

The World is At Our Doorstep

Heralding India's G20 Presidency

A major global event is coming to Indian shores at a very fragile time in the history of the world. In just a few weeks from now, we are poised to assume the presidency of the G20, the group of the largest economies in the world. Established in 1999, this grouping constitutes over 80 percent of the global GDP, two thirds of the world's population and almost 50 percent of the land area in the world. Since the economic recession of 2008, the group convenes annually and observes a rotational presidency. This powerful international forum has the mandate to shape global economic and developmental priorities through robust discussions and deliberations and also to curate solutions for the most pressing challenges of our times.

With the G20 presidency, we must seize the moment and spearhead constructive leadership focusing on climate action, energy security, stronger public health systems, technology for public good and the acceleration of the 2030 SDGs agenda. India is the world's largest democracy, one with the most vibrant representation of different faiths, languages and cultures. We have always been home to diverse peoples and a sounding board for diverse voices and we must put forth our rich inheritance of co-existence and harmony for the world to experience. In sync with this spirit, the theme of India's upcoming presidency is Vasudaiva Kutumbakam – which translates into 'One earth, One Family, One Future'. This ancient Indian adage strongly reflects the belief that the entire world with all its life-forms is truly just a tightly knit interconnected family, transcending multiplicities. The G20 logo depicts a lotus, the national flower of India cradling the globe, symbolic of growth and resilience in times of adversity. The globe is a symbol of the planet Earth, which is a testament to India's pro-planet approach. Together, the logo and the theme communicate the essence of India's leadership of the G20 – that of an unbiased unifier and peacemaker. Interestingly, this logo is inspired by multiple entries from a competition run by MyGov India to crowd source design ideas.

The world is still recovering from the COVID-19 public health catastrophe. Adding to this, is the strain of a highly polarized and splintered geopolitical environment. The combined effect of these reflect in the state of the global economy which is now staring at an impending recession and an all-time high global debt. Moving beyond bilateral tensions, an overarching cataclysmic threat of climate change grips the entire world. Assuming the G20 presidency at such a critical juncture is a challenging task at hand for India, but we are well prepared to transform this challenge into an opportunity. All eyes are on India and we present to the world a silver lining, as a prominent emerging economy of the developing world, one with solid international alliances. India will also forefront as a voice for the global south during the Presidency and ensure active consultations with counterparts in the region.

The rotational G20 Secretariat which passes on along with the presidency includes the finance track and the Sherpa track. Working groups established under both tracks are collaborating to give a cohesive direction to India's priorities across key sectors such as health, education, agriculture, trade, tourism, technology and more. Civil society will have

its own significant share of voice in shaping India's G20 agenda items through engagement groups like B20 (for the business community), Y20 (for youth), W20 (for women), S20 (for science) and several more.

Unlike other international events hosted in the past, the G20 meetings will not be limited only to New Delhi or other metropolises. In line with the Prime Minister's vision of an 'all of government' approach, the venues have been spread out across more than 50 Indian cities. Over 200 events will be hosted, providing citizens with a unique opportunity to be a part of India's G20 story. This is a momentous occasion for us to showcase our strengths and caliber to an international audience on home ground.

The Indian government has used digital technology as an effective leveler to break down social and economic barriers. The JAM trinity enabled direct benefit transfers and financial inclusion at massive scale. PM-JAY is the largest publicly funded health insurance scheme in the world. Recently, in October 2022 India clocked over 7 billion transactions in UPI worth INR 12 trillion, the highest ever in the history of digital payments in India. Now India is in a position to share its phenomenal digital infrastructure with the world. Its recent offer to the Commonwealth nations to share UPI technology was received very positively. India has also made an offer to share its indigenous 5G technology with other nations. Several African nations too now look towards India for technology and knowledge over many western countries. This will be an important focus area during India's G20 presidency.

The LiFE mission, drawing from the sustainable practices of an Indian lifestyle, was launched just a few weeks ago. With one of the key priorities of the presidency being climate action, this will also be a significant Indian offering to the world. We will aim to upscale this visionary initiative into a global lifestyle trend. Over the last 8 years, India has constantly empowered its women through progressive policy measures. Schemes like the PM Mudra Yojana have ignited the entrepreneurial aspirations of women across India. Women empowerment and representation will be at the heart of India's G20 deliberations. The G20 Presidency will also boost India's tourism and hospitality sector with scores of international delegates visiting different parts of the country through the year. This will further activate micro-entrepreneurs and local businesses leading to overall growth in economic activity. India's Presidency is attempting to bring maximum citizen engagement and participation into its foray and create a lasting legacy.

2023 is set to be a golden year for India's billion plus strong community to put its best foot forward to the world. We must celebrate and showcase our vivid diversity and insatiable appetite for progress as we invite the world into our home. Old centres of power are rapidly dismantling and the developing world is making ambitious strides towards having more say in premier international forums like the G20. India enjoys a strategic geopolitical advantage that must be effectively leveraged to position the nation as an unequivocal global voice of influence. Through this high level political coalition, India can piece together a creviced world order into one united family, drive forward global sustainable growth and broker world peace to ensure one inclusive future for all.