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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

India at 80: Beyond Growth, the Task Is to Help Shape the World

INDIAN EXPRESS

12 August 2026 · ECONOMY IR · GS2 GS3

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India at 80: Beyond Growth, the Task Is to Help Shape the World

The Indian Express 12 August 2026 GS2 GS3

INTERVIEW ANGLE

"Shaparia argues India's stronger domestic base makes it "more useful to the world," and deeper world engagement "opens more pathways" for its people, a virtuous circle. Can you identify a plausible failure mode where this circle breaks, where global engagement and domestic strength pull in opposite directions rather than reinforcing each other?"

Source: Original editorial ↗ The Indian Express

Every fact web-verified against primary sources

THE LIFT LINE

India spent 80 years securing its place in the world. Kaushik Shaparia's argument for the next 20 is that having a seat is not the same as shaping what happens at the table.

WHY THIS EDITORIAL MATTERS FOR YOUR EXAM

This is a signed op-ed by the CEO of Deutsche Bank Group India and Emerging Asia, not an unsigned institutional editorial, a distinction worth naming in a Mains answer since it is a practitioner's perspective on capital flows and global positioning, not a general commentary. Its real value is the size-versus-relevance distinction and the three-lever framework, capital, capability, credibility, which gives a normally ceremonial "India at X years" theme genuine analytical structure. Because the piece itself is thematic and light on hard numbers, Ujiyari has added the specific trade-share, income-classification and growth-target data below to give the argument its measurable backbone for Prelims and Mains use.

GS Paper 2: India and its neighbourhood; bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India (India-EU FTA); effect of policies of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

GS Paper 3: Indian economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth and development; investment models; employment and skill development.

CONCEPT	MEANING	SOURCE
Participation versus shaping	Shaparia's core distinction for India's evolving global role	From the op-ed
Capital, capability, credibility	The three levers his argument is built on	From the op-ed
India-EU FTA as evidence	A concrete example of "shaping," not just growth	From the op-ed
Income gap: average vs middle-income households	His specific warning that growth's gains are uneven	From the op-ed
Viksit Bharat @2047	The government's developed-nation framework	From the op-ed (named, not detailed)
Exact trade-share, GDP, income-classification figures	Precise magnitude of the gap Shaparia only describes qualitatively	Ujiyari's addition

WHAT THE OP-ED ARGUES

(This section reports Kaushik Shaparia's own argument, as a named, credentialed author, not an unsigned Indian Express editorial. He writes thematically and cites almost no hard statistics; where a claim is genuinely quantified in his text, it is marked below. Where Ujiyari has supplied the missing numbers, that is separated clearly.)

Who is arguing this. Kaushik Shaparia is CEO of Deutsche Bank Group India and Emerging Asia. This is a signed op-ed reflecting his own analysis as a banking executive, not an institutional Indian Express editorial position.

From size to relevance. As India enters its 80th year of independence, Shaparia argues "the more important question today is not only how large India has become. It is how relevant India is becoming." India, he writes, "is no longer waiting to be discovered," it is already part of the choices the world is making on "trade, technology, talent, energy, supply chains and development."

India's distinctive position. In a world where "old assumptions are being tested" and countries are "rethinking where they source from, where they invest, whom they trust," Shaparia argues India holds an uncommon combination: "strong relationships with advanced economies" alongside "credibility with the Global South," because India "understands the aspirations of developing countries" while still "living many of them itself," even as it has "the ambition, capability and institutional weight to contribute meaningfully to global conversations."

The one number in the piece. Shaparia's single quantified claim is this: "India is home to more than one-sixth of the world's population but accounts for a much smaller share of global trade." He does not give exact percentages; his argument is that "the coming decades will be defined by how effectively India converts demographic scale into economic influence."

Viksit Bharat as a statement of intent. He frames Viksit Bharat not primarily as a growth target but as "a statement of intent about the kind of country India wants to become" by its centenary in 2047, "a bigger economy, certainly. But also, a more capable, confident, inclusive and globally respected one."

Capital: necessary but not sufficient. India will need investment "in infrastructure, manufacturing, clean energy, cities, technology and enterprise," but capital "alone is never enough." It "must move into the right places, at the right pace, with the confidence that rules are stable and opportunities are real." Countries able to attract and productively deploy long-term capital, he argues, "will help define the next phase of global growth."

The India-EU FTA as evidence. Shaparia offers the India-EU Free Trade Agreement as "a useful example: two large democratic partners choosing to deepen economic ties at a time when the global order is being reshaped." For India, it "strengthens links with a major advanced market"; for Europe, it offers "a deeper partnership with a country that is central to Asia's growth and to the wider search for resilient supply chains."

Capability: converting the demographic dividend. India's demographic dividend has "long been acknowledged as its biggest strength," but Shaparia argues long-term competitiveness depends on how effectively it is "converted into innovation, enterprise and broad-based prosperity." His specific warning: "the gap between average incomes and the incomes of middle-income households suggests that the gains from growth are not reaching all sections of society equally." His prescription is "creating productive, formal and better-paying jobs," alongside "strengthening manufacturing, improving productivity and building globally competitive businesses." As "technology and AI reshape industries," he argues success will depend "not just on the size of our talent pool, but on the quality of the skills, education and healthcare that support it."

The closing argument. "India's advantage is that its domestic journey and global role are now deeply connected. The stronger India becomes at home, the more useful it becomes to the world. And the more deeply it engages with the world, the more pathways it opens for its own people." As India enters its ninth decade, "its task is not simply to participate in global growth. It is to help shape it." The first 80 years, he concludes, "were about securing India's place in the world. The years ahead are about defining what India does with that place," and India's most important contribution may be "not just becoming one of the world's largest economies but becoming one of its most relevant."

Ujiyari's addition begins below. Nothing past this point should be read as Shaparia's argument.

BACKGROUND THE OP-ED ASSUMES

The following is Ujiyari's addition, not part of Shaparia's argument. He deliberately writes in qualitative, thematic terms, "a much smaller share," not an exact percentage. The figures below give his claim its measurable content for exam purposes, but they are Ujiyari's research, not his own cited statistics.

India crossed **Japan in 2025** to become the **world's fourth-largest economy by nominal GDP**, at roughly **4.2 trillion dollars**, behind the United States, China and Germany, with NITI Aayog projections suggesting it could overtake Germany to become **third-largest around 2028**. Against this, India's share of

global merchandise exports was about **1.8 per cent in 2024**, ranking it **18th** among the world's exporters, a figure the government has itself flagged to the WTO as needing to reach roughly **10 per cent by 2047** for its Viksit Bharat aspiration to be credible; its share of **global commercial services exports** has grown faster, from under 2 per cent in 2005 to roughly **4.3 to 4.5 per cent in 2024**. India remains classified by the **World Bank as a Lower Middle-Income Country**, with per capita gross national income of roughly **2,760 dollars**. The **Economic Survey** has estimated India needs roughly **8 per cent sustained real GDP growth** through 2047 to close this gap. The **India-EU Free Trade Agreement** Shaparia cites was concluded after prolonged negotiations spanning multiple rounds since 2007, with the final agreement announced in 2025.

THE ANALYSIS

1. Shaparia's central move, treating relevance as distinct from size, is the piece's real analytical contribution, and it deliberately avoids the trap of GDP triumphalism. A country can be large without being able to set the terms on which trade, technology and supply-chain decisions are made; his argument is that India's task is closing that specific gap, not celebrating the size milestone itself.

2. The India-EU FTA example does real work: it is evidence of shaping, not just participating. By citing a concrete, current bilateral agreement rather than a general aspiration, Shaparia grounds an otherwise thematic essay in one specific, checkable instance of India exercising the "credibility with advanced economies" he claims it holds.

3. The income-gap observation is the piece's sharpest, most testable specific claim, and it complicates the "fourth-largest economy" headline from within his own argument. By noting the gap between average incomes and middle-income household incomes, Shaparia is making an inequality point using his own banking-sector vantage, not a generic reference to poverty, worth citing precisely in an answer rather than paraphrased into "growth hasn't reached everyone."

4. The capital argument implicitly concedes a regulatory-predictability problem without naming it directly. "Confidence that rules are stable" is a careful, executive-diplomatic way of saying investors do not yet have full confidence in India's rule stability; a Mains answer can make this implicit admission explicit and pair it with ease-of-doing-business or contract-enforcement data.

5. The AI/skills argument reframes the demographic dividend from a quantity story to a quality story. Shaparia's point, that success depends on the quality of skills, education and healthcare rather than talent-pool size, directly parallels arguments made elsewhere about India's vocational training system (see Ujiyari's coverage of the ITI gender-gap editorial the same day), where enrolment numbers alone were shown to mask a quality and absorption gap.

6. The piece's biggest limitation for exam purposes is precisely its thematic, aspirational register: it names no specific target, timeline or institution to hold India accountable to. Unlike a policy document, it does not specify a trade-share target, a growth-rate requirement, or a named reform.

This is not a flaw in the op-ed's own genre, but it means a complete Mains answer must supply the WTO export-share target, the Economic Survey's 8 per cent growth estimate, and India's Lower Middle-Income classification from elsewhere, exactly the data marked as Ujiyari's addition above.

BEYOND THE OP-ED

This section is Ujiyari's addition: the quantitative and institutional detail that turns Shaparia's thematic argument into an examinable Mains answer.

The Viksit Bharat @2047 targets. The government's own framework sets its ambitions in productivity and export-share terms, roughly 8 per cent sustained real GDP growth and a 10 per cent global merchandise-export share by 2047, giving Shaparia's "convert demographic scale into economic influence" argument a specific, numeric target.

The Lower Middle-Income classification. India's per capita GNI of roughly 2,760 dollars, against its fourth-largest-economy GDP ranking, is the sharpest illustration of the size-versus-relevance gap Shaparia's piece describes only qualitatively, and is a classic UPSC size-versus-per-capita trap worth citing directly.

DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

PRELIMS-GRADE FACTS, FROM THE OP-ED:

- India: more than one-sixth of world population, a "much smaller share" of global trade (no exact figure given)
- India-EU Free Trade Agreement: cited as evidence of India "shaping," not just participating
- Viksit Bharat: framed as a "statement of intent" for India's centenary of independence (2047)
- Author: Kaushik Shaparia, CEO, Deutsche Bank Group India & Emerging Asia

PRELIMS-GRADE FACTS, UJIYARI'S ADDITION:

- India: 4th-largest economy by nominal GDP (~4.2 trillion dollars), overtook Japan in 2025; projected to overtake Germany by ~2028
- Merchandise export share: ~1.8% (2024), rank 18th; WTO-flagged target: 10% by 2047
- Commercial services export share: ~4.3-4.5% (2024), up from under 2% in 2005
- World Bank classification: Lower Middle-Income Country; per capita GNI ~2,760 dollars
- Economic Survey estimate: ~8% sustained real GDP growth needed through 2047

WATCH THE TRAP: DO NOT ATTRIBUTE EXACT TRADE-SHARE PERCENTAGES (1.8%, 4.4%) OR THE LOWER MIDDLE-INCOME CLASSIFICATION TO SHAPARIA'S OWN TEXT. HIS PIECE STATES ONLY THAT INDIA'S TRADE SHARE IS "MUCH SMALLER" THAN ITS POPULATION SHARE, IN QUALITATIVE TERMS; THE PRECISE FIGURES ARE UJIYARI'S SUPPLEMENTARY RESEARCH, USEFUL FOR PRELIMS BUT NOT PART OF WHAT THIS SPECIFIC OP-ED ARGUES.

THE DEBATE

Argument FOR treating this as a genuinely useful reframing. Distinguishing relevance from size, and grounding it in a concrete example (the India-EU FTA) and a specific inequality observation (the income gap), gives an otherwise ceremonial "India at 80" theme real analytical content that a purely celebratory piece would lack.

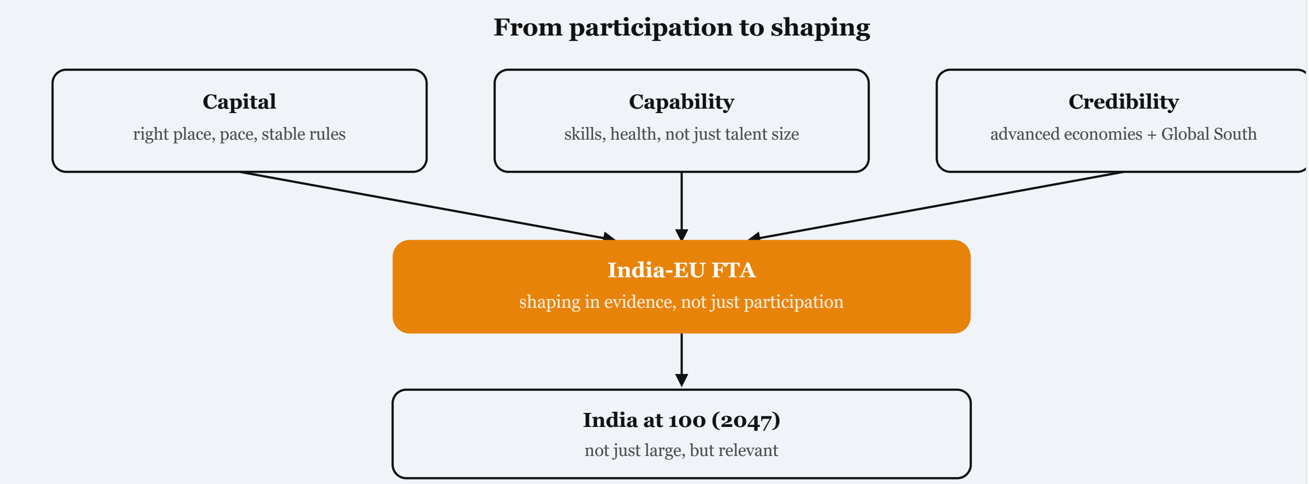
Argument AGAINST treating it as sufficient on its own. The piece's thematic, statistic-light register means it cannot substitute for the harder, numbers-driven case, India's actual trade-share gap, its income classification, its specific growth requirement, that a complete Mains answer needs; read alone, it risks producing an answer long on inspiration and short on evidence.

Balanced verdict. The two are complementary. Shaparia's framework, participation versus shaping, capital, capability, credibility, gives an answer its structure; the quantitative detail Ujiyari has added gives it its evidence. Citing the op-ed by name and pairing it with the specific figures is stronger than either alone.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS

The transferable pattern: when a practitioner's op-ed (a bank CEO, a minister, an industry leader) makes a thematic argument with few hard numbers, treat the argument's structure as the citable contribution and supply the missing data separately, rather than either inventing numbers on the author's behalf or dismissing the piece for lacking them. A framework like "capital, capability, credibility" is genuinely useful scaffolding for an answer even when the source text itself stays qualitative; the discipline is in citing the framework as the author's and the numbers as your own research.

DIAGRAM-IN-WORDS



Shaparia's three levers, capital, capability and credibility, are what convert India's domestic strength into a genuinely shaping global role, with the India-EU FTA offered as one concrete instance already underway.

TAKEAWAY BOX

India spent 80 years securing a place at the table. The next 20, on this argument, are about deciding what to do once you are sitting in it.

author **Kaushik Shaparia***, CEO, Deutsche Bank Group India & Emerging Asia; India's population share "more than one-sixth" of world total;* **India-EU FTA** *cited as evidence of shaping; Viksit Bharat as a "statement of intent" for* **2047***.*

India **4th-largest economy** *(~4.2 trillion dollars, overtook Japan 2025); merchandise export share* **~1.8%***, rank* **18th***; World Bank* **Lower Middle-Income***, per capita GNI* **~2,760 dollars***; Economic Survey* **~8%** *growth estimate needed.*

Shaparia argues the "stronger India becomes at home, the more useful it becomes to the world," a virtuous circle. As a civil servant, how would you guard against using that framing to justify deprioritising domestic equity work (like the income gap he himself flags) on the theory that global engagement will eventually solve it?

UPSC has repeatedly tested India's rising global role and demographic-dividend-to-growth conversion (GS2/GS3); this op-ed's capital-capability-credibility framework transfers directly to any question on Viksit Bharat @2047 or India's evolving foreign economic policy.

"India's task at 80 is not simply to participate in global growth, but to help shape it." Examine this claim with reference to the specific levers needed to convert India's demographic scale into global relevance by 2047.

Sources: Indian Express, "Beyond growth, India's task is to help shape the world" by Kaushik Shaparia, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, World Bank

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Source: India at 80: Beyond Growth, the Task Is to Help Shape the World — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE

Writing in the Indian Express, Deutsche Bank India and Emerging Asia CEO Kaushik Shaparia argues that as India completes 80 years of independence, its real task has shifted from securing a place in the world to deciding what to do with that place, converting demographic scale into economic influence through three levers, attracting productive long-term capital, building genuine human capability through skills and health, not just training numbers, and using its credibility with both advanced economies and the Global South to help shape global rules on trade, technology and supply chains rather than merely participating in them.

✓ SUPPORTING

- India's distinctive position, Shaparia argues, is a combination not many countries hold: strong relationships with advanced economies alongside credibility with the Global South, because India still lives many of the aspirations developing countries hold even as it has the ambition, capability and institutional weight to contribute to global conversations.
- The India-EU Free Trade Agreement is offered as a concrete, current example of two large democracies deepening ties as the global order is reshaped, strengthening India's links to a major advanced market while giving Europe a deeper partnership with a country central to Asia's growth and to the wider search for resilient supply chains.
- India's demographic dividend, long treated as its biggest strength, will only translate into long-term competitiveness if converted into innovation, enterprise and broad-based prosperity, since the gap between average incomes and middle-income household incomes suggests growth's gains are not yet reaching all sections of society equally.
- As AI and technology reshape industries, Shaparia argues success will depend not on the size of India's talent pool but on the quality of the skills, education and healthcare underpinning it, alongside creating productive, formal, better-paying jobs and building globally competitive manufacturing businesses.

⚠ COUNTER

Shaparia does not engage the harder question of whether India's institutions, regulatory predictability, ease of doing business, contract enforcement, are currently capable of absorbing and productively deploying the scale of capital he says India needs; a call to attract long-term capital “with confidence that rules are stable” implicitly concedes that rule-stability is not yet fully established, without specifying what closes that gap.

→ **WAY FORWARD**

The piece’s own logic points to a self-reinforcing sequence rather than a single lever: capital needs stable rules to arrive productively, capability needs quality skills and health investment to convert demographic scale into innovation, and both together are what let India’s existing diplomatic credibility (its India-EU FTA, its Global South standing) translate into genuine rule-shaping power rather than remaining participation alone; Viksit Bharat, in this reading, is the marker for whether that sequence has actually closed by 2047.

MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK

QUESTION

"India's task at 80 is not simply to participate in global growth, but to help shape it." Examine this claim with reference to the specific levers, capital, capability and institutional credibility, needed to convert India's demographic and economic scale into global relevance by 2047. (250 words)

INTRODUCTION

Writing in the Indian Express as India enters its 80th year of independence, Kaushik Shaparia, CEO of Deutsche Bank Group India and Emerging Asia, frames the country's central challenge not as how large it has become but as how relevant it is becoming. His argument rests on a distinction between participating in global growth and helping shape it, and on three levers, capital, capability and credibility, that determine which side of that distinction India ends up on by the time it marks 100 years of independence in 2047.

BODY

Shaparia's case begins with India's distinctive diplomatic position: strong ties with advanced economies combined with genuine credibility among developing countries, a combination he argues is uncommon and gives India standing in conversations on trade, technology, talent, energy and supply chains that the world is already having. He grounds this in the India-EU Free Trade Agreement, presented as evidence of two large democracies deepening ties as the global order is reshaped.

But the piece is equally clear that diplomatic standing alone is not enough. Capital, he writes, "must move into the right places, at the right pace, with the confidence that rules are stable," an implicit acknowledgment that regulatory predictability remains a live constraint rather than a settled achievement. Capability is the second lever: India's demographic dividend is only a genuine asset if converted into innovation and broad-based prosperity, and Shaparia flags a specific warning sign, a gap between average incomes and middle-income household incomes, suggesting growth's benefits are not yet evenly distributed. His prescription is productive, formal, better-paying jobs alongside manufacturing and productivity gains, and he explicitly ties this to the AI transition, arguing that quality of skills, education and healthcare, not merely the size of India's talent pool, will determine competitiveness ahead.

CONCLUSION

Shaparia's framing is aspirational rather than data-driven: the piece cites almost no statistics beyond noting India's population share dwarfs its trade share, leaving the specific magnitude of the gap, and the concrete policy detail of what "stable rules" or "quality skills" require, for the reader to supply. A complete Mains answer should credit the piece's central distinction, size versus relevance, while pairing it with the quantitative detail (India's actual trade-to-population ratio, its income classification, its specific growth targets) that gives Viksit Bharat @2047 its measurable content.

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