

RISE IN SPORTS

India's sporting journey has entered a transformative era-one marked not just by medals, but by a renewed national temperament, stronger institutional support, and a deep cultural shift that places sports at the heart of India's aspirations. Over the past decade, India has moved from sporadic success to sustained performance across multiple disciplines, signalling a rise that is structural, not accidental.

This new trajectory is visible in India's unprecedented achievements at global events. The country's performance at the Olympics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, and World Championships across sports like badminton, boxing, shooting, wrestling, and athletics reflects a system where talent is finally meeting opportunity. The breakthroughs by athletes such as Neeraj Chopra, P.V. Sindhu, Mirabai Chanu, and the growing pool of young champions suggest that India is breaking away from its long-standing dependence on cricket-centric glory. The narrative is becoming diverse, inclusive, and ambitious.

A major factor behind this rise is the strengthening of grassroots initiatives. Government schemes like Khelo India, Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), and state-level sports academies have created a more structured ecosystem. Unlike earlier decades, when talented athletes often faded due to lack of facilities, today's generation benefits from scientific training, nutrition support, international exposure, and world-class coaching. This systemic investment is slowly but steadily bridging the gap between India and established sporting nations.

Equally critical is the cultural shift taking place in Indian society. Parents who once viewed sports as a distraction from academics are increasingly recognising it as a viable career. This acceptance, combined with the visibility of successful athletes, has encouraged children from small towns and rural regions to dream beyond limitations. The democratization of sports has brought extraordinary talent from districts once never heard of in national competitions. Their rise serves as both inspiration and a reminder of the potential that lies in India's villages and towns.

The role of private sector involvement-through leagues, sponsorships, and corporate sports initiatives-has also been transformative. Leagues in wrestling, kabaddi, badminton, and football have elevated the profile of non-cricket sports, offering athletes financial stability and international exposure. The collaboration between government, federations, and private stakeholders is stronger than ever before.

LIFE LESSONS FOR STUDENTS-HOW TO QUESTION YOURSELF?

■ PROF K S CHANDRASEKAR



You are responsible for your own success and failure. Any growth or slump is basically due to your own deeds and efforts. It is said that you are the master of your thought, moulder of your own world, creator of your own destiny and the maker and shaper of the conditions and environment. Remember that the quality of your life is determined by the quality of your thoughts. The more positive you think the more positive your future will be. You should realise that thoughts are power. Train yourself to see the positive side of every situation. With practice you can achieve almost anything. Breathe-in the fire of passion into everything you do.

Keep the promises you make to others - and to yourself. For that you should first develop will power. For that do the thing that you are till now reluctant to do, of course the positive things only. For example, if you feel like watching a program when there are so much work pending to do, yet you feel too lazy to switch off the program, force yourself to do just that. Likewise if you decide to walk back home and at the last minute you are making any silly excuses try to persuade your mind to do what you have decided earlier which is good for you physically and mentally. You feel more confident if you do something to improve your will power. As it is said "Do the thing you fear to achieve what you dream to achieve". Remember the project that most scares you is the project you need to do first and will benefit you the most. The brave does not run away from problems. When you go to your limit your limit expands. Always try to

step out of your comfort zone, because life begins at the end of your comfort zone. Small daily improvements are the key to staggering long-term results. You can decide on doing something simple and a small step at a time can lead to a big achievement of a life time. But the most important point is to be persistent in whatever you are doing. And of course don't try to find any excuses for not doing.

Do as the popular saying "Take time to smell the flowers". Enjoy the present, for this may not exist tomorrow as the popular film title "Kal Ho Na Ho". So live and cherish the present moment. Treat and enjoy every day as a new beginning. Don't ever be too busy to enjoy the little pleasures of your life. Stop being busy without even time to look after your loved ones. Please remember that no job is worth losing your loved ones. It is ultimately their trust and love that we have. Now onwards invest more time for your family and deliberately try to improve relations. Evaluate what would the child that I once was, think of the adult that I am now. In a world where technology is causing some of us to forget how to act human, become the politest person you know. Give your teammates, customers and family one of the greatest gifts of all, the gift of your attention (and presence).Every morning ask yourself: "How can I best serve the most people?"

Every night ask yourself: "What 5 good things happened to me this day?" Try to leave your ego at the door every morning and remember the best ever idea for happy living is living a life of simplicity. Be the first one to say "Hello". Try to communicate using people's names. Say "please" and "thank you". Reward people for the good work they are doing. Encourage creativity and authenticity. Become a brilliant listener. Help the people

around you to realize their potential and grow. Take time to discipline yourself first, including the discipline to wake up early, giving up that thing you think is not beneficial to you even though you enjoy it very much. Be known as a person of Integrity.

Try to start something new every day. It is said that the greatest failure is the failure to try. Remember that all great ideas were first ridiculed. If it is of any help, try to remember that critics are dreamers gone scared. It is said that the harder you work the luckier you get. Take 60 minutes every weekend to craft a blueprint for the coming seven days. Make an action plan for the coming week, if not in detail, just outlines. Don't expect everyone to like you. You can't be a visionary if you long to be liked. You have to decide and act for the benefit of the majority. Only thing that matters is that you have to be true to yourself first, then only you can be to the world. Leave every project you touch at work better than you found it. Be prepared to give more than anybody expects you to deliver. Your job is not just to work; your job is to leave a trail of leaders behind you. A job is not 'just a job'. Every job is a gorgeous vehicle to express your gifts and talents - and to model exceptionalism for all around you. Being a leader is not about being liked, it is about doing what is right. Do more than you're paid to do and do work that leaves your teammates breathless. Remember the secret to happiness is doing work that matters and being an instrument of service. Don't let fears unfaced become your limits?

Now the most important thing. You should remember that a healthy mind can reside in a healthy body only. The popular saying "Health is wealth" is one hundred percent right. Get up at 5 am and take 60 minutes

to prepare your mind, body, emotions and spirit to be remarkable during the hours that follow. Being a superstar is not the domain of only the gifted but the prepared. Try to meditate. In this fast paced life we might often feel out of control. It is in these times that meditation helps by de-cluttering your mind. It helps you understand yourself better allowing more space for self-introspection. It is great health booster. By doing meditation you will get more energy and there is less chance of falling ill, and your memory will certainly improve along with more concentration. You will have more restful sleep and a better start to the next day. Drink more water. Eat fresh vegetables fruits. Trust the two doctors that you have with you, your left leg and your right leg. Make full use of their service. Try to walk up your life. Walking helps to solve almost all the lifestyle diseases. Try to think while you are walking, "I am more powerful than I appear to be, the power of the whole universe reside inside me". Or you could just repeat "I am confident and smart" or whatever you want to be like. You will certainly feel more confident and enthusiastic after a walk. And of course enjoy your walk. Set 5 daily goals every morning. These small wins will lead to nearly 2000 little victories by the end of the year. Embrace all that good in your life. Don't be the richest person in the graveyard. Life's short. The greatest risk is risk-less living-and settling for average. Always enjoy your life as it comes and try that with your family in total. "Success doesn't come to you? You go to it." Was the quote by Marva Collins which inspires every one and students are no exception.

(The author is Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu)

A Society's test of humanity: Reimagining Disability inclusion in Jammu & Kashmir

■ MOHAMMAD HANIEF



The International Day of Persons with Disabilities, observed worldwide on December 3, is a reminder of humanity's shared responsibility to uphold dignity, equality, and opportunity for all. In 2025, the theme - Fostering disability-inclusive societies for advancing social progress - urges nations to look beyond symbolic gestures and to genuinely integrate disability inclusion into the foundations of development. Social progress cannot be claimed as long as persons with disabilities remain on the margins, unheard and unrecognized.

The observance of this day invites society to reimagine inclusion as more than a policy or a goodwill gesture. It calls for a transformation in how communities value diversity and how institutions design education, employment, healthcare, public transport, and civic life. A disability-inclusive society recognizes that progress is incomplete unless every person can participate fully and independently.

The 2025 theme stresses that inclusion must become central to social development - not an add-on, not welfare-driven, but rights-based and structurally embedded.

Across the globe, persons with disabilities continue to face deep structural barriers: inaccessible infrastructure, limited healthcare, unemployment, lack of social protection, and an absence of meaningful representation in decision-making. Many remain confined to poverty and social isolation because systems fail to support them.

These barriers are not merely physical; they are attitudinal and systemic. The absence of accessible transport, inaccessible education systems, and workplaces unprepared to accommodate diverse needs reveal how society still treats disability as an afterthought rather than a shared responsibility.

While global challenges are undeniable, the lived pain of specially abled persons in Jammu and Kashmir deserves particular attention. The region's terrain, climate, governance complexities, and infrastructural limitations intensify the struggles faced by persons with disabilities. For many, daily life is a battle against barriers that others do not see.

In remote villages, the absence of accessible roads, ramps, or reliable transport means that individuals often remain confined to their homes. Winters make this confinement even harsher - snowbound roads, frozen pathways, and long power



outages leave many cut off from medical care, therapy, education, and social interaction. A trip to the hospital for someone in a wheelchair can become a day-long ordeal, if it's possible at all. Children with disabilities often experience heartbreaking disruptions in their education. Schools lack accessible classrooms, inclusive teaching methods, or basic assistive devices. Some students are carried by family members to upper floors because buildings have no ramps or elevators - a painful reminder of how society still fails to plan for their presence. Others simply drop out because they cannot navigate the physical and social barriers around them.

In many households, the emotional toll is immense. Parents worry not just about survival, but about dignity. A mother pushing her child's wheelchair through muddy streets, a father carrying his son on his back to tuition classes, a young girl with hearing impairment struggling because her school has no interpreter - these are everyday realities in Jammu & Kashmir.

The pain is not always visible. It lies in the silence of a talented student who cannot join college because buses are inac-

cessible, in the frustration of a skilled youth denied employment due to assumptions about capability, and in the loneliness experienced by those whose world shrinks because society does not expand enough to include them.

Employment opportunities remain scarce, and workplaces are rarely equipped for persons with disabilities. Many are forced to remain financially dependent, not due to lack of talent, but due to a lack of accessible and inclusive systems. For families surviving on limited incomes, the cost of assistive devices, therapies, or frequent travel to hospitals outside the region adds crushing financial pressure.

These hardships underline a simple truth: inclusion in Jammu & Kashmir is not just a policy requirement - it is a moral and humanitarian necessity.

Even amid challenges, education remains a beacon of hope. When schools and colleges adopt inclusive practices, they empower youth with disabilities to dream beyond limitations. But meaningful inclusion requires infrastructure that accommodates all learners and teachers trained to understand diverse needs.

Technology, too, has emerged as a lifesaver - from mobility aids to hearing devices and digital learning tools. Yet access to these technologies is uneven due to high costs and limited availability, especially in rural and hilly regions of Jammu & Kashmir. Ensuring equitable access is essential for transforming lives.

Economic empowerment is crucial to restoring dignity. Persons with disabilities in the region often depend on inconsistent financial assistance and scarce job opportunities. Social protection schemes are helpful but insufficient when accessibility barriers remain unaddressed. To build a truly inclusive society, employment spaces must adapt rather than expect individuals to fit into existing systems.

True inclusion means that persons with disabilities participate in decisions that shape their lives. Representation in policymaking, community committees, and local governance strengthens accountability and ensures that disability-related issues are neither overlooked nor misunderstood.

The promise of the 2025 theme can only take shape when disability inclusion becomes a shared priority - in government planning, civil society efforts, community behaviour, and institutional design. Jammu & Kashmir has taken steps toward accessibility, but the transformation must go deeper, faster, and wider.

Every ramp built, every accessible classroom created, every assistive device provided, and every barrier removed carries the potential to change a life. And every act of empathy - a teacher listening, a neighbour helping, a policymaker understanding - can inspire a chain of inclusion.

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is more than an observance; it is a judgement of a society's values. A truly progressive, compassionate, and stable society is one where no individual is left behind - where disability does not mean exclusion, dependence, or silence.

As the world marks IDPD 2025, the message is clear: social progress is impossible without disability inclusion. The pain, resilience, and aspirations of specially abled persons in Jammu & Kashmir remind us that the path to justice begins with accessibility, respect, and equitable opportunity.

An inclusive world is not just a goal - it is a responsibility. And it starts with acknowledging the struggles, embracing the potential, and building systems where every person, regardless of ability, can live with dignity, pride, and hope.

(The author is a senior analyst)

Carbon Budgeting: India's Path to Net-Zero

■ EVA SHARMA, JYOTI KACHROO & ANIL BHAT

The global climate crisis is no longer a distant threat but a present reality, with record-breaking temperatures and extreme weather events reshaping our world. The scientific community has been unequivocal in that order to limit global warming and prevent the catastrophic environmental and social collapse, the world must operate within a strict "Carbon Budget".

A carbon budget is not an abstract financial term but a finite and rapidly diminishing resource-the total amount of carbon dioxide the world can release into the atmosphere while maintaining a reasonable chance of staying within a specific temperature threshold. The most recent statistics offer a disturbing perspective showing that the world is on track to exhaust the 1.5°C carbon budget in roughly six years as the global fossil fuel emissions hit a record high of 37.4 billion tonnes in 2024. This trajectory is not merely an environmental concern but it threatens to destabilize global economies, cripple agricultural productivity and inflict severe health consequences. Therefore, decisive and collaborative actions from every nation become more imperative.

Amid this global urgency, India has demonstrated remarkable leadership through its proactive climate policy. The nation has set a bold target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2070, a commitment backed by a series of ambitious and achievable goals. These include reducing the emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030 (from 2005 levels) and boosting its non-fossil energy capacity to 500 GW by the same year. Having already met its previous commitments ahead of schedule, India's actions are strategic national commitments rather than mere claims.

While the energy sector remains the largest contributor to India's CO2 emissions, a significant part of the climate solution lies in an often-overlooked sector: Agriculture. The farming community which accounts for a substantial portion of non-CO2 greenhouse gases like methane and nitrous oxide (primarily released from enteric fermentation and fertilizer use) holds the key to India's carbon sequestration potential. Innovative and climate-smart practices such as agroforestry, conservation tillage and the introduction of biochar into soil not only enhance food security and crop resilience but also actively remove carbon from the atmosphere, storing it in soil and biomass. Studies in India show that aboveground carbon sequestration in these systems can range from 0.23 to 23.55 Mg C ha⁻¹yr⁻¹, while below-



ground sequestration adds another 0.03 to 5.08 Mg C ha⁻¹yr⁻¹. Furthermore, the concept of "Blue Carbon" is gaining prominence. India's vast coastal ecosystems particularly its mangrove forests covering nearly 5,000 square kilometers, are powerful carbon sinks. They currently store an

estimated 702.42 MT of CO2 and have the potential to sequester 748.17 MT of CO2 by 2030. Initiatives like the Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI), National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) schemes are a testament to India's focus on harnessing these natural assets for climate mitigation and economic benefits. The government's initiatives to promote these methods have already yielded significant results as India has already sequestered 2.29 billion tonnes of carbon since 2005.

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is a prime example of a region taking a focused approach to climate action. A comprehensive State-Specific Climate Change Action Plan (SSCC Action Plan) has been published, aiming to determine greenhouse gas emissions and develop mitigation strategies based on vulnerability analysis of each district. Specific carbon sequestration initiatives in the region demonstrate the potential of natural ecosystems. Natural forests with species like Blue Pine have been identified as having very high carbon sequestration potential (e.g., 1,634.561 t ha⁻¹ of CO2 equivalent). Poplar and Willow plantations also show significant capacity, with Poplar up to 1,161.106 t ha⁻¹ and White Willow up to 1,075.24 CO2e tons ha⁻¹. A study in the Kupwara district estimated that agroforestry systems can sequester 1.46 lakh tonnes of CO2 equivalent annually. It has also been found that the potential revenue from these systems is significant, with the Forest land-use system valued at a total of Rs. 2,469.17 million, Agroforestry land-use system's at Rs. 12,147.02 (per-hectare CSP), while the Horticulture system showed a revenue potential of Rs. 5,295.05 (per ha).

Beyond agriculture, the government is making strides in green mobility as well. In Jammu and Kashmir, electric buses have been introduced to promote zero-emission vehicles. Ladakh has also launched a hydrogen bus pilot project estimated to cut 350 tonnes of carbon emissions and generate 230 tonnes of pure oxygen annually which is equivalent to planting 13,000 trees.

These schemes combined with a growing understanding of carbon farming's potential both at the national and localized level indicate that India is not just fulfilling its international obligations but actively shaping its sustainable future. While the path to net-zero presents formidable challenges, from technological hurdles to economic shifts and a rapidly shrinking global carbon budget, India's sustained approach and strategic resource utilization promise a more resilient and prosperous future.