

**EU PROPOSED 'NEW STRATEGIC EU-INDIA AGENDA'**

EU has unveiled a New Strategic Agenda with India, focusing on **5 key pillars** and aiming to finalize the world's largest FTA by the end of 2025.

Significance of India-EU Relations

- ⌘ **Diplomatic Relations:** India established ties with the European Economic Community in 1962, upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2004.
- ⌘ **Trade Partnership:** EU is India's **2nd-largest trading partner** (€120 billion, 11.5% of trade).
- ⌘ **Strategic Alignment:** Shared interests in security, renewable energy, climate action, & multilateralism, with bilateral dialogues on counter-terrorism, cyber security, migration, etc.
- ⌘ **Infrastructure Cooperation:** The India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) fosters cooperation in semiconductors, AI, clean energy, and digital finance.
- ⌘ **Global Governance:** EU supports India's trade diversification and advocates a rules-based order in forums like G20, WTO & UNSC.

Barriers to India-EU Relations	Way Forward
Stalled FTA Negotiations: Delays due to EU's demand for lower tariffs on automobiles, spirits, and dairy, while India seeks access for pharmaceuticals & IT services; EU's CBAM adds challenges for Indian exporters.	Accelerate FTA and Trade Facilitation: Resolve tariff disputes, fast-track FTA, and attract European investment in India's manufacturing sector.
Investment & Regulatory Barriers: EU's trade regulations and investment protection concerns, highlighted by Switzerland suspending the MFN clause in Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with India.	Establish a Data-Sharing Framework: Negotiate an EU-US Privacy Shield and implement mutual recognition frameworks to reduce compliance costs.
Foreign Policy Divergences: India's ties with Russia, including military exercises & oil purchases, conflict with EU's stance on sanctions.	Green Technology Partnerships: Enhance cooperation in renewable energy, green hydrogen, electric vehicles, and carbon-neutral technologies.
Supply Chain Risks: Dependency on China continues to pose risks to supply chains, exposing both regions to geopolitical tensions and disruptions.	Enhance Security Cooperation: Expand joint naval exercises, cyber defense, and intelligence sharing; align defense strategies (Indo-Pacific) to counter China.

5 Pillars of New Strategic EU-India Agenda**Prosperity & Innovation**

Focuses on economic growth and technological advancement.

**Security & Defence**

Enhances cooperation in security and defence sectors.

**Connectivity & Global Issues**

Promotes global connectivity and multilateral engagement.

**People-to-People**

Facilitates cultural exchange and mobility between people.

**Enablers**

Supports coordination and strategic planning for effective implementation.

STUBBLE BURNING IN INDIA

To tackle Delhi's pollution, the **SC directed Punjab, Haryana & UP to fill State Pollution Control Board vacancies in 3 months** and urged the Union Govt to penalize stubble burning.

Stubble Burning

- ⌘ The practice of **burning leftover straw after harvesting crops like paddy & wheat**, b/w late Sept and early Nov.
- ⌘ **Reasons:**
 - ❖ **Mono-Cropping:** MSP system favors wheat & rice, which leads farmers to burn crop residues to prepare fields quickly.
 - ❖ **Cost-Effectiveness:** Cheaper than other disposal methods like shredders or balers.
 - ❖ **Weed Management:** Fire eliminates weeds & seeds, reducing herbicide use.

- ❖ **Limited Options:** Lack of infrastructure & awareness of alternatives like composting or bioenergy.
- ❖ **Climate Impact:** Erratic monsoons & rising temperatures delay harvests, pushing farmers to burn stubble.
- ⌘ **Impacts:** Releases pollutants (**PM10, PM2.5, NOx, methane, CO, VOCs**), contributes to GHG emissions, and depletes soil nutrients, moisture & microbes.

Challenges in Controlling Stubble Burning	Way Forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combine harvesters leave 10-15 cm of stubble, difficult to manage without specialized equipment; CHCs lack machinery. Unclear definitions of stubble burning, environmental compensation & confusing compliance rules burden farmers. Limited subsidies for machinery & weak frameworks for environmental compensation funds hinder implementation. Lack of training on sustainable alternatives leads to reliance on traditional practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement crop mapping, build storage, support supply chains, use Microbe Pusa & Happy Seeder; promote short-duration paddy varieties; convert stubble to fodder/manure/biofuel. Propose MSP for paddy residue to reduce stubble burning, recommended by Committee on Subordinate Legislation. Provide guaranteed prices for stubble, set annual benchmark prices, and ensure returns cover costs. Introduce MGNREGA-like programs for stubble harvesting, composting, & reward eco-friendly practices

Initiatives to Tackle Stubble Burning



KERALA MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE URBANISATION IN INDIA

Kerala, with urbanization set to exceed 80% by 2050, is the **first state to establish an Urban Policy Commission (KUPC)** with a **25-year roadmap** for sustainable urbanization. Its report offers key lessons on growth, climate resilience, governance & financial empowerment.

India's urban population will reach **600 Mn (40%) by 2036, up from 31% in 2011**, with cities driving **~70% of GDP**.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT

- Use **hazard maps** (floods, landslides, coastal risks) to prevent disaster-prone development.
- Set up a digital observatory with **LiDAR**, satellite data & weather sensors for municipalities.
- Introduce **green fees** for eco-sensitive projects & climate insurance for resilience.
- Major cities issue **municipal bonds** and smaller towns should use **pooled bonds** for infrastructure funding.
- Create elected city cabinets, expert teams in municipalities & launch "**Jnanashree**" for skilled youth in governance.
- Promote strengths of cities (Kochi as FinTech hub); restore wetlands, waterways & heritage zones.
- Establish **City Health Councils** for migrants, students, etc.
- Integrate community experiences** (e.g., fisherfolk, street vendors) into urban data for participatory planning.

Measures Offered by the Kerala Model for Urban Planning

Mnemonic: KERALA

- ⌘ **K – Knowledge & Community Data:** Blend satellite, sensor data, and citizen inputs for policies reflecting lived realities.
- ⌘ **E – Elected & Specialist Governance:** Shift bureaucratic inertia to elected city cabinets, specialist municipal cells & youth technocrats; set up **time-bound urban commissions**.
- ⌘ **R – Resilience & Climate Integration:** Integrate hazard mapping and resilience into all planning stages.
- ⌘ **A – Autonomy in Finances:** Equip municipalities with pooled bonds, green fees, and climate insurance for fiscal autonomy.
- ⌘ **L – Livelihood & Land-sensitive Planning:** Promote regional hubs while safeguarding commons, culture, and heritage.
- ⌘ **A – Awareness & Citizen Participation:** Strengthen voluntarism, community engagement, and public participation in urban planning.

India's Urban Development Initiatives



INDIA-AI IMPACT SUMMIT 2026

MeitY unveiled **official logo & flagship initiatives** for the India-AI Impact Summit in **Feb 2026 (New Delhi)**, marking the **first time a Global South nation will host the event**.

- ⌘ **Initiatives:** AI Pitch Fest (UDAAN) for Tier 2 & 3 startups, Global Innovation Challenges (promoting AI solutions for public issues) & AI Expo.
- ⌘ **Official Logo:** Ashoka Chakra symbolizing ethical governance, with neural network flares representing AI's transformative impact.

India-AI Impact Summit 2026

⌘ Summit Sutras

- ❖ **People:** AI must be inclusive, respecting culture & ensuring accessibility.
- ❖ **Planet:** AI should be resource-efficient, eco-friendly, & align with sustainability goals.
- ❖ **Progress:** AI benefits must be equitable, with open access to data, compute and applications in key sectors.



MeitY's Eight AI Foundational Model Projects

Avatar AI: Creating AI Avatars for Indian languages in agriculture, healthcare, and governance.

IIT Bombay Consortium – Bharat Gen: Developing multilingual, multimodal models for agriculture, finance, legal, health, & education.

Fractal Analytics Ltd.: Building India's first large reasoning model for structured reasoning, STEM, and medical problem-solving.

Tech Mahindra Maker's Lab: Designing a model for Indic languages (Hindi dialects) & AI platform Orion for government apps.

Zenteiq: Developing BrahmaAI for engineering intelligence, scientific computing, and industrial innovation.

GenLoop: Creating small language models – **Yukti** (Base), **Varta** (Instruction), and **Kavach** (Guard) – to support 22 Indian languages supporting reasoning and content moderation

Intellihealth: Proposing a model for EEG analysis to screen neurological disorders and advance brain-computer interface research.

Shodh AI: Developing a model for material discovery and AI integration in material sciences.

SWACHHATA HI SEVA 2025

Govt. has launched the **Swachhata Hi Seva 2025 campaign**, conducting cleanliness drives nationwide.

- ⌘ Continuing the **Swachh Bharat Mission**, the **2025 theme "Swachhotsav"** blends festive spirit with cleanliness responsibility.

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)

Launch & Objective: SBM (Grameen) & SBM (U) **launched in 2014** to eliminate open defecation & improve sanitation.

SBM-Grameen	SBM-U
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phase I (2014-19): Achieved 100% sanitation coverage, 10 cr+ household toilets & declared all villages ODF. ● Phase II (2020-25/26): Focus on sustaining ODF, waste management & transforming villages to ODF Plus Model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phase I (2014-21): Targeted ODF cities & 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste across 4,041 statutory towns ● Phase II / SBM-U 2.0 (2021-26): Aims for "Garbage Free" cities and contributing to SDGs 2030.