Don't take rest after your first victory because if you fail in second, more lips are waiting to say that your first victory was just luck.
-Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

ENVIRONMENT: ISSUE OF GLOBAL IMPORTANCE

The environment is no longer a distant concern confined to scientific conferences or policy debates-it is the defining issue of our time. From rising global temperatures and extreme weather events to biodiversity loss and water scarcity, the planet is sending clear and urgent signals. Environmental degradation transcends national borders, political ideologies, and economic systems. It is a global challenge that demands collective responsibility and coordinated action.

Climate change stands at the forefront of environmental concerns. Increasing greenhouse gas emissions have led to unprecedented warming, resulting in melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and more frequent natural disasters. Floods, droughts, wildfires, and heatwaves are no longer rare occurrences; they are becoming the new normal. These changes not only threaten ecosystems but also jeopardize food security, public health, and livelihoods, particularly in vulnerable and developing regions.

Equally alarming is the rapid loss of biodiversity. Forests are being cleared at an unsustainable rate, oceans are polluted with plastic waste, and countless species face extinction due to habitat destruction and climate shifts. Biodiversity is not merely about protecting wildlife; it is about preserving the intricate balance that sustains human life. Healthy ecosystems provide clean air, fresh water, fertile soil, and pollination of crops-services that are invaluable and irreplaceable.

Pollution, in its many forms, further compounds the crisis. Air pollution contributes to millions of premature deaths each year, while contaminated water sources expose communities to disease and hardship. Industrial waste, chemical runoff, and improper waste management practices continue to degrade land and marine environments. Urbanization and rapid industrial growth, though essential for economic progress, must be balanced with sustainable planning and environmental safeguards.

The environmental crisis is also a moral and ethical issue. Future generations will inherit the consequences of today's actions. Unsustainable consumption patterns, excessive reliance on fossil fuels, and careless exploitation of natural resources reflect a short-term mindset that disregards long-term sustainability. There is an urgent need to transition toward renewable energy, promote sustainable agriculture, encourage responsible consumption, and invest in green technologies.

Governments play a crucial role in framing policies that reduce emissions, protect natural habitats, and promote clean energy solutions. International cooperation is vital, as environmental challenges are interconnected and global in scope.

A Defining Leap in India's AI Journey

■ **BAIRAJ CHAWALGAMI**

The recently convened India AI Impact Summit 2026 marks a decisive moment in India's technological journey, signaling the country's transition from a fast-growing digital economy to a serious global contender in artificial intelligence leadership. Hosted in the national capital amid heightened global competition in advanced computing and machine learning, the summit brought together policymakers, technology executives, startup founders, researchers, investors, and public sector strategists under one roof, creating a rare confluence of vision, capital, and capability. The gathering was not merely ceremonial; it functioned as a working platform where policy direction, commercial ambition, and scientific innovation intersected with unusual clarity. The atmosphere throughout the summit reflected urgency rather than celebration. Artificial intelligence is no longer treated as a speculative frontier but as core infrastructure - as vital as energy, transport, or telecommunications. Delegates repeatedly emphasized that AI will shape productivity, national competitiveness, governance delivery, and even geopolitical leverage in the coming decade. India's pitch was clear: it does not intend to remain only a consumer market for imported AI systems but aims to become a builder, trainer, and exporter of intelligent technologies tailored to diverse linguistic, economic, and social environments.

Government representatives outlined a framework centered on compute capacity expansion, public data platforms, indigenous model development, and startup acceleration. Discussions highlighted the creation of shared AI infrastructure - including high-performance computing clusters and national datasets - designed to lower entry barriers for researchers and smaller firms. Rather than allowing AI innovation to concentrate exclusively within a handful of multinational corporations, the policy thrust favors a distributed innovation ecosystem in which universities, mid-sized enterprises, and public institutions can participate meaningfully. Industry leaders, meanwhile, focused on deployment at scale. Case studies presented at the summit demonstrated how AI systems are already optimizing logistics networks, accelerating medical diagnostics, modernizing agricultural advisories, detecting financial fraud, and strengthening cybersecurity defenses. What distinguished these presentations was their emphasis on measurable outcomes rather than conceptual promise. Speakers cited reductions in operational cost, improvements in service delivery time, and increased predictive accuracy across sectors - metrics that moved the conversation from hype to performance. A recurring theme was

India's linguistic and demographic complexity, framed not as a barrier but as a competitive advantage. With hundreds of languages and dialects, vast public service networks, and one of the world's largest pools of digital users, India offers unparalleled real-world training ground for multilingual and multimodal AI systems. Developers argued that models trained in such heterogeneous environments tend to become more robust, adaptable, and globally transferable. Several firms showcased language models and voice systems optimized for Indian languages, aiming to close the accessibility gap that has historically limited digital adoption.

The startup corridor at the summit attracted particular attention. Young companies demonstrated AI applications in climate modeling, legal analytics, rural credit scoring, medical imaging, and educational personalization. Investors present at the venue described a noticeable shift in funding philosophy: from consumer app experimentation toward deep-tech platforms with defensible intellectual property. Venture capital panels suggested that the next wave of AI value will emerge from domain-specific solutions rather than generic tools, especially in regulated sectors such as healthcare, finance, and governance technology. Ethics and regulation formed a parallel track of deliberation. Experts warned that unchecked algorithmic deployment can magnify bias, erode privacy, and destabilize labor markets. The regulatory tone advocated at the summit avoided extremes - neither laissez-faire nor overly restrictive. Instead, speakers supported a risk-tiered approach in which high-impact AI systems face stricter audit and transparency requirements while low-risk applications remain lightly regulated to preserve innovation velocity. There was broad agreement that trust will be the decisive currency of AI adoption, and that transparent model behavior, accountable data sourcing, and redress mechanisms must be embedded early. Workforce transformation emerged as another focal concern. Contrary to popular fear narratives predicting mass technological unemployment, multiple research presentations suggested a more nuanced outcome: role transformation rather than wholesale displacement. Automation is expected to absorb repetitive tasks while elevating demand for supervisory, analytical, and creative competencies. Education leaders at the summit called for rapid curriculum modernization, integrating AI literacy, data reasoning, and human-machine collaboration skills into mainstream higher and vocational education.

International cooperation was visibly woven into the summit's structure. Delegations and corporate participants from multiple regions discussed interoperability standards, cross-border

research partnerships, and shared safety benchmarks. India positioned itself as a bridge between advanced AI economies and emerging markets - capable of translating frontier technology into scalable public solutions. This diplomatic framing aligns with the broader ambition of shaping global AI norms rather than passively inheriting them. Cybersecurity specialists issued a sober warning that AI simultaneously strengthens and complicates digital defense. While machine learning dramatically improves anomaly detection and threat response speed, adversaries are also weaponizing AI to generate more adaptive attacks. Panels urged synchronized investment in defensive AI, secure model training pipelines, and resilient data architecture. The consensus view held that AI security cannot be an afterthought layered onto finished systems; it must be engineered from inception. Commercial exhibitors displayed rapid advances in multimodal systems capable of processing text, image, voice, and sensor data in integrated workflows. Demonstrations included real-time translation engines, autonomous inspection drones, predictive maintenance platforms, and AI copilots for enterprise software. Observers noted that user interface simplicity has improved markedly, lowering the expertise threshold required to deploy sophisticated models - a factor likely to accelerate adoption across small and medium enterprises.

Beyond the technical discourse, the summit carried symbolic weight. It projected confidence that India's digital public infrastructure - identity systems, payment rails, and open networks - provides fertile substrate for AI innovation at population scale. By aligning AI strategy with inclusive service delivery rather than purely commercial gain, policymakers attempted to frame technological advancement as a public good rather than an elite privilege. The closing sentiment across sessions was neither utopian nor alarmist, but strategic. Artificial intelligence was portrayed as a force multiplier whose benefits depend on governance quality, talent development, infrastructure readiness, and ethical discipline. The summit's central message resonated with pragmatic optimism: nations that invest early in capability, guardrails, and broad participation will shape the rules and reap the rewards. As delegates departed, the measure of success was not the volume of announcements but the density of commitments - funding pledges, research collaborations, pilot programs, and policy timelines. Whether these translate into durable outcomes will depend on execution beyond the conference halls. Yet one conclusion appears unmistakable: India has moved decisively from observing the AI revolution to actively engineering its place within it.

Baba Jittmal of Jhiri: The Living Legacy of Agrarian Dignity

■ **ASHUTOSH PANDEY**

The shrine of Baba Jittmal in Jhiri, Jammu, is not just a religious site; it serves as a strong symbol of farmers' dignity, social justice, and Dogra cultural identity. Commonly known as Baba Jitto, he is remembered as a 15th-century folk hero who gave his life to defend labor and fairness.

Baba Jittmals story is still talked about today through stories people tell each other, Dogri literature and what people in the area remember. His influence is still changing the way people think about things.

Historians say that in the century Jammu was a place where people mostly worked on farms. The people who owned the land were in charge. The peasants did all the work. This system of sharing the crops often led to people being treated

Baba Jittmals fight for what's right happened because of the way society was at that time. People say Baba Jittmal came from a farming family and lived with his daughter, Bua Kaudi. Baba Jittmal is still a figure, in the history of the area. Facing financial difficulties, he moved from the Amb Gharota region to Jhiri and began working on a sharecropping arrangement. Through hard work, he produced a good harvest, but when it was time to divide the crop, the landlord demanded more than their agreed

share.

People say that when Baba Jittmal had no way to get justice he decided to give up his life on his own grain pile. This thing he did has become a symbol of standing up against unfair things that happen to farmers. People still remember that the grain Baba Jittmal had was found with blood on it and nobody wanted to eat it. After Baba Jittmal died his daughter Bua Kaudi also gave up her life. In Dogra culture what Baba Jittmal and Bua Kaudi did is seen as the example of being very brave and good. Baba Jittmal and Bua Kaudi are remembered for their sacrifice. Over time, the site of sacrifice transformed into a place of deep devotion. Today, the Jhiri shrine stands as a living memorial, where offering wheat symbolizes the dignity of labor and food.

Every year on Kartik Purnima, the Jhiri fair is a big deal for the people of Jammu. It is one of the gatherings of people in Jammu. Thousands of people go to the fair. They bring grain for Baba Jittmal. They do this to remember the work that farmers do. The Jhiri fair is about religion. It is also about the culture of the Dogra people. Many families from the Dogra community think of Baba Jittmal as their family deity.

For families, especially those who work on the land and the Brahmin

families Baba Jittmal is a very important part of their family rituals. The people who take care of the shrine are priests who have been doing this work for a very long time and their families have been doing it for generations. The Jhiri fair and the worship of Baba Jittmal are very important, to the people of Jammu and the Dogra community. They share his story with visitors and perform the grain offering ceremony.

In Dogri folk songs and literature, Baba Jittmal is depicted as a "farmer of righteousness." Cultural scholars rank his story among the earliest folk expressions of peasant resistance. Even today, his character remains highly relevant, reminding society that economic justice arises not only from laws but also from moral courage. The shrine at Jhiri continues to assert that society's foundation relies on the labor and dignity of its workers.

Baba Jittmal's legacy is not limited to the past; it serves as an ongoing inspiration rooted in justice, self-respect, and the honor of labor. His story raises the farmer from a mere food provider to a symbol of moral strength-a living testament to the ethical power of sacrifice and truth.

(The writer is Student, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Jammu)

Baba Chamliyal Shrine - 320 Years of Faith, Healing and Unity

■ **BHARTI SHARMA**

Baba Chamliyal Shrine is a famous holy place located in the Ramgarh sector of Samba district in Jammu and Kashmir. It is around 42 kilometers from Jammu city and very close to the India-Pakistan International Border. This shrine is more than 320 years old and is known for faith, healing and unity. Every year, thousands of people visit this place to pray and seek blessings. The shrine is dedicated to Baba Dalip Singh Manhas, who is popularly known as Baba Chamliyal. He was a kind and simple man who lived in Chamliyal village. He spent his life helping poor and needy people. He gave water to thirsty travelers and supported those who were suffering. Because of his good nature and service to people, he became very respected in the whole region.

With time, his name became famous not only in nearby villages but also across the border. Many people believed that he had special blessings and could cure skin diseases.

According to belief, Baba Chamliyal was invited to Saidawali village, which is now in Pakistan and is about 500 meters across the border from the shrine. It is said that he was called there with respect, but he was betrayed and killed there. His death was a very sad event for the people who loved and respected him.

People believe that after his death,

something unusual happened. His head fell in Chamliyal village on the Indian side, while the rest of his body remained in Saidawali on the Pakistan side. Because of this belief, Samadhis (memorial shrines) were built at both places - one in Chamliyal (India) and another in Saidawali (Pakistan). Even today, both places are respected.

There is also an important story connected with his blessings. It is believed that one of Baba Ji's devotee was suffering from a serious skin disease. One night, Baba Chamliyal appeared to him in a dream. In the dream, Baba Ji told him to apply the soil of present-day Chamliyal, known as "Shakkar" and use the water called "Sharbat" daily while bathing. The devotee followed his instructions with faith. Within a few days, he became completely healthy.

After this incident, people's faith became even stronger. Since then, people from all religions have been coming with belief and respect to visit the Samadhi. Many people who suffer from skin diseases apply Shakkar and use Sharbat with faith and they believe they get relief. Because of these beliefs and experiences, the annual Mela is celebrated in his memory on both sides - in India and in Pakistan. Every year in June, a three-day fair called the Baba Chamliyal Mela is organized, usually on the

fourth Thursday of June. The exact date changes every year, but it always falls in the month of June. Thousands of people gather to offer prayers. The administration arranges proper security, medical camps, drinking water and traffic control for visitors.

For many years, one special tradition of this Mela was the exchange between India and Pakistan. A chadar was sent from the Pakistan side as a mark of respect. In return, Shakkar and Sharbat were given from the Indian side through the Border Security Force (BSF). This exchange was seen as a symbol of peace and goodwill.

However, in June 2018, after heavy firing at the Chamliyal post in which four BSF personnel were martyred, security became strict. Since then, Pakistani Rangers are not allowed to cross to the Indian side. Now, Shakkar and Sharbat are sent through tractors or trucks under tight security arrangements and the chadar is also sent in a controlled way.

Even after 320 years, people's faith has not reduced. Baba Chamliyal Shrine continues to spread the message of kindness, service, belief and unity beyond borders.

(This writer is student of Mass Communication & New Media at the Central University of Jammu)