> To my mind, there is no doubt that this Gandhi age is the dark age of India. It is an age in which people, instead of looking for their ideals in the future, are returning to antiquity.
> -B R Ambedkar

EDITORIAL

UNBEATEN RECORD

In the realm of international cricket, rivalries add emotion, intensity, and a compelling narrative to the game. Among them, the India vs Pakistan clash has always drawn global attention, and in recent years, it's the Indian women's cricket team that has consistently stamped its dominance in this historic rivalry. The Indian eves have maintained an unbeaten record against Pakistan in ICC events, a feat that speaks volumes about their consistency, preparation, and mental toughness.

India's unbeaten record against Pakistan in women's cricket stands as a powerful testament to their dominance, discipline, and rising stature in the sport. It highlights not only their superior performance but also the growing strength and support for women's cricket in India.

Whether it's the ODI World Cup or the T20 World Cup, Indian women have showcased not only superior skills but also composure under pressure. This unblemished streak is not just a matter of pride but also a symbol of the team's growing stature on the global stage. Young players like Smriti Mandhana, and Jemimah Rodrigues, backed by veterans such as Harmanpreet Kaur and Deepti Sharma, have created a balanced unit capable of rising to any challenge.

One of the defining aspects of India's success over Pakistan has been their all-round performance. Whether it's top-order batting dominance, disciplined bowling, or sharp fielding, India has outplayed Pakistan in almost every department. Their mental resilience, especially in high-pressure matches, highlights the strong character that the team has developed over the years.

On the other hand, Pakistan's women's team, while showing signs of progress, still lacks the consistency and depth needed to challenge top-tier teams like India. The gap in infrastructure, domestic leagues, and grassroots development between the two nations has become evident in these head-to-head encounters.

This unbeaten record is more than just a statistical accomplishment. It reflects the investment, support, and growing culture of women's cricket in India, spearheaded by the BCCI's increased focus on the women's game. With the launch of the Women's Premier League (WPL) and more international exposure, Indian players are becoming household names, inspiring millions of young girls to take up the sport.

Still, for now, the Indian women's cricket team can take immense pride in its unbeaten record against Pakistan-a testament to their determination, skill, and growing legacy in world cricket.

The Comfort and Risks of India's Digital Echo Chambers

■ DR. ASHWANI KUMAR

Scroll through any social media feed in contemporary India, and a pattern quickly emerges: people aren't just consuming information; they are consuming affirmation. Platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are designed to keep users engaged by suggesting content that matches their preferences. The more you "like", the more familiar content you get. Slowly, your digital world shrinks into what we now call an "echo chamber": a space where you mostly hear your thoughts echoed back, louder each time. This phenomenon is not unique to India, but it takes on a particular edge here because it resonates so strongly with our social history. For centuries, Indian society has been organised around caste, religion, region, kinship, and gender. These were ascriptive identities, assigned at birth and often non-negotiable. People lived, worked, and socialised within their bounded groups. This is what sociologists describe as a "segmental order" in which Interaction across groups existed, but it was limited and carefully regulated/Segmented.

After Independence, India took many initiatives to weaken the traditional rigid structure. The Constitution guaranteed equality. Education created opportunities and encouraged people to think beyond caste and religion. Jobs and educational institutions brought different social groups into common spaces. Most importantly, migration, whether from village to city or across states, compelled people to engage with diversity in their everyday lives. These changes did not erase traditional identities but merely rendered them more porous. New universal frameworks of belonging-such as citizenship, secularism, rights, humanism, and professionalism-emerged to complement and augment traditional parochial interactions. The internet was expected to further accelerate this process of modernization. Digital platforms connecting millions across barriers of geography and class were conceived to deepen democracy and pluralism, but the reality has turned out to be more complicated. It is evident in social media interactions that social media platforms have reinforced the old segmental logic based on the traditional structure of caste and religion to create echo chambers.

These chambers expose users to endless streams of data that reinforce their preexisting beliefs. WhatsApp groups organised by caste perpetuate emphasizes on pride or grievance, and it may be an antagonistic relationship with other communities. Channels organised around religion on Facebook circulate content that heightens exclusivity; it may sometimes turn into fundamentalism. Male-dominated online forums recite misogynistic jokes and memes while presenting them as "cultural authenticity". Alongside this, conspiracy theories, miracle cures, and superstitions spread unchecked in closed networks where doubt is low and affirmation is high.

What keeps users addicted to these platforms is not simply a sense of identity or belongingness but pleasure. Echo chambers are addictive, especially because here users are procuring entertainment. Watching a video that mocks the "out group" or a story that includes a commentary that glorifies their community offering entertainment and gratification. It is pleasurable to see one's prejudices reaffirmed and to laugh at the characterizations of out-groups. Algorithms are designed to serve up exactly this kind of emotionally resonant content: anger, outrage, pride, or laughter. There is no doubt that it feels good, but the comfort comes at a cost. By constantly consuming only what pleases us, we risk stagnation of thought.

That is what makes echo chambers problematic, especially in the context of India, where people may hold their traditional segmental thinking in their minds. They do not just repeat ideas; they solidify them. The algorithm rewards the sensational, the polarising, and the emotional, but not what is rational or thoughtful. Over time, this holds those users deeper in a feedback loop where they become more rigid, less responsive to challenge, and unwilling to change their views. This creates what scholars call "epistemic closure": a state in which users stop engaging with alternative perspectives altogether.

In a society as plural as India, the risks are enormous. Democracy is predicated on dialogue across difference, while echo chambers encourage the opposite: the entrenchment into rigid, exclusionary identities. The digital revival of caste pride, religious exclusivity, patriarchal norms, or anti-rationalism undermines the pluralism that modern India has worked hard to build.It is not surprising that these chambers have become driving force for political actions. Electoral propaganda, targeted, manipulative misinformation, and identity-centred mobilisation can thrive in algorithmic enclaves. A fragmented public sphereemerges in which each group starts to address itself, and common national conversations might shrink. Where meaningful debate might take place, we predominantly now have parallel monologues.

So how should India respond? The answer lies in treating the problem as both technological and social. First, we must socialize digital literacy as a life skill. Learning to use the smartphone is simply not enough; citizens must understand how algorithms influence what they see, that outrage- and pleasure-driven content may feel exploitative and addictive, and how manipulation can hide under the banner of entertainment. Second, institutions-schools, media, and judiciary-must hold fast to universal principles that cut across identity barriers. Educational institutions must specifically teach the young generation to question sources, think critically, and engage with perspectives different from their own.

Third, the regulation of platforms cannot stand still. Content moderation is insufficient; the issue is accountability in terms of algorithmics. Platforms should have obligations to disclose how their systems amplify divisive or sensational content and should be held responsible for curbing harmful amplification. Finally, offline spaces of encounter are still essential. Digital exchanges can never substitute for the real life experience of diversity in classrooms, offices, neighbourhoods, and public forums. Real-world interaction promotes negotiation, empathy, and the softening of rigid identities that cannot emerge from secured echo chambers.

The strength of India's democracy is based on the way it has constructed societal pluralism by managing its diversity through dialogue, cooperation, and respect. Echo chambers always provide comfort and entertainment, at the cost of foundational risk eroding these modern values. They provide affirmation but not curiosity, coherence & complexity. They provide belonging but at the cost of openness. The challenge is not to abolish group identities; they will remain a crucial aspect of social life, but to ensure they do not become impermeable digital walls. The breach of those walls require public responsibility, institutional vigilance, and above all, the courage to move out from our algorithmic comfort zones. Democracy does not reside only in comfort. It thrives on disagreement, debate, and on the willingness to listen to voices unlike our own. The task for users is to make sure its digital spaces serve that higher democratic purpose, rather than trapping citizens.

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India's Cybersecurity in 2025: Harnessing Innovation Amid Emerging Digital Threats

■ DR. DUSHYANT PRADEEP

As India stands on the cusp of a digital revolution, its cybersecurity landscape in 2025 presents both impressive advancements and evolving challenges shaped by rapid technological integration and an expanding digital population. The country's digital economy contributes significantly to national income, with over 971 million internet subscribers and a burgeoning digital payments ecosystem. With this growth comes an increased exposure to cyber threats, making cybersecurity a critical pillar of India's socio-economic progress. This year's developments highlight a narrative of proactive response, resilience, and strategic opportunity in the face of these emerging risks.

Digital Expansion: A Catalyst for Growth and Cyber Vigilance

India's digital economy was valued at over 11.7 percent of GDP in 2022-23, contributing approximately \$402 billion, with expectations that this share will reach nearly a fifth of GDP by 2030. The proliferation of internet-connected devices, smart infrastructure, and digital services are transforming industries from healthcare and finance to education and government services. India's leadership in digital payments, with 18.3 billion transactions recorded in March 2025 alone, underscores the country's global prominence as a digital innovation hub.

This rapid digitalization fosters immense economic development, societal inclusion, and efficiency but also expands the "attack surface" for cybercriminals. From ransomware and phishing campaigns to sophisticated supply chain and AI-powered attacks, India has become the world's second most targeted cyberspace. Such a status compels stakeholders across sectors to strengthen defenses continually and innovate in cybersecurity strategies.

Cybersecurity Performance and Strengthening Defenses

Recent reports reveal a positive trend in India's cybersecurity landscape. A 26 percent reduction in cybersecurity incidents was recorded in 2024 compared to the previous year. This improvement came alongside the detection of over 369 million malware incidents, indicating robust surveillance and response mechanisms. The decreasing ratio of security incidents per detection reflects enhanced preparedness and the efficacy of national cybersecurity policies and institutions.

Government-led initiatives, including an updated National Cybersecurity Strategy and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act of 2023, provide a strong regulatory framework supporting cyber resilience. CERT-In, India's Computer Emergency Response Team, plays a pivotal role in incident response, coordination, and international collaboration, having established partnerships with several countries to counter cross-border cyber threats.

India's commitment to safeguarding critical infrastructure is evident in increased reporting requirements, strategic resource allocation, and capacity-building efforts, particularly in high-value sectors such as healthcare, banking, and hospitality. Notably, the healthcare sector witnessed heightened attacks, reflecting the sector's criticality and the urgency to fortify its digital defenses.

Emerging Technologies: Challenges and Opportunities

The advent of AI and other cutting-edge technologies presents a dual-edged sword. While AI enhances cybersecurity through rapid threat detection and automated response, it equally empowers adversaries with tools to execute large-scale, adaptive attacks. AI-driven malware, phishing campaigns, and business email compromise schemes have grown in sophistication, highlighting the need for continuous innovation in cyber defense.

Moreover, the migration to cloud computing, now accounting for a substantial portion of malware detections, necessitates advanced cloud security measures. Organizations are increasingly prioritizing cloud resource management, encryption, and access controls, reflecting their understanding of this critical vector in the cyber threat landscape.

These technological evolutions also offer disruptive opportunities for India's cybersecurity industry, spurring growth in AI-powered security solutions, endpoint protection, and real-time analytics. The Indian cybersecurity market, valued at around USD 10.8 billion in 2025 and projected to nearly double by 2032, is witnessing a surge in integrated, automated solutions that underpin the country's digital ambitions.

Building Cyber Resilience: The Role of Awareness and Workforce Development

One of the vital pillars of India's cybersecurity progress is the focus on human factors-awareness, skills development, and a culture of cyber hygiene. Despite technological advances, reports indicate that many organizations remain unaware or ill-prepared to detect cyberattacks. Addressing this gap, concerted efforts are underway to educate individuals and businesses on safe digital practices, phishing prevention, and incident reporting.

India is also investing in developing a skilled cybersecurity workforce through training programs, academic courses, and industry partnerships. Such initiatives help bridge the talent gap and ensure that organizations have the expertise to implement advanced security protocols and respond swiftly to incidents.

International Collaboration and Strategic Autonomy

India's cybersecurity outlook in 2025 features robust international cooperation, essential for combating increasingly sophisticated state-sponsored and transnational cyber threats. Through bilateral agreements and participation in global forums, India actively contributes to shaping norms and frameworks that uphold a secure digital order.

Simultaneously, the country is committed to building indigenous capabilities to ensure strategic autonomy in cybersecurity technology and infrastructure. Government and private-sector collaborations are nurturing innovative ecosystems that develop homegrown solutions and promote domestic cybersecurity startups.

The Way Forward: Innovation, Inclusion, and Integration

India's journey in cybersecurity is emblematic of its broader development trajectory-fast-paced, complex, and visionary. Sustained investments in technology, policy, and human capital are indispensable to fortifying defenses against a backdrop of evolving threats.

As digital transformation touches every aspect of life, a collective approach involving government, industry, academia, and citizens is vital. Enhancing cyber awareness across all levels, fostering inclusive growth in cybersecurity careers, and promoting ethical AI use form the cornerstone of a resilient and trustworthy cyberspace.

By embracing emerging technologies and cultivating a culture of proactive vigilance, India is well poised to lead not only as a digital powerhouse but also as a global example of cybersecurity resilience. The opportunities are vast, and so is the responsibility-to ensure that the digital future is secure, inclusive, and prosperous for all.

Life Out of Gear: When Power Replaces Purpose

■ MAHADEEP SINGH JAMWAL

Politics of optics, polarization, and borrowed progress has left the common man stranded, when the mirror image, instead of bringing realization, begins to harass those who dare to look at their own ugly face, the world turns "life out of gear." The common man today finds himself entangled in a web of political deception, economic illusion, and moral exhaustion. The wheels of governance rotate, but the vehicle of people's welfare remains stationary - a loud engine with no forward motion.

As Abraham Lincoln once said, "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." This is evident in the current political climate, where ambition blinds leaders to both duty and morality. The Bhagavad Gita also instructs: "You have the right to perform your duty, but not to the fruits thereof" (2.47), reminding us that leadership is service, not possession.

The dubious character of politicians has become the new normal. The art of governance has been reduced to a theatre of promises, a circus where illusion replaces integrity. The increasing external and internal debt, camouflaged as development, is like building castles in the air while placing silver plates before citizens - filled not with opportunity, but with five kilograms of free ration, offered as mercy rather than empowerment. The ordinary citizen deserves not crumbs from silver plates, but a future built on dignity, justice, and honest leadership.

The lust for power, even at the age of Van-Prasth, is like being half embedded in the kavar (funeral bier) while wearing a golden robe on the head, adorned with cosmetic youthful looks and the illusion of 18-hour workdays. Such self-deception transforms age into arrogance, and duty into delusion, where clinging to power becomes an obsession rather than a service. The inability to renounce power at the twilight of life is a tragedy - not of ambition, but of delusion. Those who should have become sages of guidance continue to act as emperors of illusion. As Lord Acton warned "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

As election winds blow, disguised reliefs and sudden generosity flood the streets, descend upon the public. Leaders transform overnight into benevolent 'Santa', distributing subsidies and freebies, not out of compassion but calculation. It is the season of wolves slipped in dhobi tubs - outwardly cleansed, inwardly unchanged. "When ambition refuses to age, governance forgets to grow".

The internal quest to paint colored spaces on the world map and to hover in the sky with inflated dreams resembles a squirrel jumping restlessly from branch to branch - not out of purpose, but to impress a mouse friend watching below. Such restless, noisy, but directionless ambition, devoid of substance, is movement without meaning. The Bhagavat Gita 7.14 reminds us "The divine energy of Mine, consisting of three modes of material nature, is very difficult to overcome; but those who surrender up to Me can cross beyond it." The illusion (Maya) of cosmetic grandeur and political theatries entraps leaders and citizens alike and only surrender to dharma can break the cycle.

When governance fails, religious polarization becomes the tool of survival and it remains the most lethal instrument in this political orchestra. Temples, Mosques, and symbols of faith are manipulated to hide unemployment, inflation, and administrative failures - the politics of prayer replacing the politics of performance (Bhagavad Gita 2.62-63- attachment leads to desire, anger, and delusion) and it become election booths, and faith is bartered for votes, the soul of the nation suffers. Instead of uniting hearts, we are busy dividing Gods and projecting ourselves as 'Demi-Gods'.

Life's gears are jammed not by chance but by design - a leadership obsessed with image, not integrity. True effectiveness lies in inner discipline, not external theatries (Bhagavad Gita 6.5 - uplift oneself through self discipline). Leadership rooted in ego, vanity, and greed is the seed of societal decay (Bhagavad Gita 3.21 - leaders set the example for others).

The life of the nation today is truly "out of gear." The speedometers show acceleration, but the direction is lost. Confucius reminds us, "When men are pure, laws are useless; when men are corrupt, laws are broken." The challenge before every conscious citizen is to become not just a passenger, but the mechanic - to realign the gears of morality, reason, and humanity before the vehicle of democracy collapses under the weight of deceit.

It is time for citizens to demand accountability, morality, and inclusion over spectacle, ego, and hate. "Life out of gear" is a national warning - that progress without ethics and governance without truth can only lead to decay.

The life of the nation today is "out of gear." Acceleration without direction cannot lead to progress. Illusion, greed, and religious polarization are breaking the moral compass of leadership. Citizens must become the mechanics, realigning the gears of ethics, reason, and humanity. Only through duty, selflessness, and moral courage can democracy avoid collapse.

The Decline of Human Attention Span in the Age of Social Media

■ SAMRITA CHARAK

Can you read this article without checking your phone? Or even spend a day without going through social media. No, right? In this digital era, people lack the ability to focus. There was a time when people used to hold attention for hours whether in studies, watching hour long movies or doing a chore but now many of us struggle to engage even for a few seconds. Social media plays a major role in shrinking the span of their attention with it's endless feed and addictive short form content, has rewired the way our brains consume information. Consequently, it effects learning, productivity, relationships and mental health.

Social media role-Social media has a pivotal role in managing the attention crisis among individuals. It's ability to maximize screen time and reduce the mindfulness has resulted in the reduction of attention span. Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube where the feed never ends, there are endless short form content like reels of 15-30 seconds keep people hooked longer than you intend. Algorithms on social media ensures to prioritise keywords and audience engagement tailored to your interests. Each and every notification interrupts our mind and drift our attention throughout the day. It feels like social media is using us instead of the other way around.

Consequences of a Declining Attention Span- The effects of the reducing attention span has been spread across different areas of life. In the academic field, students find it harder and boring to read long chapters which leads them to scroll through social media that a short break turns into hour of scrolling. People often get distracted and takes longer to complete even simpler tasks which leads to the act of procrastination. This constant cycle of distraction often breeds anxiety and addiction. People often feel unheard and under valued because their friend or family are half present in reality and are occupied by social media.

Can We Reclaim our Focus?- We all know that our brain is adaptable. It can help restore and increase our attention span. One can reduce their screen time and disable unnecessary notifications to focus in their real life. Instead of checking social media every few minutes, designate specific times of the day. Reading books, listening to long podcasts, or even journaling can train the brain to restore immersive engagement. A person who wants to calm his mind can actually practice meditation and deep breathing to strengthen attention span over time. The goal is not to refrain social media but to use it more wisely.

Conclusion - In this digital age, reduced attention span has become a challenge. Social media has given us number opportunities but it also has reduced our ability to stay present. The affects can be seen everywhere. Technology is not the villain, it is the overuse and lack of balance. In a world that constantly demands attention, the greatest self care is choosing where to spend it.

Focus is the New Gold, invest it where you want growth.

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