

# OUR OPINION, THEIR OPINION

Life is given to us, we  
earn it by giving it.  
- Rabindranath  
Tagore

## ACT EAST POLICY BRINGS INDIA & VIETNAM CLOSE

India and Vietnam's adoption of an action plan to ensure a free and rule-based Indo-Pacific is a strategic manoeuvre of immense importance. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement underscoring India's commitment to development over expansionism is a pointed message, clearly directed at China's contentious claims over the South China Sea. This move highlights India's intent to promote stability and order in a region plagued by territorial disputes. The agreement on a \$300 million credit line to bolster Vietnam's maritime security signifies India's proactive role in regional defence cooperation. This financial support is not merely a gesture of goodwill but a strategic investment in enhancing Vietnam's capabilities to counter external threats and uphold freedom of navigation. The Indo-Pacific region is a theatre of major geopolitical contestation, and India's strategic partnership with Vietnam transcends bilateral interests. It aligns with India's broader vision of a multipolar Asia where sovereignty and international norms are respected. This partnership strengthens India's position as a key player in Southeast Asia, providing a counterbalance to China's rising influence. Moreover, India's engagement with Vietnam underscores the importance of regional alliances in maintaining a stable and secure Indo-Pacific. It demonstrates India's commitment to building a coalition of like-minded nations that prioritize rule-based order and collective security. The India-Vietnam action plan is a decisive step towards a resilient Indo-Pacific. It reflects a shared vision for regional stability and sends a clear message against hegemonic ambitions, reinforcing the principles of sovereignty and international law in the face of expansionist tendencies. Together with the ASEAN bloc Vietnam is an important partner in India's Act East policy.

## To preserve democracy, tax the rich

By enabling wealthy individuals to wield disproportionate influence, the economy marginalises and disenfranchises much of the world's population. We need a progressive tax system that redistributes income from the rich to the poor without weakening social

While there are many ways to measure economic inequality, key metrics consistently show that disparities are getting worse. According to a recent United Nations report, 71% of the world's population now live in countries where inequality has increased.

Unsurprisingly, this includes India and China. A recent paper by Thomas Piketty and his co-authors shows that the income share of the top 1% in India has risen to its highest level since 1922, the earliest data that they have, when the country was still under British colonial rule. At the same time, global inequality remains extremely high. While billionaire wealth has reached unprecedented levels, the World Bank estimates that 712 million people worldwide survive on less than \$2.15 per day. Future generations will likely be shocked that we have tolerated such extreme levels of inequality, just as we are horrified by our ancestors' acceptance of slavery. But as David Hume argued in the eighteenth century, moral imperatives ("ought") cannot be derived from objective facts ("is").

In other words, problems like inequality cannot be resolved through science or reason alone. Instead, we must highlight their moral implications to persuade people to act. Two key aspects of global inequality deserve particular attention. First, economic disparities are set to worsen both within and across countries. As technological advances like artificial intelligence reduce demand for human labor, working-class households around the world could become increasingly impoverished.

Meanwhile, those who own the machines and run the largest corporations are expected to amass unprecedented power and wealth. The United States — home to nearly 38 million people living below the poverty line despite being one of the world's richest countries — provides a glimpse into this bleak future.

Second, extreme inequality poses a mortal threat to democracy, enabling billionaires and moneyed interests to influence elections, capture traditional and social media, and shape public perceptions. Regrettably, judging by social-media chatter and



trolling, some of the strongest opposition to progressive taxation and redistributive policies comes from the poorer segments of society, largely owing to misinformation and manipulation.

The toxic combination of extreme inequality and AI-powered misinformation is also a factor fueling pressure on liberal democracies and the rise of authoritarian forces around the world. By enabling a few wealthy individuals to wield disproportionate influence, today's global economy increasingly marginalises and disenfranchises much of the world's population.

To be sure, misguided attempts to reduce inequality also carry significant risks. For example, trying to achieve perfect egalitarianism would be unwise, because some disparity is necessary to create incentives. Similarly, concentrating all wealth in the hands of the state, as the Soviet Union did, would lead to mismanagement of demand and supply and, ultimately, cronyism. Instead, what we really need is a progressive tax system that redistributes incomes from the rich to the poor while preserving incentives. Fortunately, there is significant scope for such measures. In my recent book Reason to Be Happy, I propose a tax regime that I call the "accordion tax," which aims to narrow the income gap by taxing high earners and transferring the revenue to those with lower incomes.

While this model essentially functions as a progressive tax system, its strength lies in its micro structure. Beyond a certain point, the super-rich no longer seek to earn more to buy things. Simply

put, after the fifth yacht, the sixth is merely a status symbol aimed at outdoing other wealthy individuals. By taxing all incomes above a certain threshold and transferring this money to those earning below it, governments could reduce inequality without harming incentives. The richest person will remain the richest, and the second-richest person will work just as hard to reach the top. But the incentives of the middle and working classes, whose members work primarily to make ends meet rather than to surpass their neighbors, will remain intact.

Although the accordion tax could act as a powerful tool for reducing inequality at the national level, today's globalised economy poses significant implementation challenges. If a government taxes high incomes too aggressively, it risks triggering capital flight. Thus, reducing global inequality requires multilateral agreements. While the US is well-positioned to lead this effort, its ability to do so depends on the outcome of November's presidential election. Vice President Kamala Harris, the presumptive Democratic nominee, offers hope for greater distributive fairness. By contrast, a victory for former President Donald Trump will likely cause inequality to worsen. We can only hope that American voters make the right choice.

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## Indian sports is set for a transformative leap in time for the 2036

Precisely 88 years ago, it was around the same time that hockey legend Major Dhyanchand was coaxed best by German dictator Adolf Hitler to adopt German citizenship, but a true nationalist Major Dhyanchand refused flatly as a proud Indian. Such was the wizardry of Dhyanchand with the hockey stick, that he, almost single-handedly, gave India the gold in Hitler's Berlin, the third in succession, which made superegoist, dictator Hitler attempt to wrest Major Dhyanchand's Indian citizenship to further stamp German domination of the world at that part of time. But Hitler was defeated in his quest, perhaps, the first defeat of Hitler by an ordinary, lone Indian.

The legend of Major Dhyanchand can never be erased by the sporting fraternity the world over. On August 29, India will be celebrating the National Sports Day, dedicated to Major Dhyanchand, by that time we will know two things -- one, how the Indian hockey team has performed in the Paris Olympics, but more importantly, the first indication will also emerge as to which country will host the 2036 Summer Olympics.

What a tribute and recall of Major Dhyanchand it will be if India is awarded to host the 2036 Olympics, no better sports prestige than to host 200-odd countries vying for sporting glory on your soil.

India's journey in sports, particularly Olympic sports, has been poor, to say the least, or at best modest. Down the line, India neglected sports and couldn't carry the glory of Major Dhyanchand despite winning eight gold medals in hockey - even the football team's historic semifinal entry in 1956.

The Indian hockey team had to wait for 16 years for the gold medal in a depleted Games in Moscow in 1980, this Olympics was boycotted by major hockey powers of the world. We had to wait till 2008 for an individual gold medal by Abhinav Bindra in shooting. Not to forget two consecutive medals by P.V Sindhu in Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo Olympics.

However, the gold medal won by Neeraj Chopra in javelin throw and the bronze medal bagged by the men's hockey team in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, which were held in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, raised hopes. As if the 140 crore Indians and Govt authorities have finally woken up to prestige associated with sporting glory, more so in sports played and competed worldwide.

My thesis is that without being a major sporting power, no country can be a superpower. History shows countries like the USA, the erstwhile USSR, present China, or even countries like Britain, Japan, Germany and France -- all are major political, economic, military and sports powers of the world. Now, when India has firmly established itself as 3rd or 4th largest economic power in the world, the country's rank in the field of sports barely stands in the top 50 in the world.

It is time to redeem the nation's prestige on the world sports map beyond cricket, although this over-dominated game will also feature in the next Olympics in Los Angeles in 2028.

Frankly, I am just not hoping for more Indian medals in Paris compared to Tokyo but overall India can be seen emerging in Olympic sports on the world podium.

Shooting is one such sport in which India can be watched signing as a top-notch team. Athletics is also showing signs of resurgence. Badminton is another discipline in which the Indians have been making a mark for quite some time. Hope we catch up fast, furious and determined.

Why I say that time is less is because we can hope for an Indian Olympics in 2036 with exalted economic and even political might on the world stage. The time is less because one can't expect a poor show as Olympic hosts and that too by a nation of 150 crore people, which India will be by 2036. The year will mark the Centenary of the triumph of Major Dhyanchand's India over Hitler's Germany. Well, aspiring to be a host, one should be toast in the comity of the world of sports, flanked by political and economic strength - perfect showcasing of three powers.

A major transformation is underway. better late than never. Along with govt and sports authorities, big corporates have undertaken a major role in creating sports facilities, incentivising Olympic achievers. Investing in infrastructure and sponsoring athletes has gone up manifold - schemes like TOPS by the Govt have also done wonders. At last, the entire country is acknowledging the achievements of sportspersons and perhaps seeing a career in sports as a transformative leap for economic well-being. And the results are showing as well on an international level.

Well, it takes time and it is taking time but things are well poised in the fast lane. The year 2036 will be a watershed moment, the actual turning point in the history of Indian sports provided India gets to host the Olympics, all efforts are in place. even the corporates are at play along with the determined Govt of the day to host Olympic in 2036.

By-Satish K Singh

## ADHD brain highly treatable

As a family nurse practitioner in primary care, I have diagnosed and treated numerous patients with ADHD. I was also diagnosed with it at the age of 21.

Understanding how the wiring differs in a brain with ADHD and what improves functioning is critical to help those struggling because of their brain's uniqueness.

How brains with ADHD differ Research has identified multiple differences in how brains with ADHD work. Put simply, ADHD significantly affects executive function. Executive functioning is a set of cognitive processes, including planning, prioritizing, impulse control, flexibility, time management and emotional regulation, that help people achieve long-term goals. These processes occur in the prefrontal cortex — the "personality" — of the brain.

In addition to the prefrontal cortex, ADHD affects other areas of the brain, including the basal ganglia, an area that regulates communication within the brain, and the cerebellum, which is responsible for movement and balance. All three work together regulating attention, executive function motor activity and impulse control. Chemical messengers called neurotransmitters allow brain cells to communicate with each other. Dopamine and norepinephrine are two key neurotransmitters that play critical roles in the executive functioning of the brain.

Dopamine controls motivation, rewards and pleasure. We get a flood of dopamine from pleasurable things such as eating, drinking alcohol, having sex, and receiving affirmations or good grades. That flood also

motivates us to repeat the "rewarding" behaviour. Norepinephrine is responsible for sustaining attention and helps with executive functioning.

People with ADHD have lower levels of dopamine and norepinephrine in brain regions, including the prefrontal cortex. This leads to difficulty in sustaining cognitive functions such as attention, impulse control and motivation.

Studies show that people with ADHD have more dopamine transporters in the brain. Think of transporters as vacuums that suck dopamine back up into the neuron, making it less available. As a result, there is less activation by dopamine and norepinephrine in the prefrontal cortex and the mesolimbic pathway, the area that processes rewards and motivation. Less dopamine can drive people to seek out stimulating rewards such as technology, food or drugs.

Researchers have identified at least 27 possible genetic markers that modulate dopamine regulation in the brain.

Diagnosing ADHD Nearly everyone with or without ADHD show some symptoms such as forgetfulness. For instance, when you can't tolerate sitting in a meeting for one moment longer or you can't remember why you came into a room.

A true ADHD diagnosis takes into account multiple factors. If you struggle with ADHD, you have at least five to six symptoms in the inattentive, hyperactive or impulsive categories, such as forgetfulness, trouble sitting still, losing items and getting easily distracted. For a formal diagnosis,

ADHD symptoms need to have been present before the age of 12, something that can be determined in childhood or, as in my case, much later.

Also, ADHD symptoms must negatively affect the person in multiple settings, such as at home, in school or at work — and they can't be explained away by other conditions, such as thyroid dysfunction, diabetes, sleep deprivation or anemia.

Research shows that girls with ADHD more often display inattentive symptoms along with characteristics not traditionally associated with ADHD, such as shyness, perfectionism and eating disorders. Patients, particularly women and girls, can develop depression or anxiety — or both — because of untreated ADHD. Once ADHD is treated, anxiety and depression symptoms are greatly reduced.

How ADHD medications alter neurotransmitters

The American Academy of Pediatrics provides evidence-based guidelines for the treatment of ADHD in children and teens. The first US guidelines for the treatment of adult ADHD are expected to be released in fall 2024. If patients are 6 or older, stimulant or non-stimulant medications may be used, along with behavioral therapy.

Stimulants are divided into two drug classes: amphetamines, such as Adderall and Vyvanse, and methylphenidates, such as Concerta, Ritalin and Focalin. Nonstimulants such as Strattera are recommended if patients cannot tolerate or prefer not to take stimulant medications.

Stimulants block the dopamine

and norepinephrine transporters, preventing them from depleting those neurotransmitters, so more dopamine is available to activate key areas of the brain. Amphetamines also increase the release of dopamine and norepinephrine from neurons. These increased levels allow the brain to find challenging tasks, such as doing homework, more rewarding. Because more dopamine is available, the brain's desire for stimulating rewards decreases.

Methylphenidates are typically the drug of choice for children, while amphetamines are most effective in adults.

Numerous studies have found that stimulants improve ADHD symptoms, patient motivation, parental quality of life and behavioral ratings from teachers. Stimulants decrease anxiety and emotional dysregulation in children. Nonstimulants also improve ADHD symptoms.

Improved outcomes People with ADHD attempt suicide at twice the rate of people without ADHD. They also have three times the rate of suicidal ideation and six times the rate of completed suicide.

Treating patients with ADHD with stimulant medication, in addition to behavioral therapy, has been shown to decrease suicide attempts, unplanned pregnancies and substance use. One study found that treating children with ADHD with methylphenidate reduced their risk of burn injuries by 57 per cent. In addition to medication, cognitive behavioral therapy for adults, executive function training, particularly in adolescents, and positive parenting interventions have been shown

to be effective for ADHD symptoms. Most researchers agree that behavioral training is most effective when combined with medication.

Positive parenting

Research has found significant improvement in the quality of life for both parents and children when parents participated in positive parenting education. The effect is even more pronounced when combined with medication. One such model, called the "Nurtured Heart Approach", has been used by families, schools, foster care organizations and behavioural health groups, including the New Jersey Children's System of Care. It emphasises praise and encouragement, the setting of clear boundaries for acceptable behavior, and teaches children to self-regulate emotions and behaviours. As a medical provider, I have witnessed such models work wonders in families and classrooms.

Dietary supplements

Multiple studies have demonstrated that children with ADHD have lower levels of vitamin D in their bloodstream. Having adequate iron in one's body, stored in the protein ferritin, is important to create dopamine and norepinephrine, the neurotransmitters that are lacking in ADHD. Research has demonstrated that low levels of ferritin cause a disruption in dopamine activity. Children with lower levels are more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD.

For this reason, it's important for providers to check ferritin levels and not serum iron, which is often used incorrectly to diagnose iron deficiency.

By-Kate Harrington