond their formal education to prepare for an evolving technological landscape.

Dr. Sodhi discussed India's semiconductor incentives, global collaboration opportunities, and the critical role of

workforce development in sustaining the industry. Dr. Mashelkar highlighted the significance of "Indovation" and praised Ms. Athavale's contributions to technology. He applauded India's semiconductor advancements, including the Tata Electronics fabrication facilities, and encouraged young engineers to embrace the opportunities in building India's technological self-reliance.

Mr. Rob Anderson, Public Diplomacy Officer at the US Consulate General in Mumbai, and Maj Gen Gadkari, Director of PIC, discussed the strategic importance of global partnerships and India's initiatives to become a semiconductor powerhouse. Mr. Dinanath Kholkar presented PIC's initiatives in water security, energy efficiency, and technology-led education. Dr. Bhirud welcomed the guests and provided an overview of COEP's pioneering efforts, including courses in VLSI, AI, and Intelligent Communication.

The proceedings concluded with a felicitation ceremony where Ms. Athavale was awarded honorary membership by PIC for her exceptional contributions to technology. Maj Gen Gadkari read out the citation and shared his views on the opportunities within the semiconductor industry, followed by a lively Q&A.

Press Conference on PIC Campus Inauguration

January 23

On January 23, 2025, PIC organised a 'Curtain Raiser' press conference to showcase its new campus.

Talking about PIC and its vision, Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar said, "PIC is an 'International centre in Pune' and that Pune should be known to the outside world because of PIC. He said PIC's strength is the brains of the people associated with it and that PIC's policy papers have been used in government policy.

Dr. Ravi Pandit said, PIC 2.0 aims to be the "hotbed of new thinking". He said PIC has published four books and numerous policy papers and PIC 2.0 aims to bring out at least 100 policy papers annually. Also, PIC 2.0 will enthuse young blood by having young people as researchers. Dr. Pandit emphasised that PIC policy recommendations aim to bring out practical solutions that can be implemented. The policy will also look for solutions which support environmental sustainability, highlighting the PIC C-SEM (Centre for Sustainable Energy and Mobility) study on electric vehicles to help the Government of Maharashtra expand the EV ecosystem. He listed Social Innovation, Geopolitics and Geo-Economics, National Security, Art and Culture, and Cooperative Federalism and Multi-Level Governance as the focus areas of PIC 2.0.

Dr. Prashant Girbane said PIC stands for "churning of ideas and transforming the future". Accepting that Delhi is known for public policy, he expressed the desire that public policy recommendations should also come from other cities, like Pune, adding that the nation and democracy are strengthened when public policy goes beyond Delhi.

Roundtable on Delimitation

January 24



Dr. Vijay Kelkar chairing the roundtable. (L to R) Dr. Vishal Gaikwad; Prof. Abhay Pethe, Mr. Sunil Kumar, Prof. Ujjwal Kumar Singh, Mr. Suhas Palshikar, Dr. Kelkar, Dr. Ajit Ranade, and Ms. Juthika Patankar

On January 24, 2025, PIC hosted a 'Roundtable on Delimitation' to discuss the critical issue of electoral constituency delimitation and its implications for political representation in India. Dr. Vijay Kelkar chaired the conference, which featured eminent scholars Prof. Suhas Palshikar and Dr. Sanjeer Alam presenting their paper, 'Delimitation of Electoral Constituencies and the Crisis of Political Representation in India.'

Several distinguished participants attended the conference, including Prof. Abhay Pethe; Dr. Ajit Ranade; Mr. Sunil Kumar; Smt. Juthika Patankar; Prof. Mala Lalwani (Professor of Economics, Mumbai University); Prof. Balveer Arora (Founder-Chairman, Centre for Multilevel Federalism, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi); Prof. James Manor (Emeritus Professor for Commonwealth Studies, University of London); Prof. Ujjwal Kumar Singh (Senior Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi); and Dr. Vishal Gaikwad (Research Fellow, PIC).

The discussion explored critical themes such as the Constitutional and institutional framework of delimitation, the rising population-to-representative ratio, and the widening disparities in representation among states due to differential population growth. The roundtable also delved into innovative solutions, including expanding the Lok Sabha, restructuring the Rajya Sabha, and balancing regional representation while maintaining the principles of equality and federalism.

The engaging deliberations emphasised the urgency of addressing representation anomalies and the need for a nuanced approach that integrates equality of vote with federal accommodation.

Inauguration of PIC Campus

January 26



Top (L-R): Mr. Prashant Girbane, Dr. Kelkar, Dr. Mashelkar, Dr. Ravi Pandit, and Maj Gen Nitin Gadkari during the unveiling of the Buddha statue at the PIC Campus inauguration. **Centre (L-R):** Dr. Ravi Pandit, Mr. Girbane, Maj Gen Nitin Gadkari, Mr. Devdutt Modak, and Ms. Lisa Pingale. **Bottom:** Students of Jnana Prabodhini singing the National Anthem

The new campus of Pune International Centre (PIC) was inaugurated in Pashan, Pune, on January 26, 2025, on the occasion of India's 76th Republic Day. The new facility was symbolically inaugurated by His Holiness The Dalai Lama, whose message was read out by Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar.

In his message, His Holiness The Dalai Lama highlighted Pune's "vibrant intellectual environment", which, he said, is being leveraged by PIC as a platform for discussions on issues affecting regional and national policies. Commending PIC's efforts to involve youths to help build future leadership and to inspire a new generation to create positive social change, he said the 21st century belongs to the young and that including this aspect in PIC's discussions can help create a better future for India and the world.

Emphasising the "contemporary relevance of ancient Indian wisdom", its techniques of mental training like meditation, and India's tremendous economic development, The Dalai Lama said, together, these can create an ethically grounded way of being in the world. The new PIC campus will contribute more effectively in promoting positive developments in India, now and for the future, he added.

While extending his wishes on the occasion of Republic Day, Dr. Mashelkar said the PIC campus was a dream come true. He said The Dalai Lama's blessings and message will continue to breathe life into the campus, ensuring that it stands not just as a physical space but as an eternal beacon of wisdom, compassion and harmony. He reflected on the journey of PIC over the past 14 years, highlighting the contribution of its founders, including the late Dilip Padgaonkar (journalist), the late B G Deshmukh (ex-bureaucrat), and the late Mohan Dharia (former Union minister and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission), he said PIC would continue to be a torchbearer and melting pot of transformative ideas.

"When people think of Pune, they should think of PIC," he said.

The programme was held at the Amphitheatre of the new campus—which is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities including the Main Administrative Building, Research Wing, Auditorium, Convention Hall, Art Gallery, and other facilities that can host world-class events—in the presence of PIC Trustees, Members, and other distinguished personalities, including former Union Minister Mr. Prakash Javadekar.

The day's proceedings began with the unveiling of the Buddha statue by PIC executive committee members Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar; Dr. Vijay Kelkar; Dr. Ravi Pandit; and Mr. Prashant Girbane; along with Maj Gen Gadkari, Director, PIC, followed by a campus tour for the guests by Col. Rajendra Kenjalkar, Project Manager of the PIC Campus, Mr. Neeraj Thakur, Head, PIC's Social Innovation Lab, and Maj Gen Gadkari.

The ceremony, anchored by Ms Lisa Pingale, Member, PIC, began with the singing of the National Anthem by students of Jnana Prabodhini, and some PIC staff.

Speaking on PIC's role in shaping public policy, Dr. Kelkar said PIC is one of the first fully independent think tanks and challenges the monopoly of Delhi in policy research. For good policies, he said, they must be knowledge-based and driven by consensus. He listed the various initiatives and verticals of PIC such National Security; Environment;

Cooperative Federalism; the flagship Asia Economic Dialogue (AED); Science, Technology and Innovation; and Social Innovation. He said the research papers and four books published by PIC have found a place in government policy. Explaining the PIC logo created by Ms. Falguni Pathak, he said it represented "churn of ideas".

Dr. Ravi Pandit spoke about PIC 2.0 and its vision, emphasising that it reflects the spirit of things to be done in the coming years. He said the focus of PIC 2.0 would be on independent, objective, fact-based, and practically implementable policy research that provides unique insights and touches everything related to individual and society. The vision is to be able to attract 20 research fellows and produce 100 research papers every year, he added.

Mr. Prashant Girbane traced PIC's growth from small beginnings to the infrastructure it has today, highlighting the support received from the late Ratan Tata and the funding support from Tata Trusts, and the inspiration from Dr. Mashelkar and Dr. Kelkar.

Delivering the vote of thanks, Maj Gen Gadkari said PIC's achievements would not have been possible without the contribution of the many people associated with it. The consultants, architects, and others who contributed to the construction of the campus were felicitated at the hands of Dr. Mashelkar.

The event concluded with an enlightening explanation of Pasaydan by PIC Member Mr. Devdutt Modak, and rendition of Lata Mangeshkar's recorded version of Pasaydan. Explaining Pasaydan as a prayer by Jnaneshwar Maharaj asking for "divine grace" for the entire universe, Mr. Modak said PIC will become a 'mandali', or town whose citizens are people of consciousness.

FEBRUARY 2025

February featured **two** main events—the flagship Asia Economic Dialogue 2025 and a Climate Emergency Debate competition for college students. A Union Budget 2025 screening and analysis was organised for PIC staff. PIC also participated in a Think Tank Forum.

Union Budget screening and analysis for PIC staff

February 1 & 4



The budget screening at PIC

On February 1, a screening of Union Budget 2025 was organised for PIC staff at the PIC campus. At the screening, Maj Gen Nitin Gadkari, Director, PIC, reflected on 'Budget 2025: A Mixed Bag'. At another session for PIC staff on February 4, 2025, Maj Gen Gadkari gave an analysis and explanation of the Union Budget 2025.

PIC attends Think Tank Forum

February 5-6



PIC's Dr. Gurudas Nulkar (**extreme right**) with speakers at the Think Tank Forum in New Delhi

PIC attended the 7th edition of the annual Think Tank Forum as an invitee, in New Delhi on February 5-6, 2025. Dr. Gurudas Nulkar represented PIC as a speaker at the forum's curtain-raiser plenary (February 5) on 'Navigating the Crossroads of a Fragmented World'.

Among the speakers at the event were (L to R in photo) Mr. Sujan R Chinoy, Director General, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses; Ms. Priyanka Bhide, Co-founder and Director, Kubernein Initiative; Ms. Karuna Gopal, Distinguished Fellow, India Foundation; and Mr. Nitin Pai, Co-founder and Director, Takshashila Institution.

Organised by the think tank Observer Research Foundation (ORF), the forum is an annual confluence of think tanks from across the country to foster dialogue on emerging issues. Themed 'Shaping a Resilient Global Order', the event explored India's role in driving innovation in digital infrastructure and energy transition, while emphasising sustainable development, equitable access to technology, and the future of multilateralism. Over two days of thematically diverse sessions, the forum sought to foster institutional and research linkages across India.

Climate Emergency Debate competition held for college students

February 6



Students participating in the debate competition at the PIC campus

On February 6, PIC hosted a Climate Emergency Debate Competition for college students at its new campus in Panchwati, Pashan. This was the preliminary round of the debate in the run-up to PIC research vertical Energy, Environment and Climate Change (EECC)'s upcoming Climate Emergency Conference—YouCAN 2.0 Environment Fest 2025—scheduled for March 7 and 8.

The competition brought together passionate young minds to engage in thought-provoking discussions on some of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time. A diverse range of topics were discussed, including Climate Economics, the Transition to Clean Energy, Sustainable Development, and Climate Justice. Participants presented well-researched arguments, offering insightful perspectives on the economic implications of climate policies, the feasibility of shifting to renewable energy, the balance between development and environmental conservation, and the ethical dimensions of climate action.

The participating teams represented Symbiosis School of Economics; Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE); BKPS College of Architecture; Symbiosis Skills and Professional University; MIT World Peace University; MES Garware College of Commerce (Autonomous); Vishwakarma Institute of Technology; Bhartiya Vidyapeeth New Law College; and Sir Parashurambhau College.

Asia Economic Dialogue 2025

February 20-22



Shri Piyush Goyal delivering the Inaugural Lecture at the Asia Economic Dialogue (AED) 2025 in the presence of (seated L to R) Amb. Gautam Bambawale and Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar.

The 6th edition of the Asia Economic Dialogue (AED), jointly organised by PIC and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), took place from February 20 to 22, 2025. Themed 'Economic Resilience and Resurgence in an Era of Fragmentation', the conference brought together over 40 speakers, including academicians, policymakers, and industry experts from nine countries: Australia, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, the Netherlands, Singapore, South Africa, and Sri Lanka.

In his inaugural address, Shri Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce, highlighted India's stability and rapid economic growth despite global conflicts. He discussed India's focus on innovation, especially in AI, machine learning, and women's empowerment, pointing out that 43% of India's graduates are women. Shri Goyal reiterated India's ambition to become a developed nation by 2047, emphasising the importance of small initiatives like Swacch Bharat and providing sanitary napkins for girls in driving long-term economic impact. He also mentioned government schemes that have supported small businesses, such as the Swanidhi Scheme for hawkers, and India's efforts to address the trade deficit with China by improving quality control.

Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar, in his opening remarks, described AED as having the potential to become the 'Davos of the East'. He discussed India's strengths—size, scale, and speed—and its position as the world's top destination for investment and talent, driven by its young population. Dr. Mashelkar also highlighted the role of AI and automation, stressing that these should be seen as enablers of economic growth rather than threats. India, he added, is playing a crucial role in shaping global economic resilience as a bridge between the Global North and South.

The conference featured insightful discussions, including a Fireside Chat with Ms. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Chairperson of Biocon, and another with Mr. Sanjiv Bajaj, Chairman and MD of Bajaj Finserv. Key sessions included 'Re-imagining Leadership in the Era of AI and Automation', chaired by Dr. Ganesh Natarajan, with panellists such as Mr. Jaspreet Bindra, Mr. Srikanth Velamakanni, and Ms. Naiyya Saggi. The session on 'African Transformation: From Aid to Investment', chaired by Amb. Gautam Bambawale, featured discussions with H.E. Dr. Anil Sooklal, Mr. Akshay Mathur, and others.

Further sessions covered a wide range of topics, including 'Survival Before Sustainability', chaired by Mr. Pradeep Bhargava, and 'Collaboration on Cyber Resilience', chaired by Mr. Dinanath Kholkar. The panel on 'International Monetary System' was led by Prof. Ajay Shah, with panellists such as Mr. Dammu Ravi and Dr. Amita Yadwadkar. Day 3 featured sessions on empowering MSMEs, chaired by Mr. Prashant Girbane, and the 'Blue Economy in India's Extended Neighbourhood', chaired by Dr. Manasi Singh. These discussions brought together experts like Mr. Puneet Agrawal, Ms. Subhashini Abeysinghe, and Mr. Greg Johannes, focusing on enhancing India's economic influence through regional cooperation.

AED 2025 concluded with Amb. Bambawale delivering the vote of thanks, reflecting on the vibrant exchange of ideas and the promising path ahead for India's economic resilience in a fragmented world.

MARCH 2025

Six events were held in March. This included the inauguration of PIC Auditorium, the Youth Climate Action Nexus (YouCAN) 2.0 Conference, Conference on Climate Emergency, roundtables on 'Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Course Recommendation Paper' and 'Democratic Decentralisation and Strengthening the Third Tier Government', and 'An Evening with social crusader and author Padma Shri Sunitha Krishnan'.

Inauguration of PIC Auditorium—Hindustani Classical Music Performance by Pt. Ulhas Kashalkar

March 5



Pt Kashalkar performing at the concert.

On March 5, 2025, PIC marked the inauguration of its auditorium with a Hindustani classical music performance by Padma Shri Pt Ulhas Kashalkar.

The musical showcased an intense and immersive rendition by Pt Kashalkar, accompanied by Mr. Aashay Kulkarni on the tabla, Mr. Soumitra Kshirsagar on the harmonium, and Mr. Nirbhay Saxena and Mr. Advait Keskar on the tanpura. At the event attended by PIC trustees, members and staff in large numbers, the vocalist was felicitated by Dr. Kelkar.

Introducing Pt Kashalkar, Maj Gen Nitin Gadkari, Director, PIC, highlighted the inventive yet rooted musical artistry of the khayaal maestro and his emotionally powerful renditions. He said PIC's 200-seater auditorium was state-of-the-art, aesthetically designed, and one of the best in Pune.

Dr. Kelkar and Gen Gadkari thanked SPIC MACAY (Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture among Youth), for helping organise the event.

Youth Climate Action Nexus (YouCAN) 2.0 Conference

March 7



Clockwise from top: Ms. Poonam Mehta (L) and Prof. Amitav Mallik in conversation at the event. The final round of the debate competition.

PIC, in collaboration with Climate Collective Pune (CCP), organised the YouCAN 2.0 (Youth Climate Action Nexus) fest on March 7, bringing together students, climate experts, and policymakers to discuss climate change and solutions. In his inaugural address, Prof. Amitav Mallik highlighted the urgency of addressing climate change, warning that the planet has crossed many tipping points. He urged the youth to lead the charge for climate awareness and local environmental restoration, emphasising that waiting for governmental action was not an option.

Ms. Poonam Mehta, Chief Guest and Joint Commissioner of PMRDA, joined Prof. Mallik for a discussion where she encouraged the youth to engage in civic matters and drive change for a greener future. She urged greater citizen involvement in sustainability initiatives. The event also hosted the final round of a debate competition on 'Climate Action: Individual vs Government', which saw Symbiosis School of Economics emerge victorious. The debate was moderated by Mr. Chinmay Kulkarni, former Research Intern at PIC.

The YouCAN conference, supported by INECC, Khula Aasmaan, and the Centre for Sustainable Development at Gokhale Institute, included various sessions and a pan-India poster exhibition on climate solutions. Dr. Nitant Mate, MD & Partner at SeeGreen Solutions LLP, spoke on green careers. Dr. Priyadarshini Karve, founder of Samuchit Enviro Tech, stressed the need for innovative solutions to the climate crisis.

The conference featured an interactive session, 'The Ultimate Question', hosted by Mr. Atharva Diwan and Adv. Prithviraj Lingayat, which explored issues like circular economy and consumerism's impact on climate change. A youth panel discussion on 'Engaging Youth in Climate Actions' addressed challenges like traffic congestion, air quality, and sustainable mobility in Pune. The event concluded with an exclusive conversation on climate activism with actors Suyash Tilak and Sarang Yadwadkar.

Conference on Climate Emergency—One Planet, One Chance.

March 8



Clockwise from top left: Dr. Madhav Gadgil, Dr. Kelkar, Dr. Mashelkar, panel discussion on Societal Challenges in a Climate-Challenged World, Industry Panel Discussion on Total Sustainability, and Dr. R Krishnan

On March 8, 2025, PIC hosted the Climate Emergency Conference, 'One Planet, One Chance,' at its Pashan campus. The conference, convened by Prof. Mallik and chaired by Dr. Mashelkar and Dr. Kelkar, focused on urgent climate challenges and actionable solutions. Dr. Madhav Gadgil, renowned ecologist and 2024 UN 'Champions of the Earth' award winner, was the special guest.

In his inaugural address, Dr. Mashelkar described the climate emergency as not just a crisis of nature but a crisis of leadership where humanity's survival is at risk. He pointed to political inaction as an obstacle to progress and called for strong leadership and innovation. He advocated for India to build renewable energy capacity for energy independence by 2047.

Dr. Kelkar stressed the need for India to pursue rapid economic growth to address issues such as poverty, while calling for a tempered approach that is focused on need, not greed.

Prof. Mallik stressed that as the world's seventh most climate-vulnerable nation, India cannot delay action. He criticised the lack of urgency, blaming election-driven focus on short-term gains, and urged moving away from fossil fuel dependence.

Dr. Gadgil warned that the warming Arabian Sea is increasing super-cyclones, endangering coastal infrastructure like nuclear plants and key ports. He flagged Vizhinjam port's role in quarry expansion and protests, and criticised coal imports at Vasco port for worsening aerosol pollution—linked to extreme weather. Snowmelt from climate change, he noted, threatens river flows (Ganga, Brahmaputra, etc.), while pollution of the river Ganga harms fisheries, pushing communities toward sand mining. He also highlighted severe pollution in Maharashtra's Indrayani River.

Dr. R. Krishnan, Director of IITM, warned that climate change will intensify extremes—bringing heavier rainfall to regions like India and Africa, while aggravating droughts elsewhere, especially in coastal areas. He noted that even a 1°C rise could boost rainfall by 7% and highlighted growing water scarcity and India's rising emissions, now the third highest globally.

Dr. Ajit Ranade emphasised that climate change is not just scientific or economic—it must be part of everyday life through simplified messaging. He warned that overusing ecosystems today robs future generations. Dr. Gurudas Nulkar called for decoupling growth from resource exploitation, highlighting unsustainable practices in over 200 poorly managed mines.

Marking Women's Day, an all-women panel chaired by Prof. Mallik discussed climate's link to social, economic, and governance issues. Dr. Girija Godbole stressed amplifying marginalised voices; Ms. Aditi Kale urged integrating climate awareness into professions; Ms. Anagha Paranjpe-Purohit called for investment in sustainable urban governance; and Dr. Priyadarshini Karve advocated climate literacy and moving beyond fossil fuels.

An industry panel moderated by Dr. Nulkar stressed on sustainable practices—cutting CO2 emissions, recycling plastics, scaling nuclear power, and converting biomass to gas. The conference concluded with summaries by Maj. Gen. Nitin Gadkari and Dr. Nulkar, and closing remarks by Dr. Kelkar.

Roundtable on 'Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Course Recommendation Paper'

March 21



Mr. Dinanath Kholkar addressing participants at the roundtable

On March 21, 2025, PIC hosted a roundtable to discuss the 'Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Course Recommendation Paper' for Engineering curricula. The event emphasised the need to integrate in-demand industry skills, particularly on DPI, into Engineering education to prepare students for the digital age.

Attended by experts from academia, industry, and PIC's students and researchers, the conference focused on the relevance of a DPI course, its curriculum, and its potential implementation. Participants expressed interest in continuing the conversation to develop actionable strategies for incorporating DPI into curricula, with a vision of extending its integration beyond engineering disciplines. Mr. Dinanath Kholkar noted that many students are unaware of significant developments in India's DPI landscape, underscoring the importance of formalising a DPI course for broader awareness.

Dr. Pradeep Mane, Principal of AISSMS IOIT; Dr. Rajesh Ingle, former Vice Chancellor of Symbiosis Skills and Professional University; and Dr. Vivek Bhartiya from TCS, led a session on the draft DPI curriculum proposal. Dr. Madhura Vipra, CEO of Medvolt Tech, stressed incorporating data security and legal considerations, while Dr. Deepak Shikarpur, Director at Kinetic Communications Ltd., proposed linking learning to job incentives for better engagement.

The conference also addressed challenges in integrating a new course into India's education system. Ms. Rekha Sugandhi, Director at MITADT, suggested offering the DPI course as a minor rather than an elective to ease its inclusion. Mr. Navin Kabra, Entrepreneur and Founder of ReliScore.com, recommended focusing on foundational content, while Mr. Parth Lawate, Co-Founder of Tekdi Technologies, questioned whether the course should teach the creation of DPI systems or focus on existing frameworks. Discussions also explored DPI's alignment with the

National Education Policy (NEP), workforce development, continuous learning, and the impact of global events like COVID, with India's CoWIN initiative serving as a successful case study for learners.

Conference on 'Democratic Decentralisation and Strengthening the 3rd Tier Government'

March 24



Far end of the table (L to R): Mr Sunil Kumar, Dr. Kelkar and Prof. Abhay Pethe during discussions at the conference

PICT held its Annual Conference on 'Democratic Decentralisation and Strengthening the 3rd Tier Government' on March 24, 2025, at its campus. Experts at the event discussed the need to empower urban and rural local governments (ULGs/RLGs), ensure financial sustainability, foster citizen participation, and address governance and finance challenges. Key recommendations included creating independent evaluation frameworks for local bodies, enhancing fiscal devolution, empowering local governments, strengthening municipal and rural finances, and improving service delivery. They also proposed integrating digital financial management tools to improve accountability and resource allocation.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Kelkar emphasised that ULGs/RLGs should be seen as the first tier of governance due to their direct citizen engagement. He called for inclusive policies tailored to local issues and advocated for greater collaboration between think tanks to guide policy-making. The conference featured contributions from experts, planners, policymakers, and ex-bureaucrats, including Prof. Abhay Pethe, Mr. Sunil Kumar, Mr. Jitendra Pandit, Dr. Chandrashekhar Pran, Mr. Prabhat Kumar, Dr. Ramanath Jha, Dr. Ravikant Joshi, Dr. Ajit Ranade, and Mr. Milind Mhaske.

Mr. Kumar outlined key legislative challenges in local governance, such as gaps in laws and the lack of financial

autonomy for local bodies. Panel discussions focused on comprehensive reforms to improve governance and service delivery, with Prof. Pethe highlighting the need for capacity building and independent evaluation to reduce inefficiencies.

Dr. Ajit Ranade discussed the rural-urban funding imbalance, advocating for greater local autonomy and decentralised decision-making. Dr. Pran, from a social worker's perspective, stressed the importance of balancing administrative control and decentralised governance.

An evening with social crusader and author Padma Shri Sunitha Krishnan

March 26



Top Left: Ms. Sunitha Krishnan (extreme right) during the book launch of her *I Am What I Am*. Seen in the photo (L to R) are Maj Gen Gadkari, Mr. Sushil Borse, Ms. Anu Aga.

On March 26, PIC, in association with Anjani Mashelkar Foundation, hosted 'An Evening with Padma Shri Sunitha Krishnan', a passionate crusader against human trafficking, Founder of Prajwala Foundation, and author of the

powerful memoir *I Am What I Am*.

The event, organised at the PIC Auditorium, witnessed the book launch of Ms. Krishnan's *I Am What I Am*, in the presence of Mr. Sushil Borde; Ms. Anu Aga; and Maj. General Nitin Gadkari. She also signed copies of her book for the audience and participated in an engaging interactive session.

In her powerful address, punctuated by spontaneous applause from the captivated audience, Ms. Krishnan shared her extraordinary journey that saw her transform her personal trauma of being subjected to sexual assault at the age of 15 into a powerful movement for women's rights and safety. She recounted how she began her relentless fight against human trafficking.

Ms. Krishnan questioned why, when there are fights over various other issues, there is no outrage when a six-month-old girl is raped or five-year-olds are forced into prostitution, urging zero tolerance against sex trafficking in order to create a safer world for women.

She said human trafficking was a form of modern-day slavery and the third largest organised crime globally. She said Prajwala Foundation is the world's largest therapeutic community for survivors, who comprise half of her 200-member team. Their motto: "I want to be the last girl who has been trafficked".

She said abuse thrives when people ignore it within families, institutions, and workplaces, urging people to stop making excuses, and take a stand against crimes like sex trafficking. Ms. Krishnan narrated moving stories of rescue, of receiving help, and of hope.

PUNE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE'S SOCIAL INNOVATION HUB

One of Pune International Centre's focus areas is the Social Innovation HUB (SI Hub, formerly SI Lab), which undertakes initiatives to foster Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship:

- National Conference on Social Innovation (NCSI)
- Social Enterprise Mentoring Programme (SEMP)
- Shared Service Centre for Social Enterprise (SSC-SE)
- Capability Building Sessions (CBS)
- Roundtable Conferences
- Beyond Profit Perspectives – CSR Interview series
- Research Fellowship in Social Innovation
- Policy papers, blogs, and other publications

National Conference on Social Innovation (NCSI)

PIC, in collaboration with the National Innovation Foundation (NIF) and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), has been organising the National Conference on Social Innovation (NCSI) every year since 2013. Over the years, we have successfully organised twelve national conferences, where innovators get a platform to showcase their work and network with prominent CSR organisations, grants and donor agencies, accelerators, and impact investors.

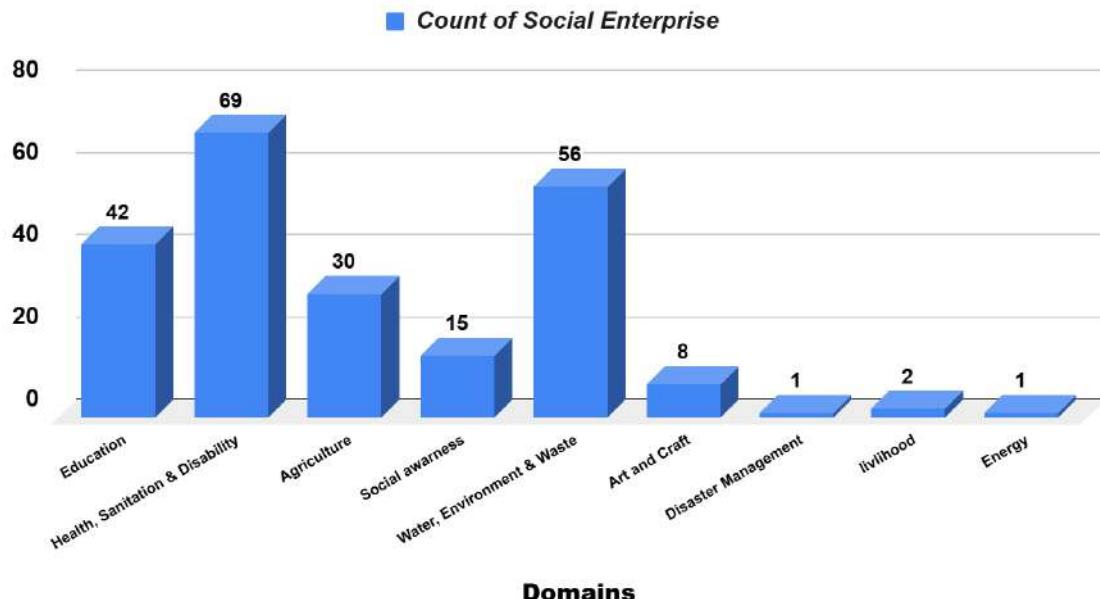
This programme runs pan India and offers the following:

- Cash prize of INR 50,000 to the winners of each category (tribal, rural, urban)
- Opportunity to be a part of the 9-month mentorship programme
- Platform to showcase and network with leading CSR officers/accelerators/impact investors.

Since 2013, PIC SI Hub has **provided a platform for 214 social enterprises** to showcase their innovative solutions to impact investors, CSR organisations, and corporations at the national conferences on social innovation.

PIC SI Hub Enterprises Sector-wise Distribution (2015-2024)

Domain-wise distribution of Social Enterprises (2015-2024)



The Social Enterprise Mentorship Programme (SEMP) commenced in 2017, supporting 102 social innovators to date. Each year, ten mentors volunteer over 300 hours of their time, spanning 6 to 9 months, to guide these social innovators.

Each Mentor: 1 to 3 mentees

Mentoring Meetings scheduled: weekly/bi-weekly

Total Duration: 9 months of intense mentoring sessions

Shared Service Centre for Social Enterprises (SSC-SE)

This digital marketplace links social innovators and service providers, allowing them to access services remotely. The platform provides various services such as digital marketing, website development, export-import documentation, intellectual property rights, legal compliance, pitch decks, and 2D/3D animation videos, all at no cost. The programme is ongoing, and from January 2021, we have assisted 181 social innovators with a total of 250 services. This year, we have supported 80 social enterprises with a total of 92 services.

Capacity Building Sessions

1. Masterclass Session

The PIC Social Innovation Lab launched its Masterclass Sessions for social enterprises in February 2023. These sessions aim to provide social innovators with a comprehensive understanding of various industry verticals. So far, **467 social entrepreneurs** have benefited from these sessions, and the initiative is attracting more entrepreneurs.

Sessions were held on the following topics in the Masterclass Series:

Ideation Tools and Applications



Mr. Pramod Athalye, a mentor at SI Hub, discussed creative tools for team collaboration, enhancement of products and services, generation of alternatives to problems, and seizing opportunities. He also elaborated on ideation tools such as brainstorming, mind mapping, scamper, nominal group technique (NGT), and evaluation matrix.

SWOT Analysis



Mr. Gaurav Chatur, co-founder and Managing Director of Catenon, discussed the role of SWOT in business planning; applying SWOT to design strategy; defining goals and objectives to support strategy; and implementing initiatives to ensure growth and development, citing the example of Zomato and a regional store.

Human Resource Management



Ms. Minakshi Kotwani, founder of Growing People, conducted the session on Human Resource Management. It discussed managing human resources for social entrepreneurs in the early startup phase, hiring with budget constraints for social organisations and nonprofits, and employee upskilling and training.

Company and Legal Compliance



The Legal Compliance session was conducted by Mr. Hemant Kelkar, Founder of VCounsel Legal Services. He discussed basics of regulatory compliance, company due diligence, employment laws and regulations, including hiring practices and employee rights.

CSR Requirements Management



In the session on CSR Requirements Management, Dr. Anil Dhaneshwar discussed the constituents of CSR; issues that are in implementation now; what an NGO should have; weaknesses of the NGO sector in India; and what NGOs need to do now.

Financial Compliance



The Financial Compliance session was conducted by Mr. Vishal Gawade, CA. It discussed topics such as financial management, financial reporting and documentation, budgeting and forecasting, basic accounting and bookkeeping.

Crafting an Impactful Pitch Deck



Mr. Anirudha Modak, Founder of Guru on Tap, conducted a session on Crafting an Impactful Pitch Deck. The basics of structure and format of the deck, problem statement, solutions (products/services), market, business model, adoption strategy, competition, and competitive advantage were discussed.

Logistics & Supply Chain Management



Mr. Sharadchandra Kaulgud addressed key challenges faced by social enterprises at the session on Logistics and Supply Chain Management. The session focused on inventory management, cost-effective transportation, and warehouse optimisation. It also highlighted risk management strategies to enhance efficiency and sustainability.

Marketing Strategies and Branding for Startups



The session on Marketing Strategies and Branding for Startups was conducted by Ms. Nandita Khaire. She discussed topics such as identifying your target audience, crafting a compelling brand story, building a strong brand identity, measuring and evaluating marketing efforts, and ethical marketing practices for social enterprises.

Digital Marketing



The session on Digital Marketing was conducted by Mr. Aniket Khare. He discussed digital marketing strategy, content marketing and storytelling, email marketing and automation, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), and paid advertising.

Export & Import



At the session on Export and Import, Mr Kanchan Kulkarni, Director & COO, Vishwaguru Infotech Pvt. Ltd., discussed the processes of export and import and the documentation to the attendees.

Effective Scaling Plan



The session on the Effective Scaling Plan was conducted by Mr. Advait Kurlekar. He discussed identifying key growth drivers and constraints, developing a scalable business model, leveraging technology for scaling impact, building strategic partnerships for growth, and financial planning and management for scaling.

Beyond Profit Perspectives – CSR Interview series

The **CSR YouTube interview series, titled Beyond Profit Perspectives**, was launched in February 2024, with the aim of providing social entrepreneurs valuable insights directly from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) heads of renowned organisations. These conversations provide a deeper understanding of corporate approaches to social responsibility, best practices in CSR initiatives, and emerging trends shaping the sector. The following are the Beyond Profit Perspectives episodes:

Bajaj Finserv's Strategic CSR: Empowering Youth, Driving Innovation, and Fostering Collaboration



The first episode featured an insightful conversation between Mr. Kurush Irani (**right**), President and Head of CSR at Bajaj Finserv, and Mr. Dinanath Kholkar (**left**). This episode discussed the CSR strategy of Bajaj Finserv, focused primarily on youth skilling, education, and health with a commitment to innovation and precision. The company's impactful vocational training programmes such as assistive technology for the disabled are made possible through collaboration with partners and data-driven decision making. Employee engagement aligns with organisational goals, which maximises social impact. The company is focused on development and maintained sustained partnerships to be able to evaluate and act effectively for the improvement of the community.

Insights into Cummins Values-Driven CSR Strategy

Pune International Centre Social Innovation Lab

Beyond Profit Perspectives

In Conversation with Soujanya Veguru



The second episode hosted Ms. Soujanya Veguru (**right**), Head of CSR at Cummins India, in discussion with Mr. Amit Bhargava. The discussion focused on the importance of aligning CSR with the core values of the company, particularly caring, diversity, and inclusion. Cummins' strategy centered on education, environment, and equity-supported by rigorous partner selection and monitoring, ensuring impact that is meaningful and measurable. Long-term programmes such as Planet 2050 and gender equity initiatives are pledges to facilitate sustainable, community-driven change. The discussion highlighted authenticity, articulated shared values, and clear communication as the way for successful partnerships that lead to impactful social innovation.

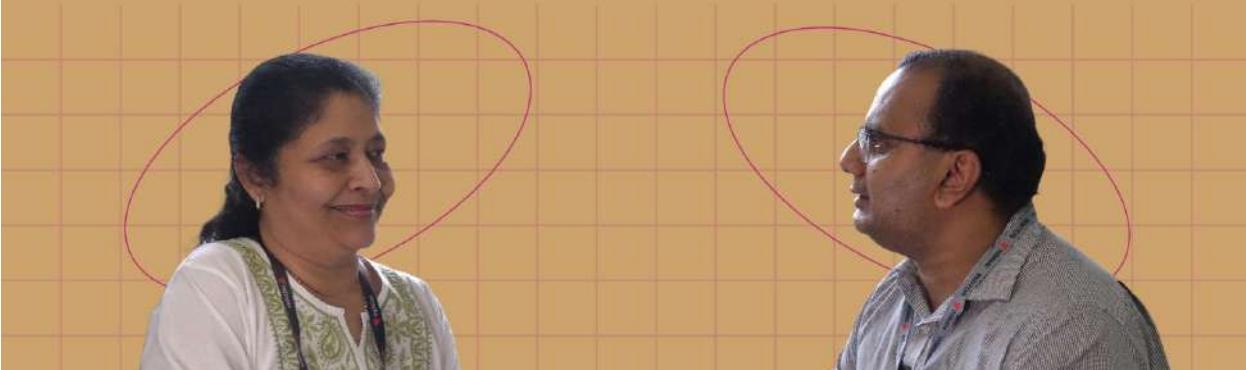
Key Insights on Strategic CSR and Collaborative Social Innovation

Pune International Centre Social Innovation Lab

Beyond Profit Perspectives

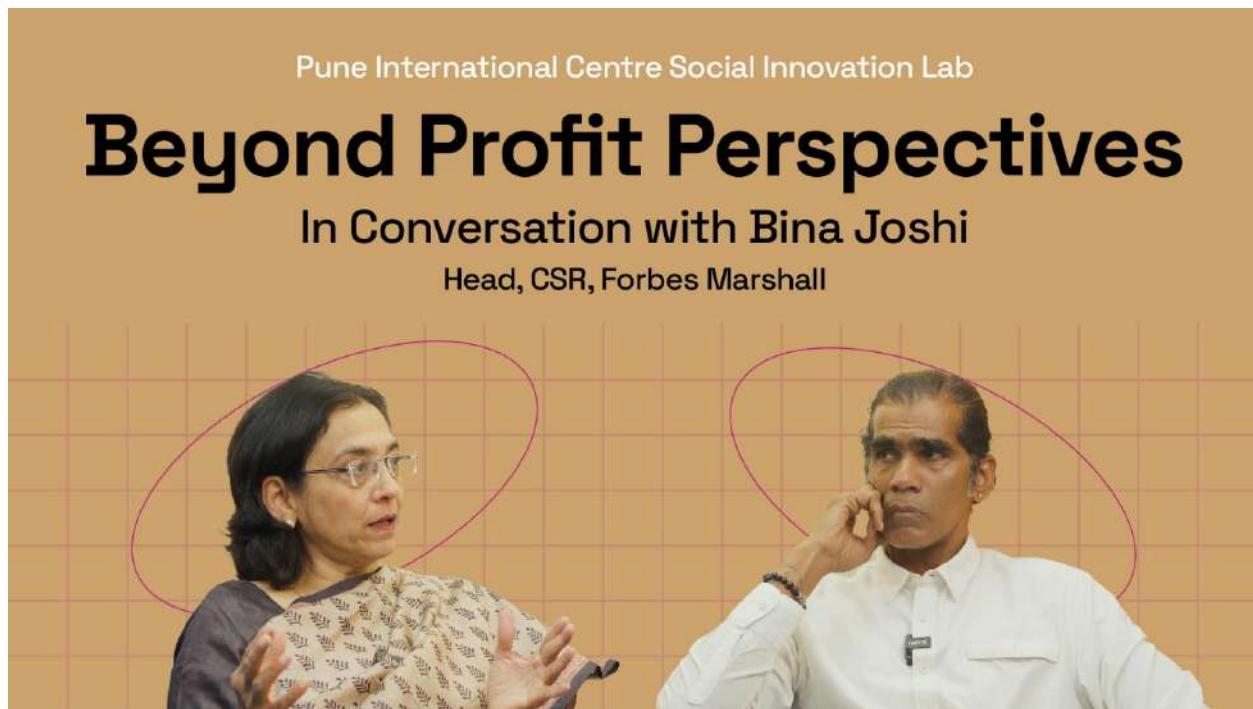
In Conversation with Dr. Sujata Deshpande

Head, CSR, Thermax Foundation



The third episode explored the CSR initiatives of Thermax Foundation, with Dr. Sujata Deshpande (**left**), CSR Head at Thermax Foundation, in conversation with Mr. Amit Bhargava. The conversation highlighted that focused, high-impact CSR initiatives would be able to more successfully address deep-rooted issues in the community. This has been proven by Thermax by concentrating its CSR efforts on skill development and primary education. Such long-term NGO partnerships and projects under the Social Compact are evidence that ethical business practices, coupled with consistent involvement, can lead to quantifiable social impact. Such initiatives also build employee leadership and participation which, in turn, build organisational commitment as well as bring about a change towards a socially conscious culture. Also, continuous collaboration between institutions and platforms like PIC drives innovation, ensuring social impact projects remain focused on the community, scalable and relevant.

Forbes Marshall's Evolving CSR: Deep Community Impact and Collaborative Social Innovation



The fourth episode brought together Mrs. Bina Joshi (**left**), CSR Head at Forbes Marshall, and Mr. Ram Iyer for an engaging discussion on their CSR activities and approach. Forbes Marshall's CSR strategy proves the strength of long-term dedication and flexibility, emphasising profound, qualitative influence in health and education among marginalised groups. Their focus on open communication, interdependent partnerships, and strict project evaluation create sustainable development. The company's shifting strategy identifies the increasing significance of building an ecosystem and being green for the future of CSR. By engaging directly with employees and stakeholders, Forbes Marshall incorporates social responsibility into its corporate ethos. Its funding for innovative initiatives, such as improving school attendance among nomadic children, indicates a desire to help meet special community needs, and its formalised grant application process ensures initiatives are meaningful and accountable.

Policy Papers and Blogs

The SI Hub publishes two research/policy papers annually and has also started a blog series to raise awareness on Social Innovation and entrepreneurship. Every year, the team and mentors publish three blogs. The research/policy papers are a valuable resource for anyone interested in the field, while the blog series is an accessible way to learn about the latest developments and trends.

- Strengthening Women Entrepreneurs: Pathways to growth in Maharashtra (November 2024)
- Why Social Enterprises Should Invest in Branding and Marketing
- Beat Startup Hiccups: How to pitch right and raise funds
- Hiring on a Shoestring: Social Ventures and Budget-Friendly Recruitment
- Digital Marketing for the Social Sector: Empowering causes with online presence
- Intellectual Property Rights for Social Entrepreneurs
- Rnisarg Foundation: Managing waste, generating jobs, bettering lives
- Padcare Labs: The green and easy way to managing menstrual hygiene

Section C

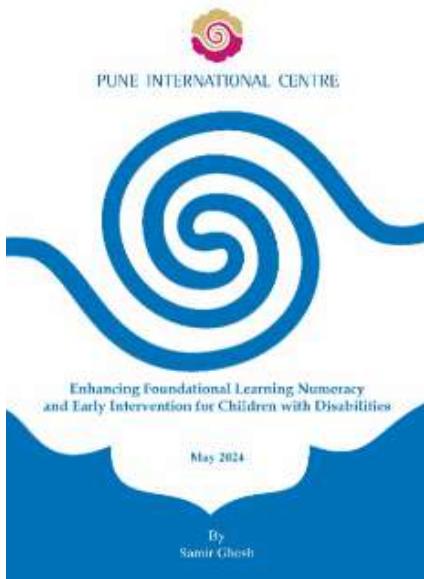
PUBLICATIONS

Policy/Research/Fellowship Papers



India Exports: The next \$100-Billion – Medical Services, by Dr. Prakash Hebalkar

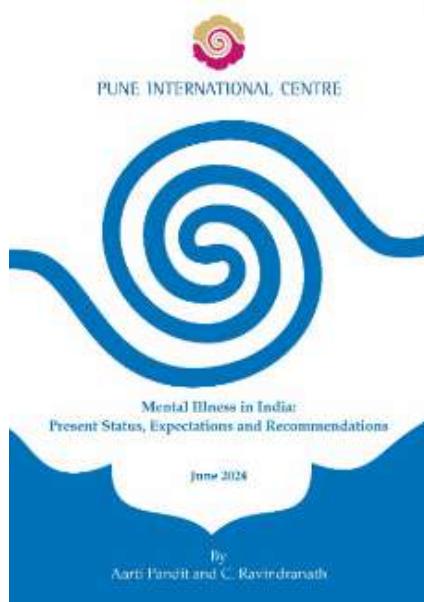
This paper discusses how India is uniquely positioned to transform its medical services sector into a \$100-billion export opportunity by addressing healthcare personnel shortages and affordability crises in G7 nations. Ageing populations, long wait times, and high costs in developed countries have created urgent demand for elder care, elective procedures, and skilled medical staffing. India offers a vast pool of trained healthcare professionals, globally recognised medical education, cost-effective pharmaceuticals, and world-class hospital infrastructure. Strategic development of coastal retirement communities and Health Cities—modelled on India's IT success—can attract foreign retirees and patients seeking affordable, high-quality care. Innovations in telemedicine and medical technology further enhance India's global competitiveness. Realising this potential requires overcoming certification and regulatory barriers through international collaboration and government policy support. With targeted infrastructure investment and smart positioning, India can become a global hub for medical tourism, elder care, and telehealth services, replicating the success of its software exports industry.



Enhancing Foundational Learning Numeracy and Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities, by Samir Ghosh

The paper explores foundational learning and early intervention challenges faced by children with disabilities in India. Key issues include urban-centric service delivery, delayed identification, inadequate teacher training, insufficient infrastructure, and poor interdepartmental coordination. The dominance of urban NGOs and limited representation of people with disabilities in organisational governance reflect systemic gaps. Despite rising admissions and varied educational services, access and quality remain uneven, especially in rural areas. Parental involvement, inclusive curriculum, and early intervention are essential components.

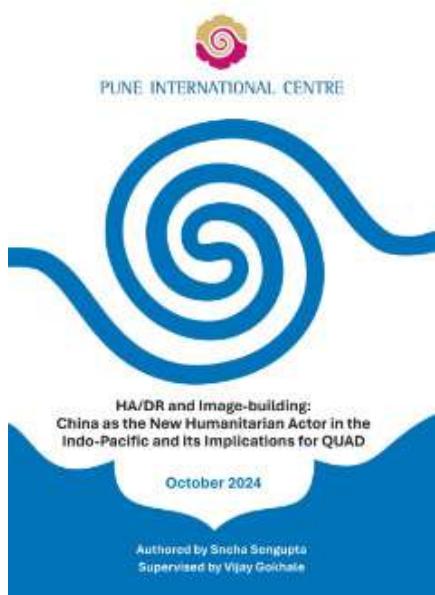
Notable best practices include the 'Total Communication' approach for deaf-blind children and the use of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory for students with intellectual disabilities. The paper recommends increased rural outreach, robust data systems, greater inclusion in governance, and inter-ministerial convergence. It also calls for capacity building, enhanced infrastructure, and targeted gender equity measures. Collectively, these steps aim to foster a more inclusive, equitable, and effective education system for children with disabilities across India.



Mental Illness in India: Present Status, Expectations and Recommendations, by Aarti Pandit and C. Ravindranath

The paper highlights the stark contrast in societal attitudes towards physical and mental health conditions. While individuals with physical disabilities typically receive empathy and support, those with mental illnesses are often subject to stigma, ridicule, and social neglect. This disparity results in the marginalisation of mentally ill persons and a lack of adequate attention to their needs. The paper argues that a meaningful shift in public perception and policy must be led by governmental authorities. The study examines the current status of individuals with mental health conditions and explores their specific needs, expectations, and the systemic shortfalls in meeting them. It advocates for a comprehensive overhaul of the mental healthcare system through policy reforms, increased budget allocations, and the implementation of structured treatment frameworks. With the growing incidence of mental health issues, the paper emphasises the urgency of adopting a holistic, integrated approach. Relying on both documented evidence and stakeholder interviews, it offers a balanced and in-depth perspective on addressing mental health challenges in a sustainable, inclusive manner.

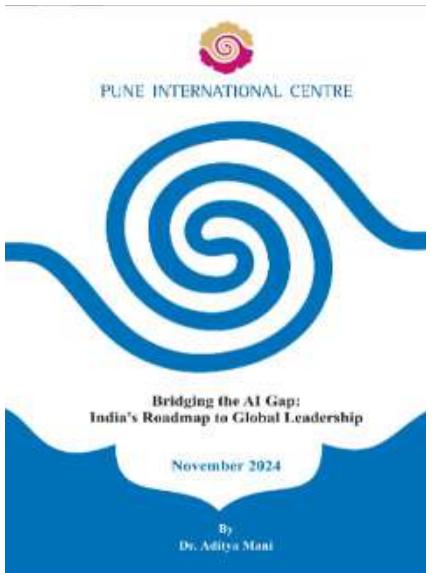
and the systemic shortfalls in meeting them. It advocates for a comprehensive overhaul of the mental healthcare system through policy reforms, increased budget allocations, and the implementation of structured treatment frameworks. With the growing incidence of mental health issues, the paper emphasises the urgency of adopting a holistic, integrated approach. Relying on both documented evidence and stakeholder interviews, it offers a balanced and in-depth perspective on addressing mental health challenges in a sustainable, inclusive manner.



HA/DR and Image-building: China as the New Humanitarian Actor in the Indo-Pacific and its Implications for QUAD, by Sneha Sengupta

China's expanding role in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) in the Indo-Pacific points to its strategic use of soft power and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to project global influence. Grounded in Joseph Nye's theory of soft power, this paper examines how Beijing employs disaster relief to enhance its international image and political leverage. It also assesses the implications for the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)—comprising the US, India, Australia, and Japan—which has emerged as a counterbalance to China's growing humanitarian diplomacy. Each QUAD member adopts distinct HA/DR strategies reflecting national priorities, leading to operational inconsistencies and coordination challenges.

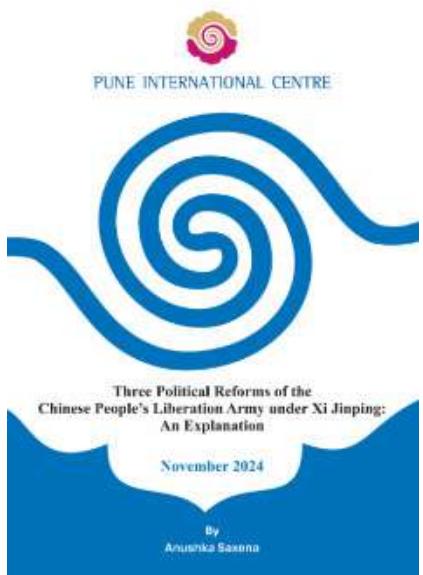
Sovereignty sensitivities and preference for bilateral engagements further complicate multilateral cooperation. As China deepens civil-military engagement in contested regions, the paper calls for the QUAD to institutionalise procedures, improve interoperability, and strengthen partnerships with regional actors and private stakeholders to ensure a cohesive and effective HA/DR strategy in the Indo-Pacific.



Bridging the AI Gap: India's Roadmap to Global Leadership, by Aditya Mani

With a robust IT sector, vast data resources, and a rapidly expanding digital economy, India aims to become a global AI leader. Yet, it continues to lag behind countries like China in research output, patents, investment, and computing power. While initiatives such as the IndiaAI Mission and "AIforAll" demonstrate intent, key challenges remain—including fragmented data, inadequate infrastructure, reliance on imported hardware, limited funding, and a shortage of skilled talent. To close this gap, India needs a well-coordinated, multi-pronged strategy that boosts foundational research, enhances education and skills, empowers the private sector, and fosters international partnerships. Clearer regulations,

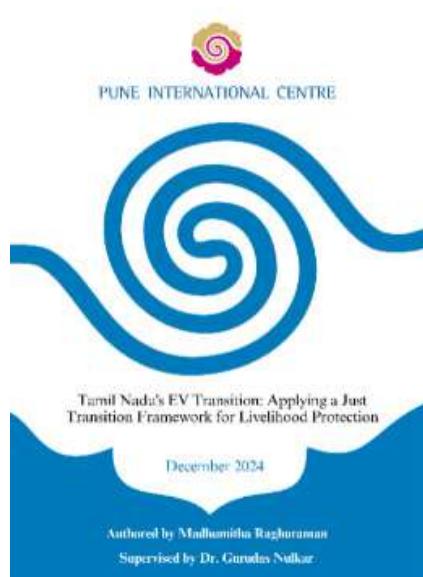
stronger industry-academia collaboration, and a focus on responsible AI governance are vital. The paper argues that by aligning innovation with social equity and economic ambition, India can address these challenges and rise as a responsible global AI leader. This paper outlines best practices, common pitfalls, and unique opportunities for India to fast-track its AI journey by building on its strengths.



Three Political Reforms of the Chinese People's Liberation Army under Xi Jinping: An Explanation, by Anushka Saxena

The paper analyses three major political reforms of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) under Xi Jinping, with a focus on the 2024 breakup of the Strategic Support Force into three specialised branches: the Aerospace Force, Cyberspace Force, and Information Support Force. This restructuring aims to enhance joint combat capabilities, tighten centralised control, reduce corruption, and modernise operations for information-centric warfare. Alongside structural reforms, the PLA has implemented wide-ranging educational changes to address talent shortages and promote political loyalty. Despite overhauling its military

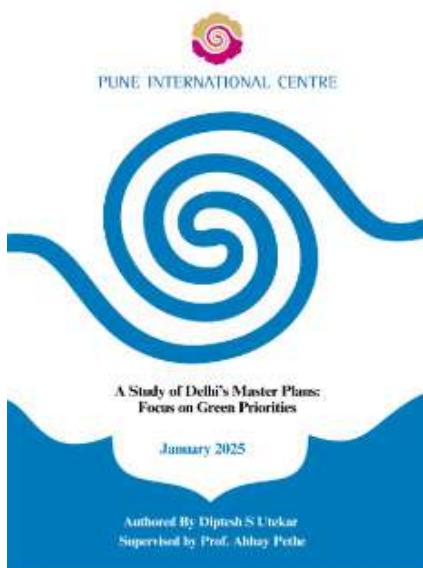
education system and emphasising joint operations, practical training, and ideological indoctrination, challenges persist—including poor skill alignment, excessive bureaucracy, demobilisation difficulties, and inconsistent training across commands. Campaigns such as national defence education month and intensified anti-corruption purges are designed to reinforce party loyalty, ensure ideological conformity, and support Xi's ambition to build a world-class, combat-ready force. These reforms reflect a broader strategy to secure the PLA's loyalty and elevate China's military stature globally.



Tamil Nadu's EV Transition: Applying a Just Transition Framework for Livelihood Protection, by Madhumitha Raghuraman

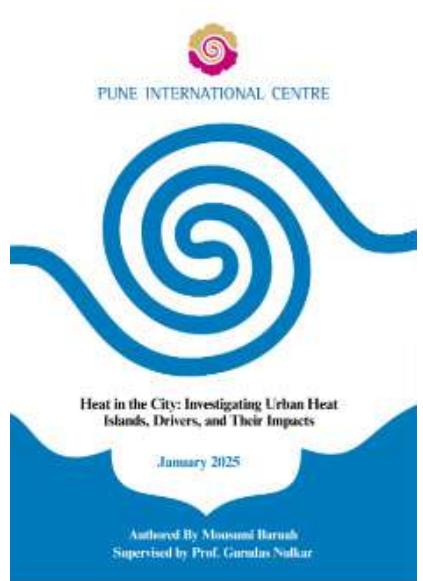
This paper explores Tamil Nadu's electric mobility transition through a "just transition" framework, focusing on livelihood protection for vulnerable workers in the internal combustion engine (ICE) sector. It identifies risks for informal labourers, contract workers, and microenterprises, particularly roadside mechanics and component manufacturers. While Tamil Nadu excels in distributive justice, the paper calls for improved workforce inclusion and recognition. Using secondary research, industry reports, and expert interviews, the paper analyses the state's EV policy, industry investments, and workforce considerations. It

underscores the vulnerabilities of MSMEs, OEMs, and informal workers, highlighting job loss risks and the need for upskilling. Policy recommendations include subsidising EV adoption, creating open data hubs, fostering social dialogue, strengthening social protection, and regulating battery recycling. The paper stresses the importance of addressing informal labour and micro-enterprises in the EV transition to ensure an inclusive, equitable shift for all stakeholders.



A Study of Delhi's Master Plans: Focus on Green Priorities, by Deeptesh S Utekar

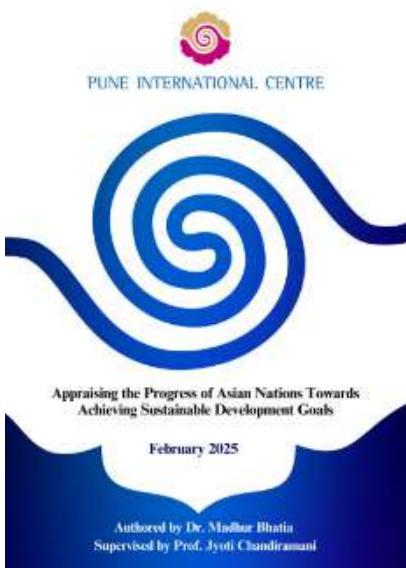
This paper examines Delhi's urban development through its Master Plans of 1962, 2001, 2021, and 2041, with a specific focus on environmental sustainability and climate change. It highlights a gradual evolution in planning priorities—from infrastructure and growth-centric approaches to greater emphasis on green spaces, climate resilience, and ecological preservation. Despite these progressive shifts, the paper identifies persistent obstacles, including weak implementation, insufficient funding, and fragmented institutional structures. The 2041 Master Plan, while ambitious, faces critical challenges such as Yamuna River pollution, inadequate solid waste management strategies, outdated land-use policies, and a lack of coordination between agencies and regional stakeholders. Furthermore, the plan suffers from unclear targets and a weak financial framework, undermining its practical execution. Drawing on international best practices, the study proposes a framework for more integrated, data-driven, and adaptive planning. Ultimately, it underscores the need for effective governance, stakeholder engagement, and robust policy mechanisms to achieve Delhi's sustainable urban future.



Heat in the City: Investigating Urban Heat Islands, Drivers, and Their Impacts, by Mousumi Baruah

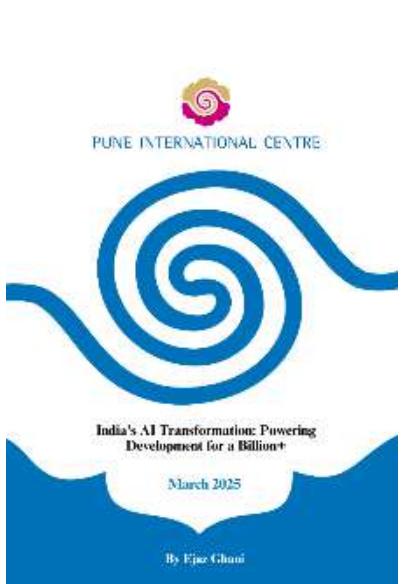
The paper examines the growing Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect, especially in the context of India's fast-expanding urban centres. It identifies rapid urbanisation, diminishing green cover, dense infrastructure, and inadequate planning as key drivers of rising urban temperatures—particularly in Tier-II cities. With global temperatures reaching record highs and India projected to warm by up to 5.1°C by 2100, the risks to public health and urban livability are escalating. Vulnerable populations, especially in poorly planned areas, face severe heat-related risks. Drawing from global and Indian case studies, the paper advocates for city-specific

adaptation strategies. Using the STEP framework (Social, Technological, Economic, Physical), it proposes holistic interventions, including community-based greening, advanced heat-mapping technologies, energy-efficient buildings, and policy reforms. The analysis underscores the need for integrated governance, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and data-driven decision-making to build climate-resilient, equitable, and sustainable cities aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.



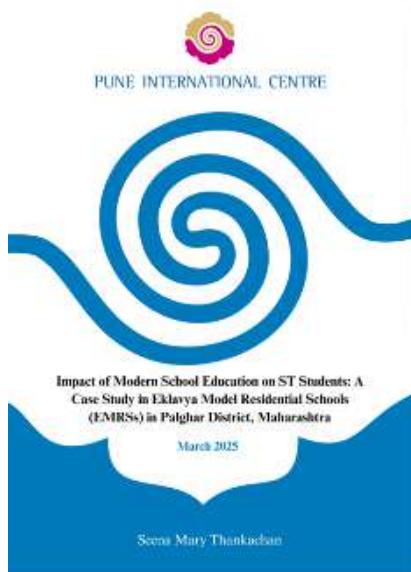
Appraising the Progress of Asian Nations Towards Achieving Sustainable Development Goals, by Dr. Madhur Bhatia

This paper assesses the progress of Asian nations towards the SDGs between 2015 and 2023, focusing on regional disparities, developmental strengths, and environmental challenges. Using trend, comparative, and convergence analyses, the paper highlights significant progress in SDGs 9, 10, and 17, while also revealing uneven advancements across regions. Eastern Asia excels in several goals, while South Asia lags, particularly in environmental and inequality-related targets. Although European nations outperform Asia in most SDGs, Asian countries show notable progress in goals like SDG12. The convergence analysis reveals that some nations are catching up, particularly in SDGs 1, 9, and 17, but challenges remain for SDGs 2, 11, and 16, where disparities persist. The study emphasises the need for targeted, region-specific interventions and evidence-based policymaking to address these gaps, particularly in environmental and inequality goals, to ensure timely progress towards achieving the 2030 agenda.



India's AI Transformation: Powering Development for a Billion+, by Ejaz Ghani

This paper envisions India using cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) as a tool for social transformation, building on its success with Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). Positioned at the forefront of the AI revolution, India aims to leverage AI to address key challenges in agriculture and healthcare, from improving crop yields through AI-powered predictions and pest detection to enhancing healthcare access via AI-driven diagnostics and personalised treatments. The paper outlines how AI can serve not only to advance India's economy but also to set a global standard for 'AI for Development', demonstrating how AI solutions can drive social good on an unprecedented scale. To realise this potential, the study discusses essential policy pathways, including bridging the digital divide, developing a skilled workforce, addressing infrastructure gaps, and ensuring ethical data governance to protect privacy, security, and mitigate algorithmic bias. Through inclusive and ethical AI deployment, India could become a model for development in the Global South, influencing global AI strategies.



Impact of Modern School Education on ST Students: A Case Study in Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) in Palghar District, Maharashtra, by Seena Mary Thankachan

The Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs), launched by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in 1997-1998, aim to provide quality education to Scheduled Tribe (ST) children in isolated areas, empowering them and promoting their development. The schools are designed to offer a holistic educational experience, combining academic achievement with skill development and career counseling. However, despite their potential, EMRSs face significant challenges. A study of three EMRSs in Maharashtra reveals critical issues in infrastructure, health, nutrition, and educational engagement. For example,

EMRS Savane has remained under construction for several years, and some schools lack basic healthcare facilities, such as sick rooms, with students sometimes drinking contaminated water. Additionally, food quality and career guidance are inconsistent, with some schools offering better facilities than others. The paper highlights the importance of addressing these issues through effective management, improved facilities, and stronger support for gender equity and career development. With focused reforms, EMRSs have the potential to become a model for inclusive education in India.

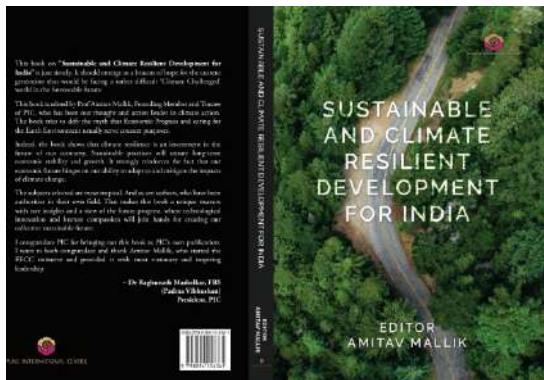


Playbook: Social Innovation in Healthcare—Enabling Access and Affordability

Over the past eight years, the Social Innovation Lab (SIL) at Pune International Centre has mentored over 80 socially driven organisations, guiding them to create measurable impact. Its second playbook focuses on enabling affordable healthcare access, particularly for underserved rural and tribal communities. While many of these social enterprises and NGOs offer innovative, technology-enabled healthcare solutions, they often lack the resources and expertise to operate full-scale medical facilities. This playbook acts as a strategic guide—akin to a sports playbook—drawing from the experiences of past mentees to help current and future

founders navigate the challenges of this sector. It provides key insights, risk awareness, stakeholder strategies, and a practical roadmap for scaling social healthcare ventures. While it avoids covering basic business principles or prescriptive instructions, it serves as a vital tool for mission-driven leaders. The playbook ultimately aims to accelerate impact and empower healthcare entrepreneurs to deliver lasting change.

Books



Sustainable and Climate Resilient Development for India

Sustainable and Climate Resilient Development for India, edited by Prof. Amitav Mallik, is PIC's first self-published book. It is a timely and vital work addressing India's urgent climate challenges. With extreme weather events on the rise, the book warns of a "Climate Challenged World" and the immense risks to lives and livelihoods. As Dr. Vijay Kelkar notes, India is

among the most vulnerable nations to climate change. Featuring insights from nine sustainability experts, the volume stresses that economic growth and environmental care are no longer at odds—future development must rely on green technologies and clean practices. Dr. Raghunath Mashelkar aptly calls the book a beacon of hope for a generation facing a difficult climate future. Dedicated to the youth, it emphasises that achieving Net-Zero is only part of the solution. Lasting impact requires restoring Earth's carbon balance and prioritizing ecological conservation, making sustainability a nature-centric and human-centric imperative.



Nari Shakti: Indian Women Take Centre Stage

Nari Shakti: Indian Women Take Centre Stage, edited by Dr. Ganesh Natarajan and Dr. Uma Ganesh, is PIC's fourth book. The tome a timely and insightful anthology exploring the evolving role of Indian women in society. With a foreword by Anu Aga, the book brings together diverse voices—both

male and female leaders—who reflect on the past, present, and future of womanhood in India. It spans a wide array of topics, including mythology, education, corporate achievements, tribal empowerment, public policy, and entrepreneurship. The authors analyze challenges faced by women across various social and economic strata, while also highlighting the transformative potential of empowering them. The book emphasises that women's underrepresentation in public life and the workforce not only perpetuates inequality but also hampers national economic progress. By shedding light on the often-overlooked contributions of women throughout history, *Nari Shakti* calls for a collective awakening to the immense value women bring to society and advocates for urgent, actionable change to ensure their rightful place at the center of national growth.

Issue Briefs

India and Bhutan – Exemplary Neighbours, Amb. Gautam Bambawale, Praneet Shukla, and Manasi Pendharkar, July 2024

India's Hypersonic Pursuit: Navigating Strategic Stability and the New Global Arms Race, Prajakta Garg, August 2024

Conference Reports

Interim Report: Project Jal Mulya: Promoting sustainable and efficient use of water through a Cost-Price Approach

Securing India's Economic Growth (PDNS Conference Report 2023 – 1)

Roundtable on Decarbonising Real Estate Sector in Pune Region

Clean Energy Conclave: Scaling Renewable Energy Smart Microgrids

11th National Conference on Social Innovation 2023

PIC's 14th Foundation Day Lecture by Shri Hardeep Singh Puri: Strategy and Measures for Enhancing India's Energy Security in the Coming Decade

Finance

Pune International Centre

(Regn No.: F-31883 (P) under Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950 & Mah. 28 / 2012 / Pune under Societies Registration Act, 1860)
Plot No.421/2, Ghorpadi Gaon (Koregaon Park), Pune - 411001.

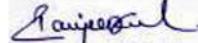
Balance Sheet as on 31st March 2025

FUNDS AND LIABILITIES	Sch	Amount Rs.	Amount Rs.	PROPERTY AND ASSETS	Sch	Amount Rs.	Amount Rs.
Trust Funds or Corpus				Immovable properties			
Balance as per last balance-sheet		96,915,653.21		Leasehold Land		29,801,574.00	
Add: Corpus contributions (Directly Credited)		3,500,000.00	100,415,653.21	Building		181,593,039.33	
				Capital Work in Progress		288,505,082.67	499,899,696.00
Other earmarked funds				Investments			
(Created under the provisions of the trust-deed or scheme or out of the income)				Movable Assets	2	17,806,410.42	
- Depreciation Fund				Furniture and fixtures			
- Sinking Fund				[As per Schedule 2]			
- Reserve Fund				Others	2	8,700,956.62	26,507,367.04
- Any other Fund				[As per Schedule 2]			
- (Social Programme Fund)	1	10,938,310.59		Loans (secured or unsecured)			
- (Building Fund)	1	729,599,443.00	740,537,753.59	- Good/doubtful			
[As per Schedule 1]				Loan Scholarships		-	
				Other loans		-	
Loans (Secured or Unsecured)							
From Trustee				Advances -			-
From others				- To Trustees			-
Liabilities				- To employees			-
For expenses (Duties & Taxes)		583,434.11		- To contractor			-
For expenses (Accrued Expenses)		1,499,999.97		- To lawyers			-
For advances		-		- To others	3	-	11,807,459.31
For rent or other deposits				[As per Schedule 3]			
For sundry credit balances		899.00					
				Other Receivables - Interest			28,727,092.00
				Other Receivables - Grants			8,000,000.00
Income & Expenditure Account:				Cash and Bank Balances			
Balance as per last Balance Sheet		-12,550,033.29		Cash in Hand with Sr. Accounts Officer			28,565.00
Add: Interest Accrued relating to previous financial years directly added		14,773,669.00		Balances with IDBI Bank, SBI & HDFC Bank			
Add: Surplus as per Income & Expenditure Account		5,323,482.87	7,547,118.58	in Current & Savings Account in the name of Pune International Centre		15,729,679.11	
				in Fixed Deposit Account in the name of Pune International Centre		259,885,000.00	275,614,679.11
Total		850,584,858.46		Total		850,584,858.46	

As per our report of even date

For G.D.Apte & Co.
Chartered Accountants
Firm Registration No.100515W




 Ranjeet Kulkarni
 Partner
 Membership No.132708

Pune International Centre

(Regn No.: F-31883 (P) under Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950 &
Mah. 28 / 2012 / Pune under Societies Registration Act, 1860)

Plot No. 4212, Ghorpadi Gaon (Koregaon Park), Pune - 411001

Income and Expenditure Account

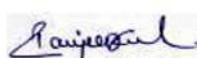
for the Year Ending 31st March 2025

EXPENDITURE	Sch	Amount Rs.	INCOME	Sch	Amount Rs.
<i>To Expenditure in respect of properties</i>			<i>By Rent</i>		-
- Rates, taxes, cesses		-	<i>By Interest</i>		-
- Repairs and Maintenance		-	- on securities		-
- Salaries		-	- on Income Tax Refund		-
- Insurance		-	- on bank account		-
- Depreciation		3,292,481.88	Savings Bank Accounts		2,272.00
(by way or provision or adjustments)			Fixed Deposit Accounts		9,773,480.10
- Other expenses		-			
<i>To Establishment Expenses</i>	4	14,978,186.46	<i>By Dividend</i>		-
[As per Schedule 4]			<i>By Donations in cash or kind</i>		-
<i>To Remuneration to trustees</i>		-	<i>By Grants</i>		8,000,000.00
<i>To Remuneration (in the case of a math)</i>			<i>By Income from other sources</i>		
<i>To the head of the math, including his household expenditure, if any</i>		-	- Annual Membership Fees		2,441,846.94
			- Scrap Sale		8,901.00
			- Others		29,719.52
<i>To Legal expenses</i>		86,500.00	<i>By Transfer from Social Programme Fund</i>	7	25,480,167.00
<i>To Audit fees</i>		48,500.00			
<i>To contribution and fees</i>		-			
<i>To Amount written off</i>					
(a) Bad debts		-			
(b) Loan scholarships		-			
(c) Irrecoverable rents		-			
(d) Other items		58,047.78			
<i>To Miscellaneous Expenses</i>		-			
<i>To Depreciations</i>	2	712,995.27			
<i>To Amounts transferred to Reserve or specific funds</i>		-			
<i>To Expenditure on objects of the Trust</i>					
(a) Religious		-			
(b) Educational		-			
(c) Medical relief		-			
(d) Relief of poverty		-			
(e) Other charitable objects	5	21,236,192.29			
[As per Schedule 5]					
<i>By Surplus carried over to Balance Sheet</i>		5,323,482.87	<i>By Deficit carried over to Balance Sheet</i>		
[Excess of Income over Expenditure]			[Excess of Expenditure over Income]		
Total		45,736,386.56	Total		45,736,386.56

As per our report of even date

For G.D. Apte & Co.
Chartered Accountants
Firm Registration No. 100515W





Ranieta Kulkarni
Partner
Membership No. 132708

Pune International Centre
Final Plot No.421/2, Ghorpadi Gaon (Koregaon Park), Pune - 411001.

Schedule 1
Details of "Other Earmarked Funds"

Particulars	Social Programme Fund	Building Fund	Total
Opening Balance	19,022,094.59	484,600,000.00	503,622,094.59
Additions during the year (Direct addition*)	17,396,383.00	238,900,000.00	256,296,383.00
Add: Interest on Building Fund		6,099,443.00	6,099,443.00
Transfer to I & E during the year	25,480,167.00	-	25,480,167.00
Closing Balance	10,938,310.59	729,599,443.00	740,537,753.59

*Please refer Annex-1 & SPV Funds Sheet

Pune International Centre
Final Plot No.421/2, Ghorpadi Gaon (Koregaon Park), Pune - 411001.

Schedule 2
Details of "Fixed Assets"

Particulars	Furniture and Fixtures	Building	Electrical Equipments	Plant & Machinery	Computers	Office Equipment	Computer Software	Land	Total
Opening Balance	160,774.80	-	-	-	185,353.05	175,710.85	4,611.19	-	526,449.90
Additions During the year	17,981,939.42	184,885,521.21	4,857,838.00	2,660,394.00	1,183,770.00	9,971.00	-	29,801,574.00	241,381,007.63
Deletions during the year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation for the year	336,303.80	3,292,481.88	85,754.98	71,065.32	191,469.29	26,557.41	1,844.48	-	4,005,477.16
Closing Balance	17,806,410.42	181,593,039.33	4,772,083.02	2,589,328.68	1,177,653.76	159,124.44	2,766.72	29,801,574.00	237,901,980.37

Pune International Centre
 Final Plot No.421/2, Ghorpadi Gaon (Koregaon Park), Pune - 411001.

Schedule 3
Details of "Other Advances"

# Sr	Particulars	Amount Rs.
1	Security Deposit for MSEDC & Maharashtra Govt.	3,214,930.00
2	Goods & Service Tax Receivable	3,020,390.94
3	Income Tax Deducted at Source	2,845,329.50
4	Income Tax TDS paid	2,709,960.87
5	Library & Other Deposit	9,000.00
6	Other Advances to Admin & Office Assistants for trust work	7,848.00
	Total	11,807,459.31

Schedule 4
Details of "Establishment Expenses"

# Sr	Particulars	Amount Rs.
1	Salary & Honararium Payble	6,640,834.00
2	Rent Rates & Taxes	1,673,279.00
3	Charges for Integrated Facility Mgt. Services	1,299,750.77
4	Campus Inauguration Day Expenses (26th Jan 2025)	1,100,523.00
5	Online Monthly Payments (Zoom, Mailchimp & All Other)	569,313.47
6	Office Electricity Charges	456,596.00
7	Telephone & Internet Charges	319,054.90
8	Office Expenses	515,599.79
9	Staff Welfare	256,528.00
10	Insurance Expenses	238,879.00
11	Zoho Creator & People Subscriptios	184,790.00
12	Fees For Professional Services	182,000.00
13	Printing & Stationery	161,249.00
14	Travelling & Conveyance	94,660.00
15	Repair & Maintenance Expenses	72,112.00
16	IT Support	69,500.00
17	Meeting Expenses	68,167.09
18	Purchase Housekeeping Material	44,350.50
19	Other Expenses (EECC Painitng Work)	27,180.71
20	Skill Development to Employee	20,097.00
21	Bank Charges	12,790.26
22	Courier Expenses	5,809.00
23	Interest on Taxes	580.00
24	Accrued Expenses	964,542.97
	Total	14,978,186.46

Schedule 5
Details of "Expenditure on Other Charitable Objects"

# Sr	Particulars	Amount Rs.
1	Programme Expenses	11,357,298.24
2	Program Related Professional Fees	3,821,478.00
3	Fellowship	3,600,505.37
4	Publications Expenses	924,111.43
5	Professional Fees - Internship	508,225.00
6	Social Media Expenses	318,138.25
7	Project Based Expenses	170,979.00
8	Accrued Program Expenses	535,457.00
	Total	21,236,192.29

EARMARKED FUNDS - BUILDING FUND SUMMARY FOR THE FY 2024-25

Particulars	Tata Trust	Reliance Foundation	Bajaj Trust	JM Financials Foundation	PIC Own & Others	Interest	Total
Opening Balances	92,600,000	200,000,000	100,000,000	50,000,000	42,000,000		484,600,000
Funds Received during the year	57,400,000	-	-		181,500,000		238,900,000
Interest		-	-				-
Total of Received Funds	150,000,000	200,000,000	100,000,000	50,000,000	223,500,000	-	723,500,000
Utilised Funds	150,000,000	138,513,570	76,592,768	50,000,000	127,385,550		542,491,888
Total of Received Funds	-	61,486,430	23,407,232	-	96,114,450		181,008,112

EARMARKED FUNDS SUMMARY FOR THE FY 2024-25

Particulars	Tata Trust	KPIT	JSW	Mr. Ravi Pandit	Anand Deshpande	Huawei	Total	Others (Reim/Cont ributions)	Grand Total
Opening Balances	7,823,564	-	226,792	-	10,000,000	971,738	19,022,094	-	19,022,094
Funds Received during the year	-	5,000,000	-	3,500,000		-	8,500,000	8,600,000	17,100,000
Interest received in bank against only tata trust funds.	296,383	-	-		-	-	296,383		296,383
Total Funds	8,119,947	5,000,000	226,792	3,500,000	10,000,000	971,738	27,818,477	8,600,000	36,418,477
Expenses during the year	8,119,947	4,061,690	226,792	3,500,000		971,738	16,880,167	8,600,000	25,480,167
Total Expenses	8,119,947	4,061,690	226,792	3,500,000	-	971,738	16,880,167	8,600,000	25,480,167
Funds/Balance Remaining	-1	938,310	-	-	10,000,000	-	10,938,310	-	10,938,310

Receipt in FY 2024-25	Amount
1. Ministry of External Affairs (AED 2024)	₹ 5,600,000.00
2. Bajaj Finance Ltd (AED 2025)	₹ 1,500,000.00
3. Amphenol (AED 2025)	₹ 1,500,000.00
Total	₹ 8,600,000.00

Receivable in FY 2024-25	Amount
1. Ministry of External Affairs (AED 2024)	₹ 5,000,000.00
2. Tata Trust	₹ 1,000,000.00
3. JSW	₹ 2,000,000.00
Total	₹ 8,000,000.00

Staff

Sr. No.	Name	Designation
1	Maj Gen Nitin Gadkari	Director
2	Ms. Kiran Pardeshi	Chief Administrative Officer
3	Mr. Neeraj Thakur	Head, Social Innovation Lab
4	Ms. Geeta Hosmane	Sr. Programme Officer
5	Mr. Ganesh D. Dhebe	Sr. Accounts Officer
6	Mr. Vitthal Borade	Property Manager
7	Mr. Mr. Tejas Pawar	Senior Admin Executive
8	Mr. Rohit Shah	Accounts Officer
9	Ms. Sheetal Panchal	Accounts Executive
10	Mr. Pranav Chandane	Documentation Officer
11	Mr. Aditya Sorte	Admin Executive
12	Mr. Harshal Chavan	Admin, IT and Network
13	Dr. Koen Lahiri	Policy Research Associate
14	Ms. Archita Joshi	Research Analyst (SI Hub)
15	Ms. Samruddhi Isave	Programme Co-ordinator SI Hub)
16	Mr. Praneet Shukla	Research Analyst (National Security)
17	Mr. Mahesh Deodhar	Research Fellow, C-SEM
18	Ms. Padmaja Uttarwar	Research Analyst, C-SEM
19	Mr. Atharv Diwan	Research Assistant, C-SEM
20	Ms. Nupur Kulkarni	Research Assistant, Science and Technology
21	Ms. Seena Mary Thankachan	Research Associate
22	Col. Rajendra Kenjalkar	Project Manager (PIC Campus)
23	Mr. Ganesh Kale	Site Engineer (PIC Campus)

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We also thank the following for their support and assistance:

- Staff of President, Vice President, Treasurer (Hon.) and General Secretary (Hon.)
- Our Bankers: IDBI Bank, Chinchwad Branch; State Bank of India (SBI), SB Road, Pune; and HDFC Bank, Bhandarkar Road Branch, Pune
- Our Auditors: M/S. S K Ekhe & Associates and M/S G D Apte & Co.
- Our Legal Advisor: Lexeye Services Pvt. Ltd.
- Our CFO Mr. Rohit Kapoor, Social Media Consultant Ms. Madhura Nanivadekar, and Senior Editor Pradeep Kumar G. Nair
- All interns who were with PIC during the year.



PUNE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

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